



METROPOLITAN  
TRANSPORTATION  
COMMISSION

Agenda Item 5a-1

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*Memorandum*

TO: Legislation Committee

DATE: April 1, 2011

FR: Executive Director

W. I. 1131

RE: SB 125 (Emmerson) — Increased Penalties for Toll Evasion

**Background**

SB 125 (Emmerson) authorizes law enforcement to impound a vehicle that is registered to a chronic toll evader, defined as a vehicle associated with an outstanding balance of \$2,000 or greater in unpaid tolls and fines or a vehicle owner whose registration has been put on hold by the Department of Motor Vehicles, at the request of a toll operator. At present, the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA) has a backlog of more than \$14 million in unpaid tolls and fines that have either gone to collections or have resulted in a DMV hold on the registration for at least two years. Almost 800 individuals have racked up an average of 66 violations each and owe more than \$5,000 in unpaid tolls and fines. This bill would help BATA recoup some of these monies and invest them in the intended seismic retrofit improvements, roadway enhancements, and public transit improvements authorized for funding by the region's state-owned bridge tolls.

**Recommendation: Support**

**Discussion**

Under current law, law enforcement officials have no authority to take punitive action against a vehicle owner who is pulled over for a traffic violation and has a documented outstanding balance of unpaid tolls and fines. SB 125 would correct this oversight in the law. As such, this bill will help BATA and toll agencies statewide recoup unpaid tolls and violation fines. We recommend a support position.

**Known Positions**

**Support**

South Bay Expressway (sponsor)  
California Association of Highway Patrolmen

**Opposition**

None on file

  
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Steve Heminger