

March 18, 2026

The Hon. David Milz, Chair  
House Public Works & Highways Committee  
Granite Place, Room 228  
1 Granite Place  
Concord, NH 03301

**RE: SB627, relative to toll rate adjustments**

Dear Chairman Milz & Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) to convey the support of the Commissioners from our member communities for SB627, which would authorize an increase in tolls for cash toll payers and Non-New Hampshire EZ-Pass accounts with a goal of generating new revenue to implement key project needs on the Turnpike System. New Hampshire E-Z Pass holders would not be impacted by this measure.

Most immediately SB627 would generate revenue needed to restore three large turnpike projects to the NHDOT 2027-2036 Ten Year Plan. These include Bow-Concord 13742 funding improvements on the I93 segment of the Central NH Turnpike; and Manchester 16099A and Manchester 16099B which fund improvements to Exits 6 and 7 on I293. These projects were removed from the draft Ten Year Plan released in August 2025 as part of a much broader removal of over 40 projects from the Plan due to a revenue shortfall of over \$400 million.

The Rockingham Planning Commission has long been on record recommending that the Legislature, GACIT and the Governor identify approaches to increase revenue to keep up with growing needs and growing costs on New Hampshire's transportation system. It has been 17 years since tolls were last raised at the Hampton toll plaza on I95, and 19 years since there was a system-wide toll increase on our turnpike system. New Hampshire currently has the lowest toll rates on a per mile basis among the 38 states that charge road tolls, and even with this increase New Hampshire's rates would rank 27<sup>th</sup>. Rising construction costs have dramatically cut into the buying power of the toll revenue the Turnpike Bureau has available to maintain and upgrade the turnpike system.

It is time to come to terms with the idea that if New Hampshire wants a safe, reliable, high quality transportation system we need to be willing to invest in it to a greater degree than we do currently. It is also important to distinguish that tolls are not taxes, but instead they are user fees paid by people who choose for their own convenience to drive on and benefit from New Hampshire's turnpike system.

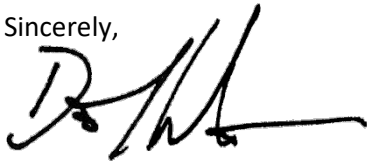
When this bill was discussed at our RPC Commission meeting on March 11<sup>th</sup> the vote to submit a letter to legislators supporting SB627 was nearly unanimous, with only the Commissioner from Seabrook voting in opposition. The Seabrook Commissioner noted he had heard concern in town that a rate increase at the Hampton tolls would cause traffic diversion where drivers would get off I95 at Exit 1 to avoid the Hampton

tolls. A similar point was made by Seabrook representatives at the GACIT meeting in Hampton last fall, and (then) NHDOT Commissioner Bill Cass noted that NHDOT's data show some level of traffic diversion when the Hampton toll plaza backs up at peak weekend times, but very little diversion otherwise. He said that NHDOT did not anticipate a significant level of diversion due to a toll rate increase. RPC staff have analyzed toll avoidance behavior using TomTom data and found minimal evidence of drivers diverting at Exit 1 and taking US1 or other routes to avoid the Hampton tolls and then getting back on I95 further north. By greatly reducing backups at toll plazas, New Hampshire's investment in E-Z Pass has reduced this sort of diversion onto surface roads over the past decade and a half.

We appreciate your consideration of the information above as you debate SB627, and thank you for the time and energy you devote to serving New Hampshire.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 603-778-0885 or [dwalker@therpc.org](mailto:dwalker@therpc.org)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Walker', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Walker  
RPC Executive Director

cc: Janet Stevens, Executive Councilor, District 3  
David Rodrigue, Commissioner, NHDOT  
Tobey Reynolds, Director of Project Development, NHDOT  
RPC TAC and Policy Committees