

Monday, July 12, 2021 (3 min)

Public Hearing Testimony – Proposed HOT Lane Toll Range Rates

My name is Ellen Ryan. I live right behind I-270, so the interstate is my Main Street. I drive it nearly every day.

The most important thing I can tell you is that no one will drive in these toll lanes unless the public lanes are crowded. And the higher the tolls go, the more crowded those public lanes will be.

So the toll lanes will fail, because the only way they will raise substantial amounts of money is if the public lanes are *so* congested that people feel forced to pay through the nose to get out of them.

But the foreign companies that build these lanes? They do it all day, every day. They're pros—and by contrast, our state has no experience at negotiating such contracts. These foreign toll-lane companies will rope us in for 50 years ... and if we expand the lanes further, the companies get paid for any loss of revenue ... and if traffic falls off, they get compensated for that, too.

We know this because it all happened down in Virginia. For example, on I-95, Virginia wanted to widen just six years after building toll lanes near Occoquan. But Transurban would cash in.

We don't need toll lanes *at all* when reversible lanes will do the job without these awful, entangling P3s—as with the disastrous Purple Line—and without charging tolls on working-class Marylanders. The answer to “How much?” is NOT AT ALL. Thank you.