

# E-tolling bill withdrawn

The controversial Transport Laws and Related Matters Amendment Bill was withdrawn from the National Assembly order paper virtually at the last minute on Thursday (22 November).

Shortly after the Assembly convened (on 22 November), the ANC asked that two resolutions paving the way for the bill to be debated later in the day be withdrawn.

No reasons were given and the request was agreed to by the House.

According to a memorandum attached to the bill, its provisions are essential to implement e-tolling and the Gauteng Freeway Improvement Project (GFIP), as well as other proposed road infrastructure projects in the country.

In a statement later, Democratic Alliance spokesman Ian Ollis claimed "pressure from opposition parties has pressed the ANC to withdraw" the bill.

"After a call by the DA's chief whip Watty Watson which was supported by other parties, and a threat from the opposition to stage a walkout during the debate on the e-toll bill, the ANC withdrew the bill this afternoon (22 November).

"This means that the Gauteng e-toll will not be the anticipated lump of coal in the Christmas stockings this year," he said.

The committee's deliberations on the bill would now continue in the new year. It could only be considered when Parliament reconvened on February 10, before being sent to the National Council of Provinces.

"This is indeed a victory for opposition parties and the South African public," Ollis said

"We will be monitoring the situation closely to ensure that all proper processes are followed when this bill is considered by Parliament in 2013 and that adequate public participation has taken place through the NCOP," Ollis added.

Source: *Sapa* via I-Net Bridge