



CENTRAL TEXAS
Regional Mobility Authority

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Steve Pustelnyk
512-996-9778 (office)
512-680-9997 (cell)

Study Finds Toll Road Users Save Fuel and Emit Fewer Pollutants

(Austin, Texas) – A scientific study conducted on behalf of the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority has found that vehicles driven on the 183A toll road on average use less fuel and emit fewer pollutants than vehicles driven on the alternative parallel route, US 183.

Conducted by Sensors Inc. in June 2009, the study involved outfitting two vehicles, a small sedan and a large SUV, with specialized monitoring equipment. The vehicles were then driven on both US 183 and the 183A toll road during peak and non-peak hours. Vehicle emissions and fuel consumption were then compared.

The study found that using 183A could potentially save the average driver 108 gallons of fuel a year, at a current cost savings of approximately \$281. Based on current traffic volumes, it has been calculated that the 183A toll road has reduced overall fuel consumption by nearly 665,000 gallons a year, saving local drivers more than \$1.7 million annually.

The study also found that vehicles on 183A on average emit significantly fewer pollutants. Nitrogen Oxide annual emissions are 56% lower, Carbon Dioxide annual emissions are 28% less and Total Hydrocarbon annual emissions are reduced by 37%. All of these pollutants have been associated with global warming, and Nitrogen Oxides contribute to the formation of ground level ozone, which can damage human lungs and is especially hazardous to people with asthma and other lung diseases.

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"This study suggests that reducing traffic congestion has more benefits than first thought. Not only do drivers get where they want to go faster and with less stress, but they can also conserve fuel and reduce vehicle emissions," says Mike Heiligenstein, Executive Director of the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority. "The net benefit is a better environment and an improved quality of life."

Since passage of the Clean Air Act in 1970, the federal government has been steadily implementing new laws and regulations aimed at reducing air pollution and may soon place new restrictions on carbon emissions.

While the study involved a comparison between a limited access toll road and a parallel arterial highway with traffic signals, the results suggest that any roadway improvement that reduces stop and go traffic would offer similar benefits.

About the Mobility Authority

The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority is a local, independent government agency created to improve the regional transportation system. Our mission is to implement innovative solutions that reduce congestion and create transportation choices that enhance quality of life and economic vitality. The Mobility Authority is the state's first Regional Mobility Authority, created in January 2003 to serve Travis and Williamson counties. The Mobility Authority currently operates the 183A toll road in Williamson County and is working to extend the 183A project and construct the US 290 East (Manor Expressway) project in Travis County.

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