

## Talking Points Against HB 1899 and SB 5825

### 1. What these bills do:

- a. Both SB 5825 and HB 1899 represent legislation that seeks to protect WSDOT from criticism, preserve toll revenue, and divert public money away from promised benefits.
- b. WSDOT is seeking to expand the failing toll system and has requested authorization from the Legislature to do so.
  - i. Senate Bill 5825 and its companion, House Bill 1899 – would not only authorize tolls on I-405, SR-167, and SR 509 – but also nullify the important speed performance metric, making the toll lanes permanent.
- c. Through new legislation, WSDOT is seeking to expand its failing toll system on I-405.
  - i. We need to hold them accountable for their policy promises. They should not be allowed to make promises, fail to deliver, and then change the rules to allow them to maintain their bad policies.

### 2. History of the Toll Lanes

- a. Several performance measures were created by lawmakers to measure the success or failure of the toll lane system. Two measures in particular had to be met in order for the tolls to remain in place;
  - i. (1) Toll lanes must maintain travel speeds of 45 miles per hour at least 90 percent of the time *during peak periods*
  - ii. (2) They must generate sufficient revenue to pay for operating costs.
- b. WSDOT and lawmakers gained the votes needed to create the tolling system based on a statutory promise that:
  - i. “If, after two years of operation of the express toll lanes on Interstate 405 performance measures...were not being met, the express toll lanes project [would be] terminated as soon as practicable.”
    1. The lanes would then be returned to the traveling public as free general-purpose lanes open to all.
      - a. The two-year trial program ended in September 2017.
      - b. WSDOT officials report the toll lanes failed to meet both standards required by law.
        - i. Yet, they continue to charge drivers to use the lanes.

### 3. Accountability

- a. When you're paying extra money, there needs to be results, and WSDOT needs to be held accountable for their promises and their lackluster results.
- b. This new legislation nullifies the speed requirement by making it optional. An optional requirement is a meaningless requirement.
- c. The legislation also shifts toll revenue from the Motor Vehicle Fund (MVF) to the general state treasury, allowing lawmakers to spend money on non-highway purposes.
  - i. The tolls were supposed to be used to pay for the upgrades and also maintain the roads