

So? What do you think?
Are toll roads the way to go?

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Recently it was reported that the federal government has granted the state permission to charge tolls on Interstate 95. Though there is no stated plan in place to charge tolls, state Department of Transportation officials have been given approval to charge access fees for the road.

I-95 enters South Carolina in Dillon County, running south into Georgia. In August, officials said the state had applied for the right to charge tolls on Interstate 95 as a part of the "Corridors of the Future" pilot program.

Other states, North Carolina, Virginia, Georgia and Florida, asked the Federal Highway Administration for permission to do the same.

Some say the money collected from the toll would be used to refurbish and maintain the interstate. All states included would have to agree to collect the tolls on I-95 and legislation in South Carolina would have to be changed to allow for tolls to be collected on I-95, it was reported.

The measure to charge tolls could mean, according to reports that cite Secretary of Transportation Buck Limehouse as the source, that SCDOT plans to place tolls on portions of Interstate 26. Also in August, federal officials approved a request by the state to allow tolls on the proposed Interstate 73.

That interstate is expected to run from Myrtle Beach to Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. In 2006 state legislators approved plans that would allow for toll collection to help finance I-73 construction. Does it matter to you that the cost for I-73 is said to be close to \$2 billion and could take at least 10 years to complete?

Additionally, Michael Covington, SCDOT, Columbia, says "An important point was omitted from your summary. SCDOT's Corridors of the Future application indicated that any tolls placed on I-95 would be used for dedicated toll lanes. This means that the existing lanes would continue to be free. I think this distinction would have a significant bearing on the public's response to your poll."