To toll or not to toll

Variouspublic facilitieshave important uses aside from revenue generation of the government. Like the tollgates, these facilities serve for the conduct of checkpoints, safety for the commuting public and substantially generate government revenues. On the contrary, tollgates are also criticized as the bottlenecks of traffic as vehicles lined up at the maximum or minimum performance of the tollkeepers. In the State of Connecticut, the Federal state and local governments plans reinstalling tolls on its highways. Several perceptions insinuate that causes ofroad accidentswere due the absence of tollgates.

It could be for the reasons that tollgates would slow down the speed of approaching vehicles as tollkeepers manning the traffic congestion from entry and exit lanes. This position paper will discuss and examine several points of considerations relating the reinstallation of tollgates in the State of Connecticut. Discussions It has been earlier reported in the 1980s that the removal of toll booths in the State of Connecticut have subsequently attributed to several road accidents that accounted about seven people who crashed and died at the Stratford tolls.

In brief, Connecticut had more than 100 private turnpikes which were built from the period 1790 to 1850. The popularization of automobiles in the mid-20th century resulted to renew toll-backed financing tofinancehighways. In the 1990s to early 2000, technologyplays a vital aspect in toll innovations through the introduction of electronic toll collection machines. Based on the May 10th 2009 news item ‘ Toll proposals to be discussed at Thursday hearing’ by Martin B.

Cassidy from the electronic publication of The Advocate, the Chairman of the Transportation Strategy Board Kevin Kelleher stated that “ all the tolling concepts would use an EZ-Pass system”, referring to the system that would collect or tabulate fees from cars traveling at a speed of 55 miles per hour and up (1). Corey Sipe (2006) in his article at Associated Content electronic publishing has discussed the analysis of James J. Fazzalaro of the office of Legislative research which cited that one-way gateway toll fees at $1. 00 could generate $58 million in revenues (1).

Meanwhile, the web site of BethelRepublicans. Org (2009) has published ‘ Opposed to Tolls on I-84 in Danbury’, implying that toll should not only be implemented to generate revenues but also to promote efficiency. Further, it reported that Connecticut Republican Senator Michael McLachlan pointed out on the issue of traffic congestion during a forum held at Western Connecticut State University on March 26th 2009. As cited from the article of BethelRepublicans. Org (2009), it quoted Senator McLachlan who said that “ drivers are trying to avoid the I-84 tolls by rerouting in community areas” .

In which case, rerouting in the residential community areas congest the traffic of small roads in Danbury and residents could be prone to accidents. It may be acknowledged that Senator McLachlan has raised a considerable point not only on the issue of traffic situation but as well the public safety, in which could pave the way in the implementation of the tolling system. Despite the concern of Senator McLachlan, it was also pointed out that travel time, gas consumption and toll fees could be an added expense to reconsider .

Indeed, many motorists tend to shorten their travel time and avoid the additional expenses for gas and toll fees. Moreover as previously covered in the article of Martin B. Cassidy (2009), the implementation of congestion pricing addresses the issue of efficiency. According to Cassidy (2009), the South Western Regional Planning Agency Executive Director Floyd Lapp commented that the state should use congestion pricing (1). It can be explained that " congestion pricing" is the process of charging distinctly separate toll rates on " peak or off-peak" travel time schedules.

Also, the toll rates can be implemented in two ways, namely " static pricing" is attained in periodic intervals on a monthly or quarterly basis with published toll rates adjustments, while " dynamic pricing" can be implemented by using " electronic traffic sensor system" to monitor the volume of traffic and automatically adjust the toll rates. Early this year, the Associated Press in its electronic news has published ' Report Pending on Highway Tolls in Connecticut' with reference to the $1 Million research contract which was engaged by Connecticut Transportation Strategy Board (CTSB) with Cambridge Systematics, Inc.(CSI).

The Associated Press has implied the result of the research-study could be the turning point to realize the seemingly idyllic yet pending developments on the tolling project implementation. However, the Associated Press quoted that " it is still doubtful whether the CTSB would be supportive of CSI's findings and propositions" . On the following month after the comments of Associated Press, the year 2009 report of the Cambridge Systematics, Inc. (CSI) was then submitted to Connecticut Transportation Strategy Board (CTSB).

The report which entitled: ‘ Connecticut Electronic Tolling and Congestion Pricing Study’ was an independent technical study that formulated the strategic and feasible options in the implementation of the toll project. To generally describe the report, it contained variable conceptual framework on how the toll project can be effectively implemented and efficiently perform for public good, together with financial indicators that indicates the cost benefits of the state.