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### **Cobequid Pass toll removal still being considered, but maybe not for everyone**

Nova Scotia Transportation officials announced their plans for the Cobequid Pass once the remaining of the bonds are paid off sometime in fiscal 2019-2020. The tolls are supposed to be removed as planned, although maybe not for everyone.

Since the Cobequid Pass opened in 1997, users of the twinned highway have contributed a total of \$308 million in tolls. The money has been used to maintain and clear the road, help with repair costs, and to pay down the initial construction and financing bills. It is suggested that out-of-province motorists and commercial trucks would continue to pay a toll through the Cobequid Pass to help with maintenance of this highway.

“There is no rationale to keep tolls for commercial trucks only. The Trucking Industry has contributed over 50% of the revenues generated from these tolls since they have been in place, therefore, we should be treated like every motorist if tolls are removed.” explains Jean-Marc Picard, Executive Director of the Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association.

Commercial trucks pay a diesel tax of 15.4 Cents/Litre to drive on Nova Scotia roads and out-of-town trucks pay the same Nova Scotia diesel tax for every mile they run on a Nova Scotia Highway, through the International Fuel Tax Agreement.

“We provide an essential service to the province of Nova Scotia by delivering food, water, medical supplies, clothing, etc. to its citizens and we would be penalized for it if they continue to make us pay for a toll that they would remove for everyone else. It is absolutely absurd to make such a recommendation.” says Picard.

“The government needs to think about this further before making any decisions as this will have an impact on a huge industry in Atlantic Canada that pays its fair share of diesel and carbon taxes.”

“We appreciate the fact that government is looking for ways to cover the maintenance costs of the roads if they remove the tolls, but why would they do so on the backs of one single industry. It would be unfair and unethical to take such an approach.”

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