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Opening Statement
Congressman Brendan Boyle
Subcommittee on Transportation and Public Assets

Hearing on "Status of Toll Interoperability"
September 30, 2015

Highways remain the primary method of transportation in this nation.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, highway mileage in the United States exceeded 4 million miles in 2009, including more than forty-six thousand Interstate miles.

According to the Federal Highway Administration, just under 6 thousand miles of highway and bridge facilities in the United States are tolled – and the majority of states have a tolled facility of some kind.

Most toll facilities now utilize some type of electronic toll collection system. As a result of their individualized development, many toll authorities use transponder systems that are unique to them and not compatible with other systems.

The MAP-21 legislation that Chairman Mica helped write requires that toll systems on Federal-aid highways, **and I quote**, "implement technologies or business practices that provide for the interoperability of electronic toll collection programs" by next year.

Right now, groups in industry are working on two different but complementary approaches to achieve interoperability.

One group, led by the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association, is working to develop a national toll protocol – meaning, in plain terms, a transponder system that could be utilized at all toll facilities in the nation.

Under this scenario, a single transponder system would be identified and all toll systems would ultimately adopt this system or utilize roadside equipment that could read the national transponder as well their own unique transponder.

There are already several regions of the country in which local toll facilities have adopted an interoperable electronic toll collection system.

The largest of these regional groups is the E-ZPass Group, whose membership encompasses 15 states and 26 separate toll authorities and systems, including the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission.

In 2014, there were nearly seven-teen million E-Z Pass accounts and more than twenty-eight million E-Z Pass transponders in use.

According to E-ZPass' website, the E-ZPass toll system collects more than $10 billion in annual toll revenue, including $7.8 billion collected electronically and more than $3 billion transferred among participating agencies as drivers move through tolled facilities in states other than their home states.

The E-Z Pass system clearly demonstrates the advantages that could result from the creation of a single national transponder system.

A separate effort is underway that seeks to stitch together the so-called "back office" operations of toll authorities. The objective of this effort, which is being led by the Alliance for Toll Interoperability, is to enable systems to exchange information on toll system usage by their various account holders so that fares – and, presumably, fines – can be exchanged among the systems.

This would achieve a form of "interoperability" that would not entail the use of a single national transponder system.

Certainly, while both efforts offer great promise to improve mobility in our nation, each also raises significant data security and privacy concerns.

For example, toll systems will have data on a vehicle's registration and travel history, and they will have the credit card information associated with the driver's account. I'm concerned to know what data standards are in place to protect this data as it is stored and particularly if it is shared among tolling entities.

I look forward to examining these issues in more detail today and thank the Chairman for calling today's hearing.

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