

AAA Poll: Plurality of CT Drivers, But Not a Majority, Say Tolls Are Best Way to Finance Transportation

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Connecticut motorists support tolling over other transportation funding options, and strongly support a constitutional amendment for a transportation lock box, according to a statewide survey by two American Automobile Association clubs in the state.

According to the exclusive AAA poll, almost three times as many Connecticut drivers support tolls (47%) over any of the other options, but none of the proposed solutions garnered majority support.

The survey, conducted for AAA Allied and AAA Northeast from Jan. 12-14, asked 980 Connecticut drivers their opinions on transportation funding issues.

The AAA survey found:

- o **Adding tolls on existing Connecticut interstates — 47%**
- o **Increasing federal and state gas taxes instead of tolls — 16%**
- o **Charging a fee based on annual miles driven — 5%**
- o **Don't support any of the three options above — 30%**
- o **Don't believe additional funding is needed — 2%**

This November, Connecticut voters will be asked to approve or deny a constitutional amendment requiring that transportation-related fees are dedicated solely to the state's Special Transportation Fund and not diverted to other uses.

The AAA survey found drivers overwhelmingly support the amendment referred to as the “lock box proposal” by almost 9 to 1.

“It is critical that the motoring public, those who pay hundreds of millions in motor vehicle taxes and fees, have a voice in how transportation funds are collected and protected,” said Fran Mayko, AAA Northeast Public Affairs Specialist.

“AAA's intention in conducting the survey was to help make motorists' opinions known to lawmakers and transportation stakeholders.”

The survey comes just ahead of the 2018 legislative session, where Governor Malloy and state lawmakers will tackle the shortfall in the state's Special Transportation Fund, projected by the Governor's office to be in the red in 2019 with a \$38 million shortfall. That number is expected to grow to \$216 million by 2022.

The telephone survey was conducted for AAA by Public Policy Polling of Raleigh, NC. The margin of error was 3.1 percent.

AAA Northeast is a not-for-profit auto club with 65 offices in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, New Hampshire and New York. In Connecticut, we serve a half-million members living in Fairfield, New Haven, and Litchfield counties.

Here are the Survey Questions that nearly 1,000 drivers across CT were asked about transportation funding:

Collecting tolls and fees from motorists is one of many methods Connecticut can use to help pay for roads, highways, and bridges. Which of the following best describes your position on funding for roads, highways and bridges?

- *We should increase federal and state gas taxes instead of establishing tolls*
- *We should add tolls only on existing interstates in Connecticut*
- *We should charge a fee based on the annual number of miles you drive*
- *Don't support any of these funding options*
- *Think no additional funding is needed*

The state's Special Transportation Fund is comprised of gas tax receipts and other transportation-related fees that help finance state transportation projects such as maintaining and building new roads, bridges and highways. In November 2018, a Constitutional amendment proposing a transportation lockbox will appear on the ballot. It requires any fees collected from taxpayers for transportation be used solely for transportation purposes and not diverted for any other use.

- *Would you support or oppose such an amendment?*