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From: aleta dupree

Sent: Monday, July 11, 2022 9:56 AM

To: MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>

Subject: BATA Oversight for 20220713

External Email

Kim and Martha with thanks please forward this message to the BATA Oversight Committee for the Regular Meeting of 13 July, 2022.

Good morning Chair Amy Worth and Members.

Aleta Dupree for the record. (she, her).

I bring you my various generalized thoughts concerning the work of the BATA Oversight Committee.

Much is happening in the toll collection space in this summer time season. On 10 July of this year, the George Washington Bridge, a historic structure spanning the Hudson River between New York and New Jersey, commenced full all electronic tolling operations. I have traveled across this particular bridge numerous times since 1970, and I remember the days of putting quarters in the baskets at the toll plaza. Having grown up in the New York area, I have been on many, if not all of these various crossings that connect the diverse parts of the region together. So I am able to see the evidence of the change from my residence through the enjoyment of live stream videos of the toll plazas, and the positive differences thereof.

I also have seen from afar this month the phased transition to all electronic tolling operations of the H.E. Bailey Turnpike in Southwest Oklahoma. It was here that I opened my first Pikepass account in April 1991, and installed transponders on the two cars I had at the time. I enjoyed being a part of the making of history and doing things in new ways, this I did until I moved away from Oklahoma in early 1995.

While the vast majority of my speaking and writing on toll road agency matters has been with you at BATA, I am sure that many other agencies across the country have taken notice of the positive work that we are doing here at BATA. I'm sure some have watched broadcasts and archives of your Meetings, both of your discussions and public comments.

There is much work to be done as we continue the work of developing all electronic tolling on our seven State owned bridges here in our beloved Bay Area. I feel what is most paramount is ensuring that the appropriate toll revenues are collected and recognized, in order to fund the work of maintaining these most important structures that millions of us count on every year to get about our business and achieving our personal goals.

I do believe strongly that the revenue due will be collected soon, due to the various decisions that you have made in your most recent Meetings. The work of educating the Public in these new and different ways of tendering toll monies needs to continue and be expanded upon. I too have learned many new things in life, and found that once learned, such is easier than the way things were done before.

I do submit to you, I ask that you not forget this, that operating a vehicle on a public street or highway is a privilege and that comes with a set of serious responsibilities. There are some, a small subgroup, who in their recalcitrance remain delinquent in the payment of appropriate toll revenue. It is important to use the tools of vehicle registration holds when necessary, as the work of maintaining these bridges must continue. I would like to see our recovery of revenue to be from the recognition of back tolls as much as possible, and not so much from fines and fees. And I do think we will achieve that goal, as most will pay as they come to understand these processes more fully.

I maintain to you that the new methods of collecting toll revenue are paying dividends, most of all in safety related matters. I had once considered working as a toll collector in my late teens, that never came to pass. Today I consider the difficulties of that work, and the need to move forward. Even in the days of humans collecting tolls in the plazas, I still saw frequent toll evasion from the corner of my eye, from the vantage point of the drivers seat of my car. I think in this new way of doing things we will catch up, as this is something more are getting used to.

So how do we move forward? I think we already are. I admit to you that I personally don't see revolving credit as a long term pathway to sustainable success. I do look forward to seeing the results of the payment plan pilot expected to be deployed. It is my hope that the Public will not be dependent on long term debt to BATA, much as with the widespread misuse of various kinds of unsecured debt instruments. I feel the work of means based tolling needs to continue, and to be part of the larger conversation of enabling greater public participation in the electronic payments ecosystem.

And so it goes, I ask that you always consider the best practices and methods, given the safety sensitive nature of the work of BATA. I enjoy seeing the results of this work as I cross the Bay Bridge on the bus, this I fairly often do. It is important to keep on with the work toward removing the old toll plazas, as other agencies are doing so expeditiously. Given this, the work toward refining our work of oversight of all electronic tolling must continue, and equitably so.

Thank you.