

Transportation RFI

Interim Charge 1A: HB 803 and SB 198, which relate to toll project financial reporting and use payments. Monitor the effectiveness of the tools available to Texas toll project entities for enforcing unpaid tolls while protecting customer rights.

Submitted by:

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Dear House Transportation Committee,

I am concerned about toll use payments. I have heard horror stories about the outrageous fines and fees added to small toll bills, and I hope that you will employ your oversight authority to be sure that citizens are protected from over aggressive toll collection efforts.

Please be sure that you address the following:

- Since the House voted in 2017 to de-criminalized nonpayment of tolls, all criminal penalties must be removed. Driving on Texas roads should not be a criminal offense.
- Bills should be sent immediately with a uniform, timely billing standard required including a reasonable amount of time to pay the fees, and adequate notice of late payments due. As with most financial delinquencies, there must be a statute of limitation on how far back an agency can go to collect a toll. Agencies should not be allowed to collect tolls more than six months old. Drivers should have at least 90 working days before an unpaid toll bill is sent to collections.
- Toll fines should be capped for all toll agencies. (Perhaps less than \$50 per year)
- Toll agencies should be required to prove the customer actually received notice of tolls owed before any fines or fees are assessed.
- Agencies must immediately notify drivers of any problems with payment cards associated with their toll tag accounts. I was surprised to learn of the practice of holding back bills to allow fines and fees to rack up before notifying drivers of a problem with payment cards. That practice is unconscionable (and illegal?! We cannot tolerate from government agencies what we wouldn't tolerate from other businesses.
- For those unable to pay in full, you should require the toll agencies to offer payment arrangements without fines and fees tacked on for inability to pay in full at the time of the billing cycle.