



Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, Inc.

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May 5, 2014

Via Email

The Honorable Wayne Schmidt
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Michigan House of Representatives
124 North Capitol Avenue
PO Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Chairman Schmidt:

The purpose of this letter is to convey the opposition of the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) to House Bill 4925 (HB 4925).

Headquartered in Missouri, the OOIDA is the largest trade association representing the views and concerns of professional truckers throughout the United States. The OOIDA has approximately 150,000 members nationwide, including more than 5,000 in Michigan.

It is my understanding that HB 4925, in part, provides significant new authority to the State of Michigan to enter into agreements with private entities that relates to the construction, operation, and financing of public transportation facilities, such as roads and bridges. Unfortunately, in the experience of truckers, these types of agreements mean one thing: tolls.

The OOIDA supports investing in our nation's infrastructure. However, tolls are financially crippling to small business truckers. Look no further than the Chicago Skyway, which charges trucks as much as \$29.40¹ to travel less than 8 miles, and the Indiana Toll Road, which charges trucks as much as \$84.33² to travel a 157 mile span of I-80/90. It is also important to note that tolls (otherwise known as taxes) are not a substitute to the federal, state, fuel, vehicle registration, excise, and other taxes that truckers pay. If more revenue is needed, increasing the fuel tax is the most equitable and efficient option, so long as the generated revenue is used for its intended purpose.

While the OOIDA appreciates that HB 4925 prohibits public-private agreements from tolling existing public transportation facilities, it does not alleviate our concerns. In addition,

¹ <http://www.chicagoskyway.org/tolls/>

² <http://www.ezpassin.com/vehicle-rates-by-class/>

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prospective agreements on new infrastructure will be inherently flawed because there is little or no transparency. HB 4925 does not provide an avenue for community participation or public input, and more importantly, it does not require the government or private entity to take into consideration the views of the citizens that will be impacted by a proposed project. Rather, the bill cedes a tremendous amount of decision-making authority to unelected employees of the State.

On behalf of small business truckers, I appreciate your consideration of our views. Please contact me directly at (816) 229-5791 ext. 1603 or mike_matousek@ooida.com if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

/s/

Mike Matousek
Director of State Legislative Affairs

Cc: Members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure