



Halifax Harbour Bridges submits request for toll increase

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Earlier today, Halifax Harbour Bridges (HHB) filed an application with the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSUARB) requesting approval to increase the existing tolls at the two harbour bridges.

HHB is asking for the NSUARB's approval to increase the fares as follows:

- \$0.20 per crossing for regular passenger cars using MACPASS (\$0.60 to \$0.80)
- \$0.25 per crossing for cash customers (\$0.75 to \$1)
- An increase of \$0.29 per axle for commercial vehicles using MACPASS
- An increase of an average of \$0.34 per axle for commercial vehicles using cash

No changes are proposed for buses including Access-A-Bus vehicles. If approved the increases to the existing tolls would be effective early in 2011.

"The bridges are very well maintained yet as they age they become more expensive to maintain," explains **Steve Snider**, general manager and CEO. "We have significant maintenance and construction projects planned for the next several years which are necessary for the long term safety of the traveling public." For example, in the next four years the suspended span on the Macdonald Bridge will be replaced. This project is estimated to cost \$137 million (2009 dollars). "A toll increase is needed to help fund this project because borrowing alone is not a prudent, fiscally responsible alternative," says Snider.

The last time HHB requested a toll increase for passenger cars was in 1992 when the cash fare went from \$0.50 to \$0.75. "Since the last toll adjustment HHB has experienced steady increases in its volume of traffic and a decrease in its interest rates which have positively affected its financing costs. This has allowed us to postpone periodic toll increases until now," explains Snider.

Under the Halifax-Dartmouth Bridge Commission Act HHB is considered a public utility. As such it is required to apply to the NSUARB to make any changes to the toll structure. The last time HHB went before the NSUARB was for approval to eliminate tokens as a form of payment, move to axle-based tolling and make business rule changes to MACPASS. These changes came into effect during the spring of 2008.

"For people still using cash to cross the harbour we recommend switching to MACPASS because it is less expensive than using cash," says Snider. "If the increase is approved, MACPASS for passenger cars will cost just \$0.05 more than cash is today. It's less expensive, faster and better for the environment."



With annual traffic volume of more than 33 million crossings and annual revenue of more than \$24 million HHB's mission is to provide safe, efficient and reliable passage at an appropriate cost.

Proposed Toll Rate Increase

**Auto, light trucks, motorcycles and buses
Per Vehicle**

Vehicle type	Current		Proposed	
	MACPASS	Cash	MACPASS	Cash
Automobiles, light trucks, motorcycles	\$0.60	\$0.75	\$0.80	\$1.00
Buses (including Access-A-Bus)	\$1.20	\$2.50	\$1.20	\$2.50

**Commercial Vehicles
Per Axle**

# of axles	Current		Proposed	
	MACPASS	Cash	MACPASS	Cash
2 axles	\$.875	\$1.00	\$1.164	\$1.375
3 axles	\$.875	\$1.00	\$1.164	\$1.333
4 axles	\$.875	\$1.00	\$1.164	\$1.312
5 axles	\$.875	\$1.00	\$1.164	\$1.350
6 axles	\$.875	\$1.00	\$1.164	\$1.333
7 axles	\$.875	\$1.00	\$1.164	\$1.321
8 axles	\$.875	\$1.00	\$1.164	\$1.344

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