

RESOLUTION 2022-01

BOROUGH OF LEMOYNE CUMBERLAND COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF LEMOYNE OPPOSING THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S PROPOSAL TO TOLL THE INTERSTATE 83 SOUTH BRIDGE

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (Penn DOT) has proposed to implement a project that will result in tolls being charged for use of the Interstate-83 South Bridge (the I-83 South Bridge Project), in which the South Bridge provides a vital transportation link across the Susquehanna River between Cumberland County and Dauphin County; and

WHEREAS, a similar bridge tolling project was undertaken by Penn DOT in Allegheny County on Interstate-79, which resulted in litigation by three affected municipalities claiming that improper procedures were followed in selection of candidate projects which eliminated the possibility of legislative reviews and approvals as required by law; and

WHEREAS, the majority of the estimated 125,000 vehicles that use the South Bridge daily originate within or have destinations within 15 miles of the South Bridge. This high percentage of local traffic will result in higher numbers of diverted traffic, as opposed to a tolled bridge serving primarily through traffic, resulting in adverse impacts to Lemoyne Borough and all of Cumberland County's West Shore communities; and

WHEREAS, traffic resulting by those avoiding tolls on the South Bridge, should they be enacted, will result in state-owned roadways as well as locally owned municipal roadways in Lemoyne and on the West Shore, which are notoriously overburdened by traffic and vehicle congestion, to become further burdened by increasing traffic backlogs, travel delays, and congestion through commercial and residential areas; and

WHEREAS, local businesses that serve as the foundation of the regional economy, will be disproportionately and negatively impacted by the I-83 South Bridge Project by causing them to pay tolls multiple times each week; estimated by one local business to result in a financial impact of nearly \$360,000 per year if current travel routes are maintained after the project is implemented; and

WHEREAS, local retail businesses and restaurants report decreases in business during periods of congested traffic, in which the financial impact will certainly be exacerbated by those avoiding tolls on the South Bridge, and the resulting traffic impact in local communities; and

WHEREAS, to accommodate the high levels of traffic created by diverted vehicles, major changes to streets, modifications to intersection configurations and traffic signal modifications will be required. Such changes to address solely the impacts of the tolling on the South Bridge will interfere with and supersede other priority transportation projects needed in Lemoyne and on the West Shore at a time when even current projects are hampered by limited transportation funding; and

WHEREAS, traffic avoiding tolls on the South Bridge will travel on already congested roadways, will impair first responders and emergency service access, create transportation delays to hospitals and impede with lifesaving assistance to persons in need, impair efforts to protect public health, safety and welfare; and

WHEREAS, low- to moderate-income populations on both sides of the Susquehanna River who use the South Bridge to travel to and from work and to shop in Cumberland and Dauphin Counties will disparately be impacted by the tolls. The tolls, which are a form of regressive tax having no relationship to a person's ability to pay, will result in increased transportation costs to at-risk populations, forcing these populations to avoid the use of the South Bridge or, even more detrimentally, to leave the area in search of more affordable communities in which to live and work; and

WHEREAS, the proposed design for the South Bridge includes a new off-ramp that connects directly to South Third Street in Lemoyne near Herman Avenue and will bisect an existing mixed-use community consisting of existing residential and commercial properties. South Third Street has limited width and capacity to handle the new traffic volume, which will negatively impact access to and the use of the Borough's parks and recreational amenities near the proposed ramp, as well as affect pedestrian and bicycle safety in that area where many children live and walk to school and the park; and

WHEREAS, bridge tolling is only one of 18 options considered by a report released by Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf on July 30, 2021, to address Pennsylvania's transportation funding deficit. In addition, the Biden Administration is actively developing a federal infrastructure package that could have major, long-term impacts on transportation funding. Penn DOT should work with the state legislature to develop a comprehensive statewide funding solution addressing the region's transportation needs in a sustainable manner, not attempt to impose a myopic method of funding that will have devastating effects on local communities and businesses in the region.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Borough Council of the Borough of Lemoyne, for the reasons noted above, is opposed to the tolling of the I-83 bridge (a.k.a. the South Bridge) as part of the I-83 South Bridge Project.

ADOPTED this 20th day of January 2022.

ATTEST: _____
Secretary

BY: _____
Council President

[BOROUGH SEAL]