

Scrap e-tolling says Cosatu

By [Jacques Keet](#)

21 Nov 2012

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) has appealed to government to take notice of opposition to the e-tolling of Gauteng freeways and scrap e-tolls.



In a presentation to the National Assembly's transport committee on Tuesday (20 November), the trade union federation also called for an immediate halt to the Gauteng open tolls for good.

"At the same time we call upon government to prioritise the roll-out of efficient, reliable, affordable, and safe public transport for all the people of South Africa," the Cosatu delegation told the committee. Cosatu said it would continue urging motorists not to register with the South African National Roads Agency Limited (Sanral) and not to buy e-tags.

"Our members remain mobilised for a campaign of mass action if e-tolling is not scrapped.

"As a measure of our determined opposition to this regressive and disastrous policy, Cosatu will embark upon a national strike on 30 November," the organisation warned.

Cosatu called for the Transport Laws and Related Matters Amendment Bill to be withdrawn, and e-tolling as a method of funding public roads to be scrapped.

The committee is currently holding public hearings on the bill.

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

In its presentation to the committee, Cosatu objected to the bill because of its *ex-post facto* [retroactive] introduction and lack of time-frame restrictions for increasing tariffs.

Cosatu said tolling would put a direct burden on the poor people of Gauteng, who would be forced to pay to travel on highways which had previously been free of direct charges and which they had paid for every year through income, road, fuel, VAT, motor vehicle and other taxes.

It would not just affect the people of Gauteng, as government had now conceded that e-tolling would replace the existing toll-gates and be expanded throughout the country.

It was not true that only the middle class used the highways.

The government's own statistics showed that a third of all commuters travelled by car, and that half of all working people earned less than R3,000 a month.

"This means that many low-income earners use private cars to travel to work, because our public transport system is so unreliable they have no alternative," Cosatu said.

"Public transport is also unavailable outside peak commuter hours, including weekends, when many Gauteng residents travel long distances across the province to visit family members, attend funerals, and so forth." Placing caps on tolling would also not help low-income earners.

"The point is that large numbers of private vehicle users simply do not have a single extra rand to spare," Cosatu said.

E-tolling would further have an immediate effect on food and other consumer goods' levels of inflation, already facing severe upward pressure due to massive fuel price increases.

Source: *Sapa* via I-Net Bridge

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>