



Pennsylvania Conference of Teamsters

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LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

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LEGISLATION TO BRING BACK TURNPIKE WORKERS

**PA Senator Marty Flynn will be introducing legislation to
reinstate limited turnpike workers**

**PA House Bill 2080, that has already been introduced, contains the same language “to
reinstate turnpike workers” that will be in Sen. Marty Flynn’s bill. The PA Conference will
notify all affiliates when bill numbers are assigned to Sen. Marty Flynn’s PA Senate Bills.**

**Continue calling or writing your PA House members and tell them to support PA House
Bill 2080.**

**Once the senate bills are introduced and assigned numbers, the Conference would ask
that our affiliates contact their PA Senators to support those bills.**

MEMORANDUM

Posted: November 18, 2021

From: [Senator Marty Flynn](#)

To: All Senate members

Subject: Turnpike Reform Package

In the near future, I will be introducing a package of bills in direct response to the disclosure that \$104 million in Pennsylvania Turnpike tolls went uncollected from June 2020 through May 2021. This number is unacceptable, and it demands a targeted approach to increase enforcement and penalties for those that consistently evade paying applicable tolls.

The attempt to streamline and modernize the collection of tolls through the shift to All-Electronic Tolling was made with good intentions; however, the Turnpike Commission has failed to sufficiently adapt existing enforcement mechanisms – along with a lack of new tools – to address the issue of unpaid tolls. We need to stop the bleeding and find solutions. Please join me in sponsoring this legislation so that we may recoup some of these losses and reestablish public confidence in the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission.

Document #1

Description: Increasing Enforcement of Unpaid Turnpike Tolls

In January 2021, the Pennsylvania Turnpike implemented a 45% surcharge on Toll By Plate transactions to, in part, offset the amount of unpaid toll revenue. Rather than punishing those who pay their tolls by forcing them to pay higher fees and greater surcharges, this Senate companion legislation to House Bill 1922 will increase the penalties and lengthen the enforcement windows for those who fail to pay their tolls, putting the onus back on the offenders.

Currently, toll violators are subject to a suspension of their vehicle's registration if they have at least six unpaid tolls or total unpaid dues of at least \$500, with a three-year statute of limitations. An enforced suspension is indefinite and continues until outstanding tolls are fully paid.

This legislation will lower the threshold needed to trigger a registration suspension from six unpaid tolls to four, or from \$500 in total unpaid dues to \$250. It will also raise the statute of limitations from three to five years, so Turnpike officials have a longer window to pursue offenders.

Document #2

Description: Toll Collection Reporting to the General Assembly

This legislation will require the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to submit an annual report to the General Assembly that outlines revenue from collected tolls as well as missed revenue from uncollected tolls during the prior fiscal year.

The revelation that \$104 million in Turnpike tolls went uncollected from June 2020 through May 2021 was only discovered after the Associated Press filed a request under the Right-to-Know Law to obtain an internal report from the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission. This amount of lost revenue is significant in any context, but especially when considered in light of regular increases in tolls for those that pay them.

The Legislature has an obligation to conduct oversight, and I believe that there is a clear need reflected in the amount of toll revenue that went uncollected – whether lost, outstanding, or otherwise. This annual report would be similar to what the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission already develops internally, and it would be shared with the majority and minority chairs of both the House and Senate Transportation Committees. This legislation will both increase transparency and ensure accountability of this vital system.

Document #3

Description: Reinstating Staffing at Turnpike Interchanges

This legislation would require the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to reinstate a limited number of staffed lanes to allow for in-person payment of tolls – including via cash.

In 2020, the Turnpike Commission converted to All-Electronic Tolling (AET) to safeguard their operations and ensure customer and employee safety during COVID; however, the Commission's bad debt expense (i.e., unpaid tolls) surged from \$88.8 million in FY 2019-20 to \$104.9 million in FY 2020-21. The increase in unpaid tolls correlating to the transition to AET necessitates a recalibration in approach in lieu of an immediate, permanent switch to this system.

Thus, my legislation will establish a minimum staffing requirement for toll collectors at each interchange based on traffic volume data maintained by the Turnpike Commission. This methodology will help to restore payment options to Pennsylvania motorists, reestablish good-paying jobs to communities, and increase revenues from tolls.