Indiana and Pennsylvania Officials Put ‘For Sale’ Signs on State Roads

Foreign conglomerates clamoring for right to own free trade corridors

By Mark Anderson

In a move that many grassroots activists believe signals a coming trend, two states have put taxpayer-financed toll roads up for sale to foreign companies. More disconcerting is the fact that these have the potential becoming a massive network of toll roads facilitating free trade throughout North America under the framework of the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA.

In Indiana, foreign interests are obtaining the first lease agreement with a state government to privately operate an existing toll road—paying $3.8 billion for a 75-year lease to operate the Indiana Toll Road.

In addition, the historically significant Pennsylvania Turnpike also may be headed to the proverbial auction block, as confirmed by American Free Press. But apparently it's not a done deal.

AFP reported last December that Pennsylvania state Rep. Richard Geist had planned to introduce House Bill 1 to sell the Pennsylvania Turnpike to private investors.

The Indiana Toll Road deal prompted Hoosiers to send scores of “Ditch Mitch” bumper stickers critical of Gov. Mitch Daniels's unceremonious support of the sale. It inspired

*Have added main parts of Pres. Bush's E.O. which caused it.*
back to the days of Washington, according to the PTC.

"President Washington publicly favored the establishment of roads to promote the westward expansion of our nation," notes a passage on the PTC's web site. "In 1791, the legislature of the Pennsylvania Commonwealth approved a statewide transportation plan and a year later created the Philadelphia and Lancaster Turnpike Company."

The company's charter called for constructing a 62-mile long-surfaced road, providing successful transport for settlers and their goods over muddy territories.

After 1800, the route of the future Lancaster Turnpike was replaced by a canal, and then replaced in the 1880's by the early stages of a railroad. A series of decisions and changing national transportation needs over the years led to today's turnpike, now in its sixth decade of service.

The original 160-mile route, the PTC's web site adds, "has been expanded to 514 miles, carrying 156.2 million vehicles a year at a toll of just over 4.1 cents a mile. . . . Today, the Pennsylvania Turnpike, part of Interstate 76, can be recognized as the first of a new breed of American toll ways in the interstate highway system."

But it's not as if only existing toll ways are under consideration. New ones, with up to six lanes in each direction, are envisioned for the Trans-Texas Corridor, which seems well-suited as a linchpin for connecting the United States, Canada and Mexico under the umbrella of a "North American Community."

China has a big interest in the toll ways because of its commercial shipping in Pacific and Atlantic seaports. Some imported goods can be routed away from West Coast ports, to be unloaded off ocean vessels at cheaper Mexican ports and transported by truck and rail through Mexico into Texas and beyond by Mexican trucks and drivers.

Kansas City, Mo.—despite being 1,000 miles from the U.S.-Mexico border—has been dubbed a major hub, including as a customs inspection location, for the goods and raw materials transported through the area on existing rail lines and toll ways, and on the new ones that may be built, forever altering the physical, economic and political landscape of these United States.


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