

HOUSE No. 1707

By Mr. Beach of Wilbraham, petition of Fred Ruther for the appointment of a special commission by the Governor to investigate traffic improvement projects and toll highways in Hampden County. Highways and Motor Vehicles.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Fifty-Two.

RESOLVE PROVIDING FOR AN INVESTIGATION AND STUDY OF THE FEASIBILITY, DESIRABILITY AND COST OF CONSTRUCTING A NUMBER OF TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS IN HAMPDEN COUNTY AND PAYING FOR COST OF SAME THROUGH THE COLLECTION OF TOLLS.

1 *Whereas*, The county of Hampden of the common-
2 wealth of Massachusetts, said county covering a land
3 area of six hundred and twenty two square miles, as-
4 sessed at approximately five hundred and seventy-
5 five million dollars, does not possess enough modern
6 express highways, bridges and approaches, traffic sub-
7 ways, and parking facilities for the safe, convenient
8 and rapid movement of vehicular traffic from one
9 section of the county to the other; and

10 *Whereas*, Many citizens of said Hampden county
11 are convinced that the only way the county is going
12 to secure these much needed facilities is through the
13 application of the toll principle, that is, the cost of
14 providing these facilities to be liquidated through
15 the collection of tolls from those using the same, the

16 same as is now being done in many neighboring
17 states; therefore be it

18 *Resolved*, That a special commission to be known
19 as the "Hampden County Authority Commission,"
20 is hereby established for the purpose of investigating
21 and studying the feasibility and advisability of con-
22 structing a number of express highways, bridges, ap-
23 proaches, traffic subways, etc., in said county, and
24 paying for them in whole or part through the collec-
25 tion of tolls, especially the following, which, many
26 citizens are convinced, are among the most necessary
27 and which most likely can be paid for through tolls: —

28 (A) A two lane vehicular traffic subway, starting
29 at a point at or near Harrison and Dwight streets, in
30 the city of Springfield, thence westerly on Harrison
31 avenue, to Main street, to Vernon street, thence west-
32 erly and emerging on Vernon street at a point near
33 Broadway, then as an overpass over Columbus ave-
34 nue to a point on Memorial bridge, thus proving a
35 more adequate exit and entrance to the eastern end
36 of Memorial bridge.

37 (B) A two or three-lane vehicular traffic subway,
38 starting at a point at or near Victoria square on
39 Dwight street in the city of Springfield, passing
40 under State street, thence the full length of Willow
41 street, thence at ground level at about Union street,
42 through the vacant land between Main and Maple
43 streets to a point near Mill street, thence over or
44 under Mill street, Belmont avenue, and Fort Pleas-
45 ant avenue, and finally connecting with the eastern
46 end of the proposed new South End bridge, thus
47 providing a much needed express highway from the
48 South End of the city into the heart of the down-
49 town business district of Springfield.

50 (C) An expressway, tentatively called the
51 "Springfield Thruway", starting at a point at or
52 near the Springfield city line near where the Stony
53 Hill road crosses the Boston road in the town of
54 Wilbraham, thence following a westerly direction
55 south of the Boston & Albany right-of-way to a
56 point near Amory or Spring streets in the city of
57 Springfield, thence as a vehicular traffic subway un-
58 der Chestnut, Dwight and Main streets to a point
59 near Columbus avenue, where the building of a new
60 Connecticut river bridge should be considered, one
61 of the approaches of which should be at the junction
62 of Memorial avenue and Union street in West Spring-
63 field. From that point on there are several routes
64 available to take the Thruway at least as far as the
65 Westfield street overpass, and eventually connecting
66 with the so-called Springfield by-pass somewhere to
67 the north, east or west of Westfield.

68 (D) A two or three lane bridge across the Con-
69 necticut river to connect South Hadley with the
70 Northampton road at some point south of Mount
71 Tom Junction on the Boston & Maine Railroad.

72 (E) An aerial cableway for passengers from some
73 point at the foot of Mount Tom to the top of said
74 Mount Tom, a recreational facility which would at-
75 tract visitors from all over the east and which could
76 be operated to produce a very substantial profit.

77 Said "Hampden County Authority Commission",
78 to consist of seven members, three democrats and
79 three republicans, all residents of Hampden county,
80 to be appointed by the governor and to serve with-
81 out pay but to receive reasonable travel and expense
82 money; the seventh member of the commission to be
83 elected by the said commission members, and who

84 need not be a resident of Hampden county and may
85 be paid for his services, the amount depending on
86 what experience he has had and what he accomplishes
87 for the commission.

88 The said commission shall receive, consider and
89 study any other reasonable plans that may prove
90 beneficial to Hampden county that may be brought
91 forward by any citizen, newspaper or civic organiza-
92 tion, especially if cost of such plans can be liquidated
93 through the collection of tolls, admissions or fees;
94 and it is further

95 *Resolved*, That fifty thousand dollars, or as much
96 thereof as may be necessary, shall be advanced from
97 the department of public works road fund to the com-
98 mission to cover costs of surveys and investigations,
99 and that this money need not be returned to the road
100 fund until one or more self-liquidating projects de-
101 veloped by the commission are on a well-established
102 paying basis. Further, the commission shall draw up
103 a charter setting forth its powers, which charter shall
104 be approved by the state legislature before becoming
105 effective.