



October 12, 2021

Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Public Information Office
375 Beale Street Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: FasTrak Practices

Dear Metropolitan Transportation Commission:

East Bay Community Law Center is the largest legal services provider in Alameda County. In the Clean Slate Unit, our work deals with the intersection of poverty and the criminal legal system. Our most vulnerable clients are frequently disproportionately affected by minor offenses or infractions. A \$6 toll can have a snowball effect for a low-income or unhoused person because of the late penalties that quadruple every month.

These late penalties are excessive because they force those who cannot pay immediately to have to pay far in excess of what they have the ability to pay or originally owed. Many of our clients reach out to us for help because FasTrak has placed a hold on their vehicle registration or told our clients that they owe thousands of dollars. Some of our clients owe over \$74 for one \$6 toll. One of our clients sold her car to someone who did not register the vehicle and then racked up FasTrak fees. Without the late penalties, our client would owe \$144. With the late penalties, our client owes FasTrak over \$1400.

In addition, FasTrak's policies are very burdensome for people experiencing homelessness. Unhoused people do not always have regular access to mailboxes. FasTrak's policy of sending bills to wherever a vehicle is registered means that many of our clients only learn of fees after the deadline and incur penalties without realizing, as the address where the vehicle is registered is often not an address a person experiencing homelessness can regularly access.

People experiencing homelessness frequently do not have a credit card or the means to acquire a FasTrak transponder in their vehicle. During the pandemic, bridge operators do not accept cash. As a result, many people experiencing homeless are continuously incurring hundreds, sometimes thousands, of dollars' worth of toll violations and accompanying late penalties whenever they cross a bridge in the Bay Area simply because they have no credit card and no means to pay the charges.



Compounding issues is the fact that FasTrak's policies demand that people be able to access the Internet. Our clients, many of whom are overwhelmed, low-income, or experiencing homelessness, do not have the easy access to computers that FasTrak demands, especially with the pandemic shutting down public libraries. Anyone who wishes to appeal a ticket must do so online (while also having their violation number accessible). Clients who cannot access the Internet in the 21-day window face the late penalty, which quadruples what they owe.

In conclusion, East Bay Community Law Center strongly encourages the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to eliminate all fees and reduce all fines, forgive all past fines and fees owed, and end the practice of placing holds on vehicle registrations. The livelihood of the Bay Area's most vulnerable communities depends on it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jael Myrick", written over a horizontal line.

Jael Myrick
Program Director, Clean Slate Unit
East Bay Community Law Center