



C O M M I S S I O N N E W S R E L E A S E

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Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission Announces 2014 Toll Increase

Cash tolls set to increase 12 percent, E-ZPass 2 percent on Jan. 5 2014

HARRISBURG, PA (July 29, 2013) — The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) has approved a 2014 toll-rate increase of 2 percent for E-ZPass customers and 12 percent for cash customers. The increase is largely needed to allow the PTC to meet its funding obligation to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania under a 2007 state law known as Act 44. New revenues from the increase will also help fund the Turnpike's capital-improvement plan, which is focused mostly on completely rebuilding the 73-year-old toll road and widening it from four to six lanes.

The increase — approved by the five-member Turnpike Commission at its July 15 public meeting — will take effect Jan. 5, 2014.

"Our E-ZPass customers have seen lower increases than cash customers since 2011, and this will be the fourth year we've been able to minimize the impact to E-ZPass users," said Turnpike CEO Mark Compton. "Since more than 70 percent of our customers pay with E-ZPass today, most customers are taking advantage of these lower rates."

The PTC charges E-ZPass customers less because of the lower costs of collecting tolls electronically. On average, E-ZPass costs about five to 10 times less per transaction than processing a cash toll.

"Besides being faster and more convenient for motorists, E-ZPass is a more efficient, environmentally responsible way for us as an agency to collect tolls because it reduces idling at the tollbooth and cuts emissions," Compton said.

PTC motorist research has shown that many people don't know it's so affordable to enroll in E-ZPass. The initial cost to open an auto-replenishment account is \$38; however, \$35 of that is the available balance from which tolls are deducted. "The only cost to E-ZPass customers is really the \$3 annual service fee," Compton said, "which many people can recover in a few trips due to the lower tolls."

The average Class-1 toll for a cash customer on the Turnpike mainline is \$4.49 today. The same toll is just \$2.92 with the 2014 E-ZPass discount — for a savings of \$1.57 per trip. In view of this, most current cash customers would earn back that \$3 annual fee after only two trips (a single round trip) if they switched to E-ZPass.

This increase will be the 11th rate hike in the history of the PTC — and the sixth yearly toll

increase implemented after the passage of Act 44. Act 44 directs the commission to make annual payments to PennDOT for off-Turnpike investment in the state's ground-transportation network. "We understand that these recurrent annual increases can create an economic hardship for some, and for this reason we ardently support a measure in the general assembly that would modify the funding requirements in Act 44," Compton said. "If passed, this measure would mean that the PTC could eventually reduce the magnitude of future toll increases."

Since Act 44's passage in 2007, the PTC has transferred almost \$3.9 billion to PennDOT and will continue to make annual disbursements of \$450 million. Of that, \$200 million is used for highway and bridge improvements while \$250 million is used to support the operating expenses of various public-transit authorities in the state. The PTC's outstanding Act-44 debt now stands at \$4.3 billion with associated debt payments of \$226 million a year and climbing.

Here is the effect the 2014 increase is expected to have on some of the most-common Pennsylvania Turnpike Class-1 (or passenger) trips:

- A **short, commuter** trip for Class-1 vehicles will increase from \$1.02 to \$1.04 for E-ZPass customers and from \$1.40 to \$1.60 for cash-paying travelers. Some examples of popular short trips include: Willow Grove (#343) to Bensalem (#351); Irwin (#67) to Pittsburgh (#57); and Harrisburg East (#247) to Harrisburg West (#242). E-ZPass users will save 56 cents on these trips.
- A **typical, mid-length** trip for Class-1 vehicles will increase from \$2.71 to \$2.77 for E-ZPass customers and from \$3.55 to \$4 for cash-paying travelers. Some examples of popular medium trips include: Morgantown (#298) to Valley Forge (#326); Lehigh Valley (#56) to Pocono (#95); and Cranberry (#28) to Pittsburgh (#57). E-ZPass users will save \$1.23 on these trips.
- A **longer, regional** trip for Class-1 vehicles will increase from \$7.10 to \$7.25 for E-ZPass customers and from \$9.10 to \$10.20 for cash-paying travelers. Some examples of popular regional trips include: Mid-County (#20) to Wyoming Valley (#115); Breezewood (#161) to New Stanton (#75); and Reading (#286) to Delaware River Bridge (#359). E-ZPass users will save \$2.95 on these trips.

E-ZPass is available online at www.paturnpike.com or by calling 1-877-PENN-PASS (1-877-736-6727). Customers can buy an E-ZPass GoPak at more than 300 retailers across the state, including most AAA offices and at certain stores in these chains: Acme, Giant Eagle and GetGo, Karns, Walmart and Wegmans. The E-ZPass GoPak allows travelers to obtain a transponder that is already activated and can be used immediately. (Retailers charge a one-time convenience fee.) Customers who purchase a GoPak must register the E-ZPass within 72 hours online or by calling the toll-free number. Turnpike travelers can also get an E-ZPass at vending machines called Tag Tellers inside certain Turnpike travel plazas. For a comprehensive list of E-ZPass retail locations, visit www.paturnpike.com/ezpass/sales.aspx.

A Pennsylvania Turnpike E-ZPass can be used on any toll facility where the purple-and-white logo is shown. Presently, there are 25 E-ZPass agencies in 15 states, largely in the Northeastern U.S., and more than 20 million E-ZPass transponders in use on toll roads, bridges and tunnels nationwide.

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