

**TOLLING IS A
DOUBLE TAX
ON CITIZENS.**

**Join us in the fight against the proposed
tolls on the I-10 Calcasieu Bridge.**

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Calcasieu River Bridge Background

Officially named the “Louisiana Memorial World War II Bridge” the Calcasieu River bridge is also known as the “I-10 bridge” because of its location on Interstate 10 in Lake Charles, Louisiana. The bridge opened in 1952 originally to connect Highway 90 between Lake Charles and Westlake, Louisiana over the Calcasieu River. The bridge features a through truss design and has a total length of over 6,600 feet. In 2009, the measured average annual daily traffic was 51,800 with daily crossings over 90,000.

Since 1992 the rating of the bridge has deteriorated and has been listed by the Department of Transportation’s National Bridge Inventory (NBI) as “structurally deficient.” The NBI also gave the bridge a 6.6 rating out of 100 that it still has today. Following these ratings, the speed limit has been dropped to 50 mph on the bridge, with heavy trucks being limited to the right lane. The lane restriction, as well as the ramp that merges east-bound, have caused a bottleneck and overall severe congestion on the bridge – all accumulating to excess weight and added stress on the already weakened bridge.

Following the NBI rating, the Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development (LA DOTD) began a multimillion-dollar repair project that was completed in 2012. Following these repairs, the LA DOTD declared the bridge safe with plans to replace the aging bridge.


Current plans for financing the construction of the new Calcasieu River bridge by the current Administration include the implementation of a toll, creating a tolled portion of the I-10 interstate system. Currently, there are limited routes to easily cross the Calcasieu River and navigate to Interstate 10, especially for large and oversize vehicles and equipment.

Truckers and members of Louisiana and the nation’s transportation industry depend on this corridor of I-10, for commerce out of the Port of Lake Charles and also in the connection of the supply chain throughout Texas, south Louisiana and the entirety of the Gulf Coast.

For more information on the Calcasieu River Bridge toll, information on tolling or to sign up for updates, visit www.tollsaredoubletax.com.

Press Contact:

Name: Renee Amar
Email: renee@lmta.la
Mobile: (225) 287-0117
Press Kit: rebrand.ly/tollsx2tax



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About the I-10 Calcasieu Bridge Tolling

Following years of failed National Bridge Inventory (NBI) ratings and temporary repairs, it is widely agreed that the aging Calcasieu River Bridge has passed beyond its intended service life and is in need of replacement.

Current plans for financing the construction of the new Calcasieu River bridge by the current Administration include the implementation of a toll, creating a tolled portion of the I-10 interstate system. Currently, there are limited routes to easily cross the Calcasieu River and navigate to Interstate 10, especially for large and overside vehicles and equipment. This would create a mandatory toll for truckers and members of Louisiana and the nation's transportation industry who greatly depend on this corridor of I-10, for commerce out of the Port of Lake Charles and also in the connection of the supply chain throughout Texas, south Louisiana and the entirety of the Gulf Coast.

We are in opposition to the proposed I-10 Calcasieu Bridge toll, not only because it puts the financial burden heavily on the trucking industry, but also because interstate tolling is a double tax on citizens.

INTERSTATE TOLLS ARE A DOUBLE TAX

A new toll on Interstate 10 means a motorist pays two taxes for the same road: a gas tax and a toll tax. Fuel taxes, which citizens and businesses already pay for at the pump, are supposed to fund the interstate system.


THE UNSUCCESSFUL HISTORY OF TOLLING

Tolling existing interstates has never been successful and has a negative impact on public safety, congestion, the environment and the economy.

In 1998, Congress established the Interstate System Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Pilot Program, which authorized three toll pilot projects, one in each of three states, to toll an interstate highway, bridge or tunnel. Due to significant public and political opposition, attempts at tolling under the program have been unsuccessful. These failed attempts have cost states and the federal government millions of taxpayer dollars.

History shows us tolls are:

- **Inefficient:** Tolls take many years to generate any net income.
- **Expensive:** A family traveling from Washington D.C. to Florida and back on I-95 would pay \$143.50 in tolls on the interstate alone, with that amount increasing every year. Even worse, \$36 of that \$143.50 would go to cover the administrative costs of tolls, not to the roadway's tolls were intended to fund.



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- **Disrupting:** Even electronic tolls can cause delays and make roads less safe by disrupting traffic patterns. Traffic diversion creates congestion on other roads and can delay response time for emergency personnel who rely on those secondary routes. This creates more wear and tear on those secondary roads.
- **Bad for business:** Tolls increase the cost of delivering goods and services, putting local businesses at a competitive disadvantage and increasing costs for the residents.
- **Bad projections:** Researchers found "With rare exception, actual toll road traffic in many countries has failed to reproduce forecast traffic levels, regardless of whether the assessment is made after an initial year of operation or as long as 10 years after opening."
- **Create Privacy Concerns:** The electronic devices used to pay tolls to enable the vehicle to be tracked outside tolling facilities and personal information can be used by groups and agencies other than toll operators.
- **Unpopular:** Poll after poll has demonstrated that the public is strongly against the idea of tolling our interstate system.

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Calcasieu and Jefferson Davis Parish Voters Tolling Opinions *(with additional details & notes)*

SURVEY BACKGROUND: Survey of Likely General Election Voters
(Calcasieu, Jefferson Davis Parish) March 1 – 2, 2022 | Sample Size 205 | $\pm 6.71\%$
(See below: Demographics of Sample)

SUMMARY & FINDINGS:

1.) Voters in Calcasieu and Jefferson Davis parish hold an unfavorable view of tolls.

- Voters are opposed to tolling in general as well as tolling the new Calcasieu Bridge in particular.

2.) Voters don't want to toll the new Calcasieu Bridge.

- Opposition to tolling the bridge is strongest among voters under 65 years of age, Republicans, and Independents.

3.) When given a message suggesting that tolling was the only way to fund the new bridge, respondents were split with their support of tolling following the statement.

4.) After being exposed to positive and negative messages on tolling the Calcasieu Bridge, voters were still opposed to tolling the new bridge.

- Opinions on tolls are firmly engrained as opposition remains steady after messaging.
- The largest increases in opposition were among seniors, liberals, and high-propensity voters.

5.) Voters were less likely to vote for a candidate who supports tolling.

- In fact, all voter groups except self-identified liberals are less likely to support a candidate who wants to toll the bridge.

FINDINGS #1:

Voters in Calcasieu and Jefferson Davis parish hold an unfavorable view of tolls.

Question Asked: Tolling is the practice of charging money for the use of something, typically infrastructure like roads and bridges. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of tolling?

Tolls are particularly unpopular with voters under age 65, Republicans, Independents, white voters, lower and upper-income earners, higher-income earners, high-propensity voters, and in Calcasieu Parish

Of those surveyed – 52.4 percent of voters have some form of unfavorable view of tolling, while only 38.6 percent of voters view it positively.

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Additional details:

- 65 percent of self-identified independent voters view it unfavorably.
- 54 percent of those between the ages of 18 - 34, 59 percent between the ages of 35 – 49, and 58 percent of those between the ages of 50 -64 view tolls unfavorably.
- 55 percent of those with incomes below \$49,000, 48 percent of those earning between \$50,000 – 99,000 annually, and 60 percent of those making over \$100,000 view tolls unfavorably

FINDINGS #2:

Voters don't want to toll the new Calcasieu Bridge.

Question Asked: Do you support or oppose tolling the new Calcasieu bridge?

Opposition is highest among men, voters aged 35-64, Republicans, Independents, high-income earners, low-propensity voters, and in Calcasieu Parish.

Of those surveyed – 48.8 percent of voters opposed the tolling of the Calcasieu Bridge, while only 34.8 percent of voters supported it.

Additional details:

- 50 percent of Calcasieu Parish residents opposed the tolling of the Calcasieu Bridge
- 55 percent of self-identified Republican voters opposed the toll on the I-10 bridge
- 46 percent of those between the ages of 18 - 34, 65 percent between the ages of 35 – 49, and 54 percent of those between the ages of 50 - 64 did not support a toll of the bridge.
- 67 percent of those making over \$100,000 opposed the tolling proposal

FINDINGS #3:

When asked if voters were given a message suggesting that tolling was the only way to fund the new bridge, respondents were split with their support of tolling following the statement.

Statement Provided: Tolling is the only way the state can afford to build the new bridge.

This message split voters, with only 34 percent of all respondents being more likely to support tolling, and 34.3 percent being less likely.

- Key Takeaway: Of the identified 34.3 percent who were less likely to support tolling, 24.8 percent felt strongly and were “much less likely” to support tolling.

Additional details:

- Of those that were less likely to support tolling following this message, 48 percent were between the ages of 18 – 34 and 42 percent were age 35 – 49.

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FINDINGS #4:

After being exposed to positive and negative messages on tolling the Calcasieu Bridge, voters were still opposed to tolling the new bridge.

Question Asked: With what you know now, do you support or oppose tolling the new Calcasieu bridge?

The voters most opposed are men, people aged 35-64, Republicans, people without a college degree, and high-income earners.

Overall, while some opinions slightly moved voters still largely opposed tolling. With 48.6 percent of respondents continued to oppose the tolling of the bridge and only 37.3 percent supporting the toll.

- Key Takeaway: Of the identified 37.3 percent who overall opposed the toll, 37.2 percent were “strongly opposed” to it.

Additional details:

- The largest increases in opposition were among seniors and high-propensity voters.
- 49 percent of Calcasieu Parish residents and 45 of Jefferson Davis Parish residents opposed the tolling of the Calcasieu Bridge
- 56 percent of self-identified Republican voters and 49 percent of self-identified independent voters opposed the toll on the I-10 bridge
- 61 percent between the ages of 35 – 49, and 54 percent of those between the ages of 50 - 64 did not support a toll of the bridge.
- 61 percent of those making over \$100,000 opposed the tolling proposal
- 50 percent of opponents did not have a secondary or college education, while 41 percent did

FINDINGS #5:

Voters were less likely to vote for a candidate who supports tolling.

Question Asked: Would you be more or less likely to vote for a candidate who supports tolling the new bridge?

Results found Republicans, Democrats, and Independents along with both white and black voters are less likely to support the pro-tolling candidate.

Of those surveyed – 49.7 percent of respondents said they would be less likely to vote for a “pro-tolling” candidate. Only 18.2 percent of voters said they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supports tolling.

- Key Takeaway: Of the identified 49.7 percent who were not likely to vote for a candidate who supported a toll on the new Calcasieu Bridge, 35 percent were “much less likely” in their opinion to vote for pro-toll candidates.

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Additional details:

- 49 percent of Calcasieu Parish residents and 55 of Jefferson Davis Parish residents were overall less likely to vote for candidates who supported the new Calcasieu Bridge toll.
- 59 percent of self-identified Republican voters and 4 percent of self-identified independent voters were less likely to support “pro-tolling” candidates
- 51 percent between the ages of 35 – 49, and 54 percent of those between the ages of 50 - 64 were also less likely to vote for candidates who supported the toll.
- 46 percent of those with incomes below \$49,000, 50 percent of those earning between \$50,000 – \$99,000 annually, and 53 percent of those making over \$100,000 suggested they were not likely to vote for “pro-tolling” candidates
- 51 percent of African American voters and 50 percent of white voters were less likely to vote for candidates who supported the bridge toll

Demographics of Sample:

- **Sex:** 55.3 percent female, 44.7 percent male
- **Geography/Parish:** 83.8 percent Calcasieu, 16.2 percent Jefferson Davis
- **Partisanship:** 42.9 percent republican, 38.1 percent democratic, 14.5 percent independent
- **Age Range:** 15.3 percent age 18 – 34; 19.5 percent age 35 – 49; 27.6 percent age 50 – 64; 37.6 percent age 65 +
- **Ideology:** 26.9 percent “very conservative;” 29.9 percent “somewhat conservative;” 24.5 percent “moderate;” 6.5 percent “somewhat liberal;” 5.2 percent “very liberal;”
- **Household Income:** 29.4 percent under \$49,000, 44.2 percent between \$50,000 - \$99,000, 23.7 percent over \$100,000
- **Race:** 70.7 percent white, 20.5 percent African American, 1.2 percent Hispanic, 3.5 percent “other”
- **Past Election Voting:** 13.8 percent voted in 1 of past 4 elections; 12.3 percent voted in 2 of past 4 elections; 19.2 percent voted in 3 of past 4 elections; 53.9 percent voted in 4 of past 4 elections.

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