

Re [Ontario needs more toll roads, Editorial April 10](#)

While your editorial correctly suggests that road tolling represents good public policy, the argument that the public has expressed “steadfast resistance” to tolls because of the selloff of Highway 407 is off base.

Premier Kathleen Wynne changed her support for new revenue streams primarily out of a political desire to win the 2014 provincial election, not because a wide swath of the driving public is opposed to using the 407 ETR. Far from it.

Traffic volume on 407 ETR has increased since opening in 1997 from 237,000 trips on an average weekday to current levels of 380,000 trips per day. This would indicate that people are paying to enjoy the many benefits of this facility such as improved travel time and safer road conditions.

Clearly, there is political sensitivity to bringing in road pricing across all highways in Ontario and there would be predictable “resistance” from opposition parties. It is useful to remember, however, that it was former NDP Premier Bob Rae who launched the 407 project and former Tory Premier Mike Harris who completed it, prior to the selloff.

Other jurisdictions that have implemented road pricing, such as Stockholm, London and many U.S. states, have found that initial opposition to tolling typically disappears once the facilities, including high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes, have been put in place. As the Star’s editorial correctly points out, congestion relief and dedicated revenue to improve transportation infrastructure are two key advantages of toll roads.

Let’s take an incremental step in the right direction and use the expanded high occupancy vehicle (HOV) network that will be in place this summer for the Pan Am Games and test the HOT concept. I’ll bet there would be many single-occupant drivers willing to use carpool lanes at 30 cents per kilometre in order to move around the Toronto region faster.

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