

Now Some Good News: Motorists Rejecting Toll Roads



VOICE IN THE CHEAP SEATS

Charles Tarlow



Losing can be winning when it comes to toll roads.

I'd like to think that I'm an optimist; that I focus on good ideas and root for their success. But sometimes failure can be a "win" and when it comes to toll roads, failure is a big win for everyone!

When "Congestion Pricing" money seduced Los Angeles to join Orange County in the morally corrupt plan to sell our public infrastructure to the rich by creating toll roads, it was tough for me to be optimistic. The little guy clearly lost that battle. Cities blinded by dollar signs figured they had little to lose and MONEY to gain. Sure there would be more pollution as the majority of commuters spent extra hours daily in stop and go traffic, but the rich could zip to work and fill the public coffers at the same time. And let us not forget all that Federal money to be had for agreeing to the Congestion Pricing Scheme.

Who would have thought that there would be a resistance to paying the toll? Well take notice Los Angeles, because Orange County is not seeing the toll road traffic they expected.

In an article in the **Los Angeles Times** ("Recession slows use of Orange County's toll roads" by Nicole Santa Cruz), it is reported that many expected users of the new toll roads are opting for a longer commute instead of paying the \$7 plus tolls. Other toll roads are experiencing similar problems. The South Bay Expressway, operator of California 125 toll road through San Diego County has filed for bankruptcy.

Normally I would be saddened to hear about plans that fail, but in this case I applaud the failure. I hope all toll roads fail! Because if they succeed, America will be changed forever and there will be no going back.

If you want a glimpse into the future, take a look at Japan. A friend of mine's wife hails from Tokyo. If she wants to travel from her brother's house to the airport and back, she will have to pay \$200 in tolls. If she orders something to be shipped home, she can expect at least \$80.00 in tolls added to the shipping bill.

So YES ... I hope every toll road in the country goes bankrupt. I don't want Los Angeles to follow in the footsteps of Tokyo. I don't want America to have toll roads like Japan. If I could outlaw toll roads altogether, I would.

Public roads vs. Toll roads speak to the heart of Government. Should our leaders make decisions solely on the basis of money and influence or is there a higher calling they should consider. Even in economically challenging times, I want a Government that serves all the people and not just the

privileged among us.

It is highly unlikely that our elected officials will develop a conscience in the near future and even more unlikely they will back off their “Congestion Pricing Scheme” as long as there is a chance it will feed money into their coffers.

So in what may seem counter intuitive to the success of Los Angeles, I hope with all my heart for the failure of toll roads. I will not use them. I hope you do not use them. May they all go bankrupt and may their failure mark the beginning of a long term success for Los Angeles, California, and the Nation.

(Our “Average Joe” is Charles Tarlow, a mid-city resident and community activist. Tarlow writes Voice in the Cheap Seats for CityWatch. He can be reached at: stillchugn@yahoo.com) -CW

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