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J. Randy Forbes
United States Congress

4th District, Virginia

May 10, 2010

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Mr. Victor M. Mendez
Federal Highway Administrator
Office of the Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Mendez,

I am writing to express my opposition to the current proposal by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to pursue tolling stations along Interstate Route 95 (I-95) in southern Virginia.

It is my understanding that the application to install tolling stations on I-95 stems from VDOT's desire to participate in the federal Interstate Reconstruction and Renovation Pilot Program (IRRPP), which provides for the conversion of reconstructed roadway segments into toll-ways. As you know, Interstate Route 81 was initially selected by the Commonwealth as the roadway of application in IRRPP. Since Interstate Route 81 was prevented from further consideration, however, VDOT has recently amended its application to substitute I-95 as the roadway to receive tolling stations.

While acceptance in the IRRPP program may allow VDOT some flexibility in their assessment of transportation priorities, the installation of toll stations on I-95 would not be beneficial to Virginians. Interstate Route 81 was first targeted instead of I-95 because it best met the criteria for inclusion in the IRRPP. Safety, surface conditions, and number of travelers remain consistent factors in forming the initial assessment that I-95 should not be selected for IRRPP.

Unfortunately, those citizens living in southern Virginia who frequently use I-95 for everyday travel will disproportionately bear the brunt of payments at toll stations. During these challenging economic times, they can ill afford to take on an unfair higher share of the cost of road maintenance.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. With kind personal regards, I am

Yours Truly,

J. RANDY FORBES
Member of Congress