Private Members' Motion – Toll Charges and the Cost of Living

That Dáil Éireann recognises that:

- There are 11 toll roads in operation across the State, 10 of which are on National roads network with two of these being in full public ownership and eight roads across the State are tolled under Public Private Partnerships (PPP) with the Minister for Transport holding responsibility for overall policy and funding in relation to the National Roads Programme.
- households and workers across the State continue to face significant cost-of-living pressures, including the rising costs of rents, energy, food, insurance and transport;
- motorists are already facing substantial financial pressures arising from fuel prices, motor insurance, motor tax, vehicle maintenance and existing toll charges;
- for many workers and families, particularly those living in rural areas and communities with limited public transport, travelling by car is a necessity rather than a choice;
- toll charges represent an additional financial burden on workers who rely on the national road network to travel to and from employment, education and essential services;
- further increase in toll charges in January 2027 would add to the cumulative financial pressures facing motorists and households;
- Annual increases in Carbon taxes, which have been implemented by government since 2020 and are set out 2030, have raised the price of motor fuels, with the Minister for Finance holding overall responsibility for tax policy.

Further notes that:

- Private toll companies have recorded millions of euros in after tax profits in the past year. These profits are growing to record levels
- the existing gold-plated PPP contracts that permit toll increases and generous traffic guarantee payments are a legacy of bad economic policy choices and decisions made by successive Fianna Fáil led Governments; workers who depend on tolled roads for their daily commute incur significant annual costs simply to travel to and from work;
- motorists are being charged higher tolls year on year for roads that are growing increasingly congested;
- new data has shown that hiked tolls on the M50 have done nothing to reduce congestion since the new toll regime began meaning this is another punitive measure from a government that punishes people because they have failed to provide any alternative;
- families should not face additional transport costs at a time when household budgets remain under considerable pressure;
- the Government has a responsibility to consider the cumulative impact of increases from toll increases and the impact on household living standards;

- There is a precedent for this, and the Minister himself said on the eve of the General Election that tolls hikes should not go ahead and the cost of living has risen sharply since then.

Calls on the Government to:

- Stop the proposed increase in toll charges scheduled for January 2027, ensuring that motorists are not subjected to additional financial pressures at a time of continuing cost-of-living difficulties;
- undertake a review of the cumulative financial burden of toll charges on regular commuters, workers and families, particularly those with no viable public transport alternative;
- examine measures to provide greater relief for frequent road users who depend on tolled routes for work and essential travel; and
- ensure that future decisions on toll charges take full account of affordability, household incomes and the wider cost-of-living pressures facing motorists.