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COMMITTEE MEETING

before

ASSEMBLY TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

"Proposed changes in the toll structure of the  
Garden State Parkway"

February 20, 1989  
Theater Auditorium  
Atlantic Community College  
Mays Landing, New Jersey

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Assemblyman Newton E. Miller, Chairman  
Assemblyman D. Bennett Mazur

ALSO PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Dolores G. Cooper  
District 2

Laurence A. Gurman  
Office of Legislative Services  
Aide, Assembly Transportation and  
Communications Committee

New Jersey State Library

\* \* \* \* \*

Committee Meeting Recorded and Transcribed by  
Office of Legislative Services  
Public Information Office  
Hearing Unit  
State House Annex  
CN 068  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

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**C O M M I T T E E M E E T I N G**

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MEMORANDUM

February 10, 1989

TO: MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY TRANSPORTATION AND  
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

FROM: ASSEMBLYMAN NEWTON E. MILLER, CHAIRMAN

SUBJECT: COMMITTEE MEETING - MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1989

(Address comments and questions to Laurence A. Gurman, Committee Aide, at  
609-984-7381.)

The Assembly Transportation and Communications Committee will meet at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, February 20, 1989 in the Theater Auditorium, Atlantic Community College, Route 322-Black Horse Pike, Mays Landing, New Jersey. The purpose of the meeting is to hear from interested parties who wish to speak about proposed changes in the toll structure of the Garden State Parkway.



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**ASSEMBLYMAN NEWTON E. MILLER (Chairman):** We were waiting for-- Here he comes now. Assemblyman Mazur we were just about to announce you. Ben, why don't you just grab a chair here?

Good morning.

I would like to call this meeting of the Assembly Transportation and Communications Committee to order. I am Assemblyman Newt Miller from Passaic County representing the 34th Legislative District, and I Chair this Transportation and Communications Committee. With us this morning is Assemblywoman Dolores Cooper of Atlantic City and the Second Legislative District. I think everybody in Atlantic City knows Dolores Cooper. And on my right is Assemblyman Ben Mazur; Bennett Mazur of the 37th Legislative District. Ben--

This morning the Committee will discuss the merits of the New Jersey Highway Authority's proposal for increasing revenue, including the proposed increase in tolls along the Garden State Parkway, and the need for additional toll plazas in South Jersey.

It is well known by now that the New Jersey Highway Authority is proposing a 10 cent increase in tolls on the Garden State Parkway, effective April 19 of this year. In addition, bus fares will increase 100% from \$1.00 to \$2.00. The Highway Authority states that the increase in tolls is needed to cover roadway improvements totaling \$256 million. It also states that without the proposed 10 cent hike, the Authority will be in the red in 1990. The commissioners anticipate voting on the toll increase proposal at their next meeting, on March 2. The debate surrounding the toll hike is not a new issue. Discussions have taken place in many forums throughout the State. However, what is often neglected is the effect of the toll increase on traffic, safety, and the environment.

In the fall of 1988, the General Assembly commissioned an independent analysis of traffic and accident levels at Garden State Parkway toll barriers. This study, which was forwarded to the Transportation and Communications Committee for evaluation, indicated the use of toll barriers as a method of revenue raising, will result in an increased incidence of accidents, greater discharges of automobile emissions, and increased traffic congestion. The Rutgers University study concluded that accidents in general, and specifically injury accidents and property damage, occur at a significantly higher rate in the vicinity of toll booths.

In addition, the study specifically examined the effect of the toll increase on vacation shore traffic by looking at traffic patterns at the four southernmost toll barriers: that is Barnegat, New Gretna, Great Egg Harbor, and Cape May. It concluded that during extreme congestion, toll booths could add up to 29 minutes per trip. Even during off peak periods, the toll booths add approximately five minutes to the travel time. Vehicles using the toll road have a higher fuel consumption and emit additional pollutants because of the constant deceleration, stopping, and acceleration at the toll barriers. According to the Rutgers study, there will be a substantial increase in the emissions of hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide.

In addition to the study, the General Assembly, on February 6, 1989, adopted a resolution opposing the toll increase at this time, until an examination of alternatives can be completed. These alternatives should address the serious safety and environmental concerns that will result from the toll increase.

There are several worthwhile alternatives that must be studied before a verdict on the toll hike is rendered. Among these, is a proposal to eliminate tolls completely on the Parkway, and no doubt would it provide for tolls just at the points of entry and exit from the highway.

In addition, serious consideration must be given to developing an effective marketing strategy for the use of tokens, in order to speed the flow of traffic. This marketing strategy can only be developed over a period of time so that the various traffic impacts of a toll increase may be studied.

At this time, I would like to introduce to you, the Speaker of the Assembly, Mr. Chuck Hardwick, who has a few comments. Mr. Speaker, would you care to at this time-- Thank you.

**S P E A K E R   C H U C K   H A R D W I C K:** Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee.

I think your opening statement is well prepared and balanced, regarding the concerns that I have. It seems to me that there are several issues that are before this Committee and before the people of the State.

One of the issues is whether or not a toll increase is needed. And the second issue is, if it is to be implemented, when and how should it be done?

I am very disturbed that at the rate the Highway Authority is proceeding, without developing adequate marketing plans to increase the use of tokens or looking at alternative means of collecting tolls, that we are headed for a condition of massive traffic tie-ups -- of traffic jams that could just literally strangle the economy, especially in this part of the State.

To many people in the State, the Garden State Parkway is a convenience. To the people in this part of South Jersey, it is the lifeblood for their economy, because if it is strangled because of tie-ups and traffic jams, and a reduction in tourism, and a reduction in traffic, well, it's not the people are out of luck; they're out of business. And so, the reason that I think your Committee hearing is so important and the reason I've written Mr. Tremayne and written Governor Kean, is that I don't think that a toll hike should go into effect at

this time at all. I believe that what the Garden State Parkway people should do is come before you, come before the Governor and others and say, "Here's our way of guaranteeing that we're not creating the biggest traffic jam that New Jerseyans have ever had." And to implement it as scheduled on April 19th, and into May, and into June, is going to cause havoc. It's going to disrupt the daily lives of people in our State. It's going to hurt the economy, and the shore can't really take it. The fragile economy at our shore as we prepare for another tourist season -- and it's been hard hit we know, because of the problems of the last two summers -- just can't take the kind of problems that I foresee.

The other point that you touched on that I think is very important: Earlier this year when I commissioned the study that you referred to, done at the Traffic Department at our State University of Rutgers, I have urged the Highway Authority to look at alternative means of collecting tolls or user fees as an addition to, or in place of, some of the toll barriers. In other states there are automated means; there are other systems that could be put in place that would reduce the tie-ups that occur, reduce the accident rates that occur throughout our State because of the toll barriers.

In fact, Mr. Chairman, I recall in one of the earlier meetings that we had with you, you made a suggestion that I think is an excellent one. And that is, that at certain toll barriers the toll be collected only in the northbound direction and then at the next toll barrier there be a toll in the southbound direction, presumably at twice the level to hold it -- to hold the revenues neutral; the same kind of system people use going in and out of New York now -- you only pay in one direction.

So I really urge the Highway Authority to do these things. Look at the alternatives. Look at the alternative means of collecting a user fee as they're proceeding to do that

because we know they need increased revenue, and unless the State budget is prepared to take over the cost of the Highway Authority-- At this point I don't see that money available this year in the budget; maybe in the future. But look at alternative means. Satisfy us that the toll barrier is the right way and the only way to go. I'm not convinced yet that it is, but satisfy us and don't implement a toll hike at this time. That 10 cent toll hike will cost us far more in revenue than it would generate. It would be a hidden cost: hidden cost in traffic delays, hidden cost in increased pollution and adverse effect on the environment, increased cost on the economy that would be very hard to measure. It's an untimely increase.

And so, I don't know what the concensus of your Committee will be, but as you hear testimony and as you go around the State, if you concur with that, then I would urge that this Assembly Transportation Committee take action to let the Governor and others know that the Governor should not approve that toll hike at this time.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. But a point--

You're in the position as Speaker of the Assembly to move these different bills that have different priorities, of course. But what do you see, Mr. Speaker, when it comes-- If the tolls are removed entirely, and the Authority I understand, it's \$285 million that they would have to find someplace to keep their nose above water. Where do you see that coming from, and knowing we have a budget crunch right now, what effect is that going to have upon the overall budgeting of the State?

SPEAKER HARDWICK: Well that's-- I'm not here this morning advocating that we have a way of paying to have all the tolls removed from the Parkway. That's not my position. Some

people have called for that, and I understand the opinion of motorists who would like that to be done. I don't see that right now, certainly in this year's budget, Mr. Chairman, that there's money to do that. But there are alternative and better ways of collecting a user fee, more efficient ways.

The Garden State Parkway is one of the best run roads in the country, and I think that there should be tremendous amount of credit given to the commissioners who serve without salary and the professional employees there. They run a good highway and my comments are not directed at them as a criticism at all. But my comments are directed, that as good as they are, they're about to make a mistake, I'm afraid, as they proceed on the course they've outlined, that would be very costly to us. I don't think in this year's budget that it's realistic to say that the State could take over the Garden State Parkway. That would have to be something that would be phased in over a period of time, that could be looked at by the next Governor -- the next legislative leaders.

As our budget is shaping up at this point, I just don't think it's realistic to raise a false hope that we could do that without incurring a tremendous tax increase some other way. I'm under the opinion that to an awful lot of people, they don't mind paying a fair cost for a good service, and they've had that on the Parkway. But they're about to pay more money for worse service, and I think that's what would cause a tremendous problem.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the fact you took the time to come down this morning. I know you're under the gun with several other--

SPEAKER HARDWICK: Well, I'm glad that you're here in South Jersey to have one of these hearings, too. Because it's so vital that this part of the State know that whether your district is up in Passaic, where yours is, or whether I'm the Speaker working out of Trenton, or Dolores here, or Mr. Mazur

from Bergen County, that we have a statewide perspective and that we care very much about the views of the people in this part of the State as well as the individual districts that you represent.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MAZUR: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask--

SPEAKER HARDWICK: Sure, yes--

ASSEMBLYMAN MAZUR: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your comments, I really do, and your ideas.

You know, the Garden State Parkway is not just a major artery of the south of the State. It also, certainly, goes through my county, and I'll tell you that the toll booths are put a lot closer together up my way than they are down here.

But your point about technology -- a new technology for collecting tolls -- is one that I've been chafing at the Port Authority to accomplish. I understand that the Delaware River Port Authority is presently using an electronic system where a decal is put on the inside of a window at a prescribed height, and then the passenger of that car is electronically recorded, and that information goes into a charge account. You buy the decal at the beginning of the season, if you're a regular commuter; buses, things like that, that go through regularly, and that account is electronically calculated. I think that would enormously increase the passenger traffic and smooth things out. I really agree with you very much on this.

SPEAKER HARDWICK: Mr. Mazur, that's exactly the kind of technology-- Before we would build new toll barriers here and at any other place, that's exactly the kind of technology that I'm talking about, in the meetings that I've had with them, urging them to look at, and to test, and to adopt. Because over a period of time, the large fleet users-- There are corporations with cars that number into the thousands and thousands of trips on the Garden State Parkway. The buses and others that are coming down, that's so much more efficient, and

more accurate, and just better all the way around. You're absolutely right. It's working elsewhere and it can work here. It saves time, it saves money, reduces congestion. You don't even have to stop at every barrier, if you had one when you enter and when you leave. If you have it programed right; if you had a scanner at major points of entry and major points of leaving, you could potentially eliminate some of the barriers in between. It can be done that way. We're entering the 21st century but we're collecting tolls by 18th century technology. A hand reaching out the many times to get them and making change-- That's the way the tolls were collected when we were a colonial state. It's time to get into the next century--

ASSEMBLYMAN MAZUR: --and out of the colonial period of stopping and taking the money from the wagon as it goes through.

SPEAKER HARDWICK: That's right. When a wagon was going through, it didn't hold things up much, but now it's holding things up. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER: Assemblywoman Cooper, do you have anything to ask the Speaker?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: Not really. He just said it all.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER: Okay, fine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

At this time, I would like to open the floor to discussion from the public. My comments should set the parameters, and the Speaker's comments should set the parameters for the meeting. Hopefully, they will engender your thoughts on the best way to meet the needs of the Highway Authority and at the same time those of the people of the southern Jersey region.

So we do have a couple names, Larry-- (referring to Committee Aide)

Al Meil. Al will you use that microphone over there, please? This, I might point out to you, is being recorded, will be typed up for report purposes. Thank you. Can you give your name and address, if you will?

**A L M E I L:** My name is Al Meil, I live at 60 North Windsor Avenue in Atlantic City. I am a former limousine driver, having driven the roads six days a week for about eight years. I'm pretty well up-to-date on what goes on.

First of all, the outmoded system of the toll booths slows traffic, especially on very busy days and in North Jersey, as the Assemblyman said, at a terrific pace. The amount of accidents caused by backups is really unbelievable. On the weekends in the summertime, they're laying alongside the road. Now, if you drive as much as we drove that route, you can see that the amount of pollution coming through the air conditioner in the summertime actually chokes you. The amount of cars backed up, people sweating-- It's really a situation that needs help, and needs it badly.

With an increase in tolls, two coins will have to be given out, slowing it down even more. I feel that something should be done and should be done quickly about setting up a system, as the Assemblyman said, either with the markers or toll collecting off the road at the exits and the entrances, the same as the New Jersey Turnpike. Thank you.

**ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER:** Thank you.

This is John Percy, please. John is the Mayor of the Township of Hamilton.

**M A Y O R J O H N P E R C Y:** That's correct, sir.

**ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER:** Welcome, Mayor.

**MAYOR PERCY:** How are you?

We are not a municipality that borders on the Garden State Parkway, such as Egg Harbor Township, or Galloway Township. They have to provide a lot of ancillary services,

such as police, fire, and rescue. They should probably be speaking more of these issues than we are. The Speaker did come up with some good ideas.

This is probably the only major highway that is really archaic to the collection of tolls. If you travel through any of the other states, they do not put up the tariff stations, as was well recorded here, and colonial tax tariffing.

One of the major interests I have of being here, is to relate to our representation -- when I say our, I'm talking on a countywide basis, not only for Atlantic County, but for Cape May County -- that there's not much input to the activities of the Garden State Parkway when it comes to raising tolls or putting toll barriers up, or improvements in the system itself. And I sincerely think that Atlantic County and Cape May County, both should have an equal representation on the policy-making decisions and have board members to the Garden State Parkway -- whatever, New Jersey Highway Authority, or whatever the name is popularly termed. But we have to have representation from the southern part of the State to, perhaps, circumvent some of the problems that are inherent with the northern part of the State. Now I have, myself, sat at the Union toll plaza at five o'clock at night and waited an astronomical number of minutes to get through the barrier. When you get through the toll barrier, you then face the other part of the problem, which is getting back in line to go into the three or four lanes that are still going north.

So, I guess that's my main interest in being here; to ask for representation for the southern part of the State of New Jersey. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER: Thank you.

I might point out to you that a bill was presented just recently that would have a representative from each county through which the Parkway passes, on the Authority. How practical it is, how much chance it stands of becoming law remains to be seen, but the thinking is in your direction.

Does anybody else care to speak? I can't see with this light in my eyes whether your hands are up or not, but if there's anybody out there, come on down. (no response) Evidently not.

Well, suppose I have-- I know we would each like to say something about this overall situation, so suppose we start with Assemblywoman Cooper. This is her area and she represents it well. Dolores.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: Thank you. Thank you, Assemblyman Miller.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. As was said, my name is Assemblywoman Dolores Cooper and I represent the Second District, which translates as representing 200,000 constituents. One of the major responsibilities as a legislator, is obviously, representing the voters and taxpayers, and that is why I'm here this morning.

There has been much controversy, and of course, most of you know this is the fourth hearing on the discussion of the proposed toll increase on the Garden State Parkway. Without any hesitation, it seems that my constituents, both in Atlantic County and many in Cape May County, are vehemently opposed to this increase. There are many reasons for this opposition ranging from senior citizens who are on a fixed income, from casino workers who utilize many of the Parkway exits, from people who travel the Parkway five, six, seven days a week, from patients going to the hospitals on which the exits are located, college students going back and forth to school and to their jobs. And the list goes on. It's endless; to oppose this increase. I'm showing you right here petitions, letters, probably numbering over a thousand, that have come to my office within the past year, all protesting the increase and the possibility of more toll booths being constructed, which we all agree this morning, is totally obsolete.

If one reminisces for just a moment back the early '70s, take a look at history. We all remember Watergate. Most recently, with the problems in the Middle East, we remember "Irangate," and our being here this morning is totally "Tollgate." Yes, "Tollgate," because of the secret meetings, the secret discussions and decisions being made behind closed doors of the past. And then immediately after the last election in 1987, no indication was made before that election about a possible toll increase, no public hearings to discuss the so-called financial problems of the Parkway. But the election's over and the next thing we know, we hear "increase" in tolls.

Well, I could be sitting here and have all kinds of gorgeous charts, with lots of arrows going up and down, and fancy numbers and precise percentages, and exquisite terminology, but all that doesn't truly represent the people, and most people don't understand all that anyway. What I have here, this morning, is what people have sent me, as I said, as the Assemblywoman: hundreds, hundreds, hundreds, complaining and protesting. I can't blame them, because I remember when the Parkway was built and the promise was, I believe, within 20 years it would be self-supporting, that -- finances would take care of the future -- and it would be a toll-free artery. And then came the casinos and the revenue has just poured in.

So I think the time has come for a change. But what bothers me most of all -- and of course, my bill is before the Assembly -- the fact that the Parkway Authority, in the past, has not had one representation from the south. As I said last week, the south shall rise again. There are 10 counties out of 21 and there should be 10 representatives from each county -- each one has a flavor that is unique -- a representative from the DOT, an appointment by the Speaker of the Assembly, an appointment by the Senate President. In this way, we will have

honesty and integrity in the hearings, because each county will then have a voice when we have this bill restructuring the Authority.

I'd like to read one letter, if I may, because this letter, I think, typifies the over a thousand signatures that I see here -- that you see here. It came from Marmora, which is on the border of Atlantic/Cape May County, from Ernest and Hattie Scheider. And they write "This is the first time we are writing to our elected public official and we are very, very angry. My husband and I are commuters on the Garden State Parkway from Beesley's Point, Upper Township, to Atlantic City every day. Sometimes my business requires me to make several trips during one day. Understanding the cost of maintenance, we did not mind so much the 25 cent toll each time, even though the State of California provides freeways for its commuters and travelers. How the Parkway commissioners in their ivory towers propose to increase the cost of each toll, I don't know -- we don't know. This is an outrage to the commuting citizens that are forced to pay a high toll just to get to work."

This was, more or less, representative of most of the letters and petitions that you see.

So I know we're going to have to face-- I also have been concerned, and I wrote a letter to Governor Kean on November 1, which I haven't gotten a reply. As a legislator I'd like to see the operating costs, the reasons why, the alternative, but most important of all, as we go into the 21st century, I think our Parkway should be in constancy with the technology that we are noted for, and that should be applied to us. I certainly hope that this fourth hearing, combined with the other hearings, certainly present the fact that we must face this issue fairly, squarely, and honestly, and let the citizens and taxpayers know if there is an increase, why, its justification and how we're going to present it, and a way to prevent the pollution that Mr. Meil spoke of, and the accidents that we're aware of.

In closing, I'd just like to show you all our local paper, how it has a weekly sounding board. Just about all of the responses were negative. All public forums, all editorial attempts to generate response have been negative. The residents of New Jersey have been tolled to death, and I hope that this hearing today concludes, and we will find the solution to "Tollgate." Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER: Thank you, Dolores. Mr. Mazur-- Assemblyman?

ASSEMBLYMAN MAZUR: I've been listening with great interest to testimony here and I certainly am in sympathy with the people of South Jersey who are faced with this "two coin" or additional increase in the tolls which certainly will, as the last witness testified, further delay the flow of traffic.

I have legislation in. I have two bills -- A-712 and A-713 -- before the Independent Authorities Committee. I've had them there for some time -- to abolish the authorities, particularly after all of the abuses that took place, and to continue collecting the tolls.

In the place of the authorities, we would have agencies within the Department of Transportation, probably each headed by a Deputy Commissioner. They would go on collecting tolls until the outstanding debt of some \$400 million is paid off, and then these monies could go to the operation of the highways and into the Transportation Trust Fund. I think we really have to start thinking seriously of how to provide more mass transit in this area. I realize that the railway from Philadelphia to Atlantic City is nearing completion, and that's a wonderful first step, although we have to do more on a north/south basis, since there's no direct rail communication up, as there is in the North Jersey shore into New York City.

So, these are some of the things we're going to have to address. Certainly we realize we're in difficult budgetary times now, with the shortfall of revenues. However, thinking

into the future, it's not always going to be a shortfall. There are going to be some surpluses again. How can we get people, if possible, off the roads, off the highways, and into trains? I'm sure a lot of people would like to be able to get on a train in North Jersey or Hudson County or New York City, and take a train to Atlantic City. That would be a very nice and delightful ride, and lot better than bucking the traffic. Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER: Thank you, Ben.

I might point out that Speaker Hardwick and I have an Assembly Resolution, No. 144, which has passed the Assembly. What it amounts to, is the resolution is opposing a planned increase in the Garden State Parkway proposed by the Authority, and asking the Governor to veto any increase until such time that this whole thing has been reviewed.

Also I might mention that the Atlantic County Executive, Richard Squires, has asked me to see to it that his statement is entered into the record today, as he was unable to attend. I'll see to it you have a copy of this.

There are several things that come to mind with this particular problem. Number one, of course, it would be great: no more tolls, just ride the Parkway, come and go as you see fit. That is beautiful. But when you say that, you have to recognize that the \$285 million in proposed improvements on the Parkway that are set up right now-- The money would not be there for that, and the most they would have would be \$2 million if they did away with the increase. They would not be able to meet what they're trying to accomplish.

If they do away with the tolls, the money has to come from someplace in order to offset the loss in revenue. I'm a great believer, myself, in user fees. So what happens, 22% of the traffic on the Parkway is thru traffic -- people who do not live in this State but use the highway to get from one end of the State to the other. So that's 22% of the people would have

a free ride. If they put a three cent gas tax on for this purpose, those people are not paying for it. That is for the Parkway maintenance and upkeep, and there will be many people in this State that would be paying the three cent tax on gasoline that never use the Parkway.

And, of course once it's open as a free road, you will increase the traffic. It becomes a freeway, and then you have your exit problems. You'd have to increase the capacity of your exits and entrances. All that takes more money, which, of course, means more taxes. I don't know whether the people in this State are interested in paying three cents or five cents more a gallon of gasoline for this purpose. They may be, but the last two-and-a-half cents we put in for a dedicated tax -- dedicated gasoline tax -- for roads and bridges so that we had a constant source of revenue for the Department of Transportation, passed our house and went to the Senate side, and they have done nothing with it. So that two-and-a-half cents you're paying right now is going to general revenue. That general revenue could be used for anything.

And so we talk about a three cent tax, or whatever, for the purpose of offsetting the loss of revenue from the Parkway, if they pull the same thing on that that they did with the two-and-a-half cents, rest assured it will be used in general revenue. All these other programs, everybody is so willing to spend money on, will have lost its original intent and purpose; namely to offset the Parkway's loss in revenue. Also you have to remember if that happens, that the State has to pick up a \$26 million bond issue.

The cost factors, as such, of the Parkway, that's the one issue, and to try to find where to offset this, becomes the other issue. As we know, in this State we are hurting right now for revenue, and I just don't think-- I don't think that the Legislature, as such, or the Governor, for that matter, is going to be willing to do what has to be done to offset that loss. It's a "Catch 22" type situation.

Now, I personally think that what the Parkway should be doing is, if they wish to raise revenue, to dedicate some of that revenue for mass transit. I see no reason why, five years down the road or so, we should not have monorails. Why don't we have some other means so we can get those cars off the road?

But when you say that, that cuts down on the revenue that the Parkway would be receiving because of taking cars off the road. So then again, it's a "Catch 22". But, I think, the planning has to be further out: We can't be looking at it for today. We can't be looking at it to put more macadam down.

Lord knows, the property is so expensive to buy, that the tolls are just going to go right on increasing if we keep going the way we are. There has to be an offset here someplace so you reach a certain point where for every car that goes on the road, there's one that comes off, because it's just as convenient, cheap, and easy, to take public transportation. Until you get to the point where public transportation is back to where it was back in, let's say, the '40s or the '30s, where there's a bus on the corner every six or seven minutes, and you get on that bus and get to where you wanted to go with transfers, and you didn't have to wait one hour, two hours, for the next bus to come along-- These are the kinds of things that I think that we should be working on, the Authority should be working on in their particular area.

It's very, very difficult to change the approach that these different organizations or authorities have in their way of life, but I think it can be done, and it should be done.

I want to say thanks to everybody for coming out, to those who are here. This is the first of a series of hearings. We'll probably have at least three. We'll run one up in the northern end of the State and then we'll have one in Trenton at a regular -- special meeting for this at the State House and put all the pieces together, and come up with a recommendation. That recommendation then goes to the Governor in the form of a bill or resolution.

You said something?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER: Dolores.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: Yes, before we close this session today, I'd like to point out why we need representation. Another reason why are the 10 counties--

Two weeks ago an article appeared in our local press. I'd like to pay tribute to the press coverage of this whole issue. A local official found -- it was reported to her-- They found eight toll booths stored, hidden away. And if eight toll booths are hidden away someplace in Atlantic County, contrary to all the resolutions that are coming from each municipality, including Galloway Township, then something is afoot that we don't know about as legislators. In other words, how did the toll booths get here? What's going to be their eventual disposition? Are we going to remain with the antiquated system that we spoke about?

So it's more important than ever that we be made aware of what is really going on, and ask for more accountability from those who serve on the Authority. I present this to you, sir, because I don't think you saw this.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER: Thank you, Dolores.

I might also enter into the record the letter from the Greater Mainland Chamber of Commerce. This letter was sent to the Governor back on February 6 of this year, and it's signed by John Fitzpatrick, Chairman of the Transportation Committee and Robert Swartz, President. We'll enter that into the record of this meeting also.

Is there anyone else here who would care to-- Ben?

ASSEMBLYMAN MAZUR: Mr. Chairman, since we're putting something into the record, I'd like to apprise the members of the Committee and the public present that Connecticut, when they abolished their tolls, thought that they would be able to replace them with Federal aid, aid from UMPTA. I read recently

in a newspaper article where the Governor of Connecticut was critically lamented. The fact that the monies they thought would be forthcoming from the Federal government, were not, and they were having to spend a good deal more money on the highway than they expected. Plus they no longer had the revenues from the tolls, and the Federal government just said, "Huh." That is an interstate highway, that is I-95, for which the government has a basic responsibility. The Garden State Parkway is not in that category grouping. It does not have commercial traffic. Trucks are not allowed on it either. It's a limited use highway. That's something we want to keep in mind.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER: You bring up a point too, Ben, that if you're going to tax -- say gasoline tax -- and that tax is going to be used for the Parkway, that means that truckers and trucks will be allowed to use it, because they're paying the freight for it, and they should be allowed to, so that presents another-- It's not like the Turnpike--

ASSEMBLYMAN MAZUR: Constitutional?

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER: Constitutional, that's right.

Now again, the people say do away with the tolls and do it as the Turnpike does it. You may be able to do that in South Jersey, but you get to the northern part of the State, where your exit roads and your entrance roads are just one lane wide and you come right up on the street of the town you're in, the property is not there to do that kind of entrance and exit toll booth arrangement as they have on the Turnpike. The Garden State was not put in for that purpose. It was more of a local access road while the Turnpike is not that way.

And the other thing you just mentioned, this is an editorial on the record. Just recently, where they state that there's one other important difference-- As part of the Federal interstate system, the Connecticut Turnpike has qualified for large Federal subsidies to make up for some of

the lost toll revenues. Eliminate tolls from the Garden State Parkway Federal officials say, and the Parkway will be considered just another primary road with no Federal funding to offset that, so we would have to make up the entire difference. Even Connecticut is having some second thoughts about the toll booths they took down, and the article -- maybe it was the same one -- said something about there's a move afoot to restore and put back some of them -- I don't know about all, but some of them.

Now is there anyone else who would care to be heard? If not, I want to thank you for coming out, and thank both -- Ben especially, for coming down -- but thank both of us for coming down this morning--

ASSEMBLYMAN MAZUR: I went to the casino, and I made enough money to pay for my hotel bill.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER: Oh, listen to that, would you? It's worthwhile coming to Atlantic City, Ben tells me-- (laughter)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: How much did he make?

ASSEMBLYMAN MAZUR: It's always a pleasure.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER: --to pay the hotel bill.

All right, and Dolores, thank you too. I appreciate it. Thank you.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)

**APPENDIX**





RICHARD E. SQUIRES  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

# Atlantic County

1333 ATLANTIC AVENUE  
ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. 08401  
(609) 345-3700  
FAX 343-2802

February 17, 1989

Beth Schermerhorn  
Assembly Majority Office  
State House Annex  
CN 098  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Beth:

Regarding my testifying Monday, February 20, 1989 at Atlantic Community College on the Parkway toll increase; I will not be making testimony because I gave prior testimony on January 12, 1989. However, I would like my statement of January 11, 1989 entered into the records Monday night.

Thank you.

Regards,

Richard E. Squires  
County Executive

RES:sc





# Atlantic County

RICHARD E. SQUIRES  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

1333 ATLANTIC AVENUE  
ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. 08401  
(609) 346-8700

Comments by  
Richard E. Squires  
Atlantic County Executive

Parkway Tolls  
January 11, 1989

Thank you. Once again, I'm pleased to welcome you to Atlantic County, and appreciative of your efforts to weigh the concerns of the people of this area in your considerations. I know the past year has been a turbulent time for the New Jersey Highway Authority and I thank you for your efforts in recent months to listen to our views.

My concern tonight focuses on the proposal to build a barrier toll plaza in Atlantic County. As I stated at your last public hearing here in Atlantic County, on November 28th, I strongly oppose that plan. Despite the aggressive program of improvements outlined for the parkway in Atlantic County, I do not believe a barrier toll plaza can be justified, and I will cite four reasons why:

- First, as I outlined in November, Atlantic County motorists have been throwing quarters in the basket since the parkway opened nearly 35 years ago. Except for maintaining the roadway and certain safety upgrades, there have been no improvements to the parkway in Atlantic County throughout those three and a half decades. Millions and millions of dollars collected here have paid for construction and other improvements in North Jersey.
- Second, I maintain that if there are to be any new tolls in Atlantic County, they must be directly tied to improvements. If you create new access or exit ramps, build them with toll booths. Let those who benefit from the new service be the ones who pay for it.
- Third, is the fact that Atlantic County motorists - through their property taxes - are already committed to spending several million dollars on projects to improve parkway access and safety.

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You will remember that I initiated Atlantic County's commitment to joining with the Highway Authority in sharing the cost of improvements at Milepost 36 in Egg Harbor Township. Of the \$5 million that project is expected to cost, 50 percent (two and a half million dollars) will be paid for not by the Highway Authority but by Atlantic County taxpayers. Ladies and Gentlemen, that is a lot of quarters.

Another example of our commitment to parkway improvements is the traffic signal at Jim Leeds Road in Galloway Township. The County will pay \$30,000 - 75% of the total for that project.

- And fourth, unrelated to financial concerns, is the recent Rutgers University study that cites barrier toll plazas as a major cause of traffic delays and accidents. It's very hard for me to accept the idea of the Highway Authority building a new toll plaza here in Atlantic County at the same time it is being asked to consider tearing down some of those that already exist.

Again, I urge you to reconsider the plan for a barrier toll plaza in Atlantic County. Based on our history of subsidizing North Jersey improvements, our support for ramp tolls where new access or exit ramps are created, our unique commitment to helping fund parkway improvements and the question as to whether barrier toll plazas should be used at all-----a barrier toll plaza in Atlantic County cannot be justified.

Thank you.



GREATER MAINLAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

1520 S. MAIN ST., PLEASANTVILLE, N.J. 08232

(609) 646-0777

"Your  
Chamber  
Means  
Business"

February 6, 1989

The Honorable Thomas H. Kean  
State of New Jersey Governor  
CN 001  
Trenton, N.J. 08625

Governor Thomas H. Kean:

I am writing in behalf of the Greater Mainland Chamber of Commerce and those communities which we represent: Absecon, Egg Harbor Township, Pleasantville, Port Republic and Somers Point.

Pleased be advised that we are strenuously opposed to the proposed Atlantic County Toll Barrier for the following reasons:

-Millions of dollars in Parkway tolls have been collected over the years but only a small percentage of these revenues has been spent in Atlantic County. For whatever reason, the bulk of these revenues has been invested in North Jersey Parkway improvements.

-The proposed barrier will cost \$15 million or thereabouts and it will take four to five years to recover this cost, or breakeven. This is hardly a sound investment, as we see it.

-Such a barrier, according to recent studies, will further increase air pollution, traffic congestion and traffic accidents. This fact alone would justify our position and should give us all due cause to reconsider the ramifications of this proposed undertaking.

In lieu of the proposed barrier, we recommend new tolls on new ramps which, by the way, are urgently needed now to establish full parkway service to motorists in Atlantic County.

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SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF:

Absecon • Egg Harbor Twp. • Galloway Twp. • Linwood • Northfield • Pleasantville • Somers Point

4X

At the same time and reasonably speaking, we are not opposed to a general toll increase if the additional revenues are used for the sole purpose of paying for new parkway improvements in Atlantic County.

Sincerely yours,

John Fitzpatrick  
Chairman Transportation Committee

Robert E Swartz  
President

cc:Senate President Russo  
Assembly Speaker Hardwick  
Senate Transportation Committee  
Assembly Transportation Committee  
Senator Gormley  
Assemblyman Kline  
Assemblywoman Cooper  
County Executive Squires  
Transportation Commissioner Gluck  
New Jersey Highway Authority Chairman Tremayne  
Acuate Chairman Jarmer  
Meg Worthington Deputy Mayor, Galloway Township