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May 22, 2017

Marybeth Richardson, Hearing Officer
Maine Department of Environmental Protection
312 Canco Road
Portland, ME 04103

RE: York Toll Plaza Project

Dear Ms. Richardson:

The Maine State Employees Association, Local 1989 of the Service Employees International Union, is labor union representing 13,000 public sector and publicly funded workers and retired workers statewide, including workers in all three branches of Maine State Government, workers at the Maine Turnpike Authority, and workers in York County government. We respectfully urge you to support the permit applications of the Maine Turnpike Authority to construct a new Open Road Tolling plaza at Mile 8.8 in York that includes high speed E-ZPass center lanes and staffed toll booths located safely in separated lanes to the right.

If the turnpike authority were to implement All Electronic Tolling in York as project opponents are urging, about 26 MSEA-SEIU fare collection employees who work at York could be out of jobs. Further, we understand that All Electronic Tolling could jeopardize all 230-plus toll collector jobs at the turnpike along the entire Turnpike corridor.

Our member toll collectors are critical to the toll highway experience that the turnpike provides. In addition to collecting cash from customers who cannot or do not want to get an E-ZPass, toll collectors often answer quick questions to visitors to our great state regarding destinations and directions, especially in York. They respond to "How do I get to L.L. Bean?" or "Where is Acadia?" all the time. Toll collectors at York are rightfully proud of their state and their work for the Maine Turnpike Authority. For project opponents from York to discount their value and ignore the human element and value they bring to the job is disappointing and disheartening.

Further, we understand that All Electronic Tolling would simply move toll collection from the point of service to a less effective, after-the-fact, back-office bill collection center. As we know, bill collection agencies often fail to collect a substantial amount of the owed amounts. This could result in a huge increase in free riders on the Turnpike. According to the MTA, eliminating cash collection at York would require the tolls to increase from the current \$3 up to \$6.

Also, this would change the nature and location of the toll collection jobs. A bill collection service center associated with All Electronic Tolling likely would be located in the Portland area, where unemployment is already lower compared to other regions. Thus, All Electronic Tolling could have the effect of moving good



jobs away from areas in Maine that need them more. That would be bad for Maine workers and our state.

We support our members who work as toll collectors for the Maine Turnpike Authority. Therefore, we support the turnpike authority's decision that All Electronic Tolling is neither feasible nor in the best interest of the turnpike and its customers, so please support the permit applications of the Maine Turnpike Authority to construct a new Open Road Tolling plaza at Mile 8.8 in York that includes high speed E-ZPass center lanes and staffed toll booths located safely in separated lanes to the right. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rod Hiltz
Executive Director

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