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## DIGEST

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HB 896 Engrossed

2026 Regular Session

Braud

**Abstract:** Requires toll signage at all toll facilities, toll dispute procedures, and toll customer service centers within a certain radius of toll facilities.

Present law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(A)) authorizes the Dept. of Transportation and Development (DOTD) to exercise police powers to maintain and handle any state-owned toll facility. Further authorizes the dept. may delegate the exercise of these powers to any private entity acting on its behalf in the operation of a toll facility.

Present law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(B)) provides for definitions.

Proposed law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(B)(9)) defines "toll-by-plate" as the license plate tolling system that allows customers to receive an invoice by mail at the address where the vehicle is registered.

Proposed law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(B)(10)) defines "toll collection facility" as any road, bridge, tunnel, or related structure for which users pay a fee for passage.

Proposed law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(B)(11)) defines "toll customer service center" as a facility used to assist drivers, in person, regarding various tolling services, including but not limited to inquiries on existing accounts, account setup, service complaints, and payment processing.

Proposed law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(B)(14)) defines "vehicle class" as the system used to categorize the vehicle's dimensions, including height, width, and length.

Present law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(C)) specifies that no motor vehicle or trailer can be driven or be towed through any state-owned toll collection facility without payment of the proper toll. Requires that if the proper toll is not paid, as evidenced by video or electronic recording, the registered owner be liable to make prompt payment to the DOTD and an administrative fee of \$25 to recover the cost of collecting the toll.

Proposed law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(C)) requires the DOTD or private entity acting on its behalf in the operation of a toll facility erect toll signage to indicate the presence of a toll and the real-time prices of the tolls based on the vehicles' class, rates for toll tag carriers, and toll-by-plate rates for parish residents and nonresidents.

Proposed law retains and redesignates present law.

Proposed law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(D)(1) and (2)) references that any exception as defined in proposed law be applied with respect to payment of tolls. Further removes the \$25 administrative fee. Specifies that a person who receives an invoice for the use of a toll passage of a toll facility must, at no date later than the due date specified in the invoice, do the following:

- (1) Pay the amount owed as stated in the invoice.
- (2) Send a written request to the DOTD for a review of the toll assessment contained in the invoice.

Proposed law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(D)(3)) specifies that if a person fails to comply with proposed law, the DOTD may add an administrative fee, not to exceed \$6, to the amount owed. Further requires the DOTD to:

- (1) Set the administrative fee by rule in an amount that does not exceed the cost of collecting the toll.
- (2) Charge the person more than \$48 in administrative fees in a 12 month period.

Present law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(E)) requires the DOTD adopt policies and procedures for the collection of tolls, administrative fees, and late charges authorized in present law and with the Administrative Procedure Act.

Proposed law retains and redesignates present law.

Proposed law prohibits other tolls, fees, or other monetary impositions from being collected by the DOTD or authorized entity from a person's vehicle passage of a toll facility unless expressly authorized by present law. Further prohibits any mailing cost to exceed the actual cost of the postage.

Present law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(G)(1)(a)(i)) specifies that registered owners who fail to pay administrative fees and fail to appeal a violation notice within 30 days of its issuance will incur a \$5 late charge.

Proposed law changes the timeline from 30 days to 45 days before the imposition of the \$5 late charge. Proposed law retains and redesignates present law.

Proposed law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(J)(1)) provides for the procedure to dispute improper toll charges. Further specifies that to dispute the improper toll charges, the declaration of dispute can be submitted to an authorized agent at the time and place established by the DOTD with a certification establishing the basis for the dispute. Provides grounds to dispute the violation if:

- (1) The person or entity was not the registered owner at the time of the alleged violation and submits a copy of the plate surrender receipt from the office of motor vehicles or proof of sale of the vehicle.

- (2) The toll was paid by toll tag with the toll posted to a valid toll-tag account and a copy of the toll statement was submitted to the authorized agent.
- (3) The toll was paid in cash at the time and a copy of the toll receipt was submitted to the authorized agent.
- (4) The vehicle was not present at the facility at the time of the violation.
- (5) For other good cause shown.

Proposed law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(J)(2)) specifies that if the owner is a vehicle rental or leasing company which seeks to perform a transfer of responsibility to the vehicle lessee or renter, the owner must submit to the authorized agent a notice of violation of the signed lease or rental agreement and certification of the name and address of the lessee or renter of the vehicle at the time of the toll violation. Further requires the notice of violation or toll invoice be sent by the authorized agent to such lessee or renter within 45 days of receipt of the signed lease or rental agreement and certification and the lessee or renter will be deemed the owner of the vehicle and liable for the payment of the toll and any toll violation fees.

Proposed law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(J)(3)) requires the authorized agent to send the owner a written determination of the declaration of dispute resulting from a request made under proposed law. Grants the owner the ability to request a review by the authority of the authorized agent's determination by submitting a request for review at the place and time and in the matter established in the authorized agent's written determination of the declaration of dispute. Specifies that the declaration is final and binding on the owner unless overturned by the authority upon review.

Proposed law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(K)) requires that a toll customer service center be present when there is the operation of a toll facility and specifies that it must be maintained by the DOTD or a private entity acting on its behalf. Further requires that the toll customer service center be within at least a five mile radius of any toll facility. Requires that the entity receiving toll revenue and credits pay for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the toll customer center.

Present law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(I)) authorizes the DOTD to contract with an operating entity to carry out the provisions of present law.

Proposed law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(L)) provides an exception to the DOTD's authorization to contract with an operating entity to adopt policies and procedures for the collection of tolls, administrative fees, and late charges authorized pursuant to present law and proposed law that is in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act.

Proposed law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(M)) requires the DOTD to develop and implement efficient policies and procedures to ensure that vehicles falling under proposed law and not be assessed toll passage fees and related administrative fees or fines as outlined in proposed law. The following vehicles are exempted from toll passage fees and related administrative fees or fines as follows:

- (1) Vehicles owned by any federal, state, parish, local-municipality governments, or their various depts.
- (2) Vehicles associated with law enforcement pursuant to law enforcement's free and unhampered passage on bridges and ferries (R.S. 40:1392).
- (3) Vehicles owned by local municipality or parish police and firefighters in parishes where the toll facility exists.
- (4) Vehicles of any current government employees of the parish in which the toll facility exists.
- (5) Vehicles displaying a disabled-veteran license plate.
- (6) Vehicles making one round-trip passage in a 90 day period traveling through an unmanned toll collection facility. Notwithstanding the first round-trip, vehicles that make more than one round-trip passage in a 90 day period must be charged for each passage.

Proposed law (R.S. 48:250.4.1(M)) specifies that the exception outlined in proposed law is limited to two vehicles owned and registered by government employees. Requires these employees provide

proof of employment to the DOTD or authorized private entity upon request for verification purposes.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 48:250.4.1(B)(9) and (10) and (C)-(I); Adds R.S. 48:250.4.1(B)(11)-(14) and (J)-(M))

### Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works to the original bill:

1. Make technical changes.
2. Clarify that the definition of a "toll customer service center" means a facility used to assist drivers in person.
3. Change from the use of a toll project to the passage of a toll collection facility when directing drivers who receive invoices to follow certain procedures.
4. Add that the Department of Transportation and Development or an authorized agent is prohibited from collecting any other tolls, fees, or other monetary impositions from a person's vehicle passage of a toll facility unless expressly authorized.
5. Add the prohibition that any mailing cost not exceed the actual cost of the postage.
6. Changes the timeline from thirty days to forty-five days before the imposition of the five dollar late charge for failure to pay or appeal a toll violation.
7. Change the exception to toll passage fees from vehicles owned by current employees of schools located in the parish in which the tolling facility resides to vehicles associated with law enforcement pursuant to law enforcement's free and unhampered passage on bridges and ferries (R.S. 40:1392).
8. Change the exception to toll passage fees from vehicles identified through the toll-by-plate system that pass through the facility once in three calendar but vehicles passing more than once in three months will be assessed toll passage fees to vehicles making one round-trip passage in a ninety day period traveling through an unmanned toll collection facility, but vehicles that make more than one round-trip passage in a ninety day period will be charged for each additional passage.
9. Add an upon signature of the governor effective date.