

Letter to the Editor  
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### **The "No More Tolls" Plan**

The "No More Tolls" plan revealed by Gov. Ryan lacks real reform of the Toll Authority. The plan fails to adequately address concerns about the operation and management of the Toll Authority. Gov. Ryan asserts that he is responding to public sentiment about eliminating the tollways and providing oversight of the Toll Authority but his "No More Tolls" plan calls for massive increases of tolls, the building of new roads, and no accountability of the Toll Authority.

Gov. Ryan's plan to increase cash tolls to 75¢ in October 2001 and to 95¢ in 2003 contradicts the Governor's previously stated opposition to toll increases. The increased revenue will not be allocated to repairing existing toll roads from where the toll is collected, but will fund the costly I-355 extension. The Toll Authority's 10-Year Plan stated that existing roads need \$4.4 billion worth of repairs over the next 10 years but Gov. Ryan's plan only provides \$2.2 billion over the next 20 years and will clobber revenue from roads that need repairs to build new roads. This plan is like proposing to build an addition to a home when the roof is leaking, the pipes are frozen and the mortgage payments are due.

The Toll Authority is unaccountable to the General Assembly for their budget. Taxpayers are subject to taxation without representation of how or where revenues are spent. Instead of addressing the Toll Authority's lack of accountability, the Governor is rewarding the Toll Authority by promoting an increase in tolls without oversight for five years more years, at which point the Toll Authority will merge with IDOT. The Toll Authority is giving free reign to dip into the consumer till without having to account for how the revenues will be spent, or even a plan for how the revenue will be spent.

The only part of Governor Ryan's plan that requires legislative approval is the \$700 million bond defeasance portion. The General Assembly does not have to approve, "No More Tolls," so no guarantee exists that the plan will come to fruition or if it does, that the next administration will have a commitment to dismantling the tolls or to merging the Toll Authority with IDOT yet tolls across the board will rise. Gov. Ryan's plan needs to fix existing toll roads prior to building any new roads and establish accountability of the Toll Authority, two elements this plan fails to accomplish.

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