



February 18, 2013

The Honorable David Campbell, Chair  
House Public Works and Highways Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 201  
Concord, NH 03301

***Subject: HB 617, relative to increasing the rate of the road toll, increasing the vehicle registration fee, and establishing the New Hampshire state and municipal road and bridge account.***

Dear Representative Campbell:

The New Hampshire Planners Association, representing over 200 land use planning professionals in our state, working at all levels of government and in the private sector, takes this opportunity to express its support for HB 617 which secures desperately needing funding for the maintenance our state's roads and bridges by means of several targeted and reasonable revenue generators.

There are few functions of state government that are more fundamental and important than the provision of safe and efficient highways. More than any other service provided by the government, roads are used by everyone, every day and are essential to the flow of commerce including merchandise delivery and customer travel. Solid infrastructure also helps to support local economies that depend on tourism.

It is evident, however, that many of New Hampshire's communities suffer from neglect and lack of maintenance of their roads and bridges. As you are probably aware, the New Hampshire Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers gives the state low grades for the state of its infrastructure, and it's getting worse, not better. The Society gave New Hampshire's roads a grade of C- in 2011, down from a grade of C in 2006. Our bridges received a grade of C down from a C+.

Undeniably, the state of our roads is having a negative impact on many of New Hampshire's communities. For example, to have a bridge "red listed" or closed from lack of repair often means extra dollars spent in the municipality for longer emergency service routes, garbage pickup routes and alternate road repairs.

The NHPA believes that the New Hampshire Department of Transportation is doing everything possible to disperse its funds equitably and fairly, but it's clear that the money available cannot keep pace with the constant and growing maintenance demands of our aging infrastructure. Additional revenue is required and it is our view that the bill's revenue generators are reasonable, rational, and fair.

For these reasons, the New Hampshire Planners Association urges your committee to recommend the passage of HB 617. Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment on the bill.

Sincerely,

Timothy J. Corwin, Esq.  
NHPA Legislative Liaison