



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Rhode Island Division

May 29, 2015

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In Reply Refer To:
HDA-RI

Mr. Peter Alviti, Jr., P.E, Director
Rhode Island Department of Transportation
Two Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02903-1124

Subject: *Rhode Island Bridge Proposal - May 2015*

Dear Director Alviti:

In order to respond to questions posed during the May 22nd videoconference, including whether or not NEPA actions will be required in order to implement the state's bridge infrastructure renewal program, the full scope and scale of the proposal will be needed. Consequently, FHWA seeks answers to the following questions.

Bridge Project List

FHWA requests more detailed information on the 20 bridge reconstruction/replacement projects being contemplated for tolling:

- The exact location of the proposed bridges (a map would be helpful).
- The route number(s) and NBI structure number of the facility carried by the bridge (and direction of travel, if relevant).
- Note any projects located on or connected to the interstate system.
- Any features intersected by the bridge (such as railroads, major utilities, and names of streams, rivers, and highways).
- A brief description of the work to be performed (explain why such work constitutes reconstruction or replacement of the particular bridge being tolled).

Questions for Rhode Island Department of Transportation

- Does Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) intend to use any federal funds on any of the bridges? It is our understanding that RIDOT intends to use FTA funding only on the 6/10 interchange. Please confirm.
- Do any elements of the planned construction projects require interstate access approval?
- Will any of the tolled bridges cross into adjoining states?
- What is the proposed timing between the initial tolling of the bridge and initiation of the bridge construction/replacement for each project?
- How will your truck size and weight enforcement program address diversion of truck traffic to other roads in the state?

- What percentage of truck through-traffic (O/D other than to/from Rhode Island) does your modeling tell you exist now? In your projections, how would tolling change that percentage?
- Will toll rates be communicated to commercial truck GPS services?
- Are the projects regionally significant? For projects within an MPO boundary considered regionally significant, has RIDOT consulted with the MPO?
- Has RIDOT considered that other federal agency requirements, (e.g., USACE 404 Permits, USCG Bridge Permits, ESA/EFH permits, and section 106 evaluations) may be subject to NEPA?
- Describe how and where toll revenues will be used?
- What is RIDOT's expectation from FHWA? Is this a request for approval of your proposal, or a request for feedback on the issues that might exist?

Other considerations for Rhode Island Department of Transportation

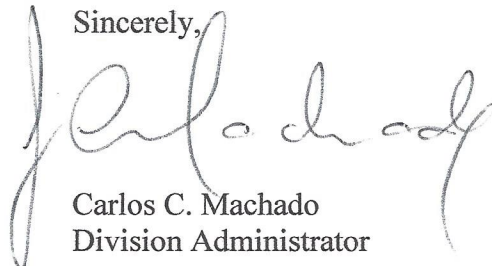
- Take note of any plans for expansion or modification of Amtrak lines, catenary or other freight rail routes in the footprint of tolled bridges.
- Consider engaging your state freight advisory committee and key freight stakeholders, including the Port, neighboring states and the I-95 Corridor Coalition to understand potential impacts on goods movement in and through the state and operations in the Corridor.
- Consider reflecting this proposal in your state freight plan.
- Consider performing an analysis on truck parking impacts in the region as a result of these projects.

FHWA Follow up

During the videoconference, RIDOT posed the following questions:

- If there are two structures (one for each direction of traffic), and only one needs to be reconstructed, can both directions be tolled? FHWA is developing a response and will follow up.
- FHWA is also developing a response to RIDOT's question on whether a highway may be tolled in conjunction with the reconstruction of an overpass bridge.

Sincerely,



Carlos C. Machado
Division Administrator

Cc: Mr. Peter Garino, Deputy Director