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*A proposal to replace the tax on gas, with one on miles driven, would, effectively, turn all roads into toll roads, and use the same system to track everyone's travel, i.e., combining speculative profits with Big Brother control. Shown: a toll road on the New Jersey Turnpike.*

system being used or to the times of day, and thus cannot be used to affect these kinds of traveler choices.”

The language makes it clear that the goal is not merely to increase revenue, but also to use pricing to change the behavior of the travelers. As in, if you insist upon driving during rush hour on congested roads, expect to pay more. This is the same sort of thinking that is reflected in the schemes to charge homeowners higher prices for electricity, if they run their air conditioners on hot Summer days: namely, social engineering aimed at enforcing austerity. Rather than improve the infrastructure, the plan is to price people out of the market while letting the existing infrastructure decay.

The Commission recommends, as a replacement for the current fuel tax, “a charge for each mile driven (commonly referred to as a vehicle-miles-traveled or VMT fee system) . . . as the consensus choice for the future.” This VMT system should, it added, provide “a foundation for state and local governments that choose to use it to develop their own mileage-based systems that piggyback on the Federal system in order to raise their share of needed revenues in ways that spur more efficient use of the system.”

Furthermore, the commission states that the technology used to track vehicles for the Federal program should be designed “in anticipation of the potential for state, local, and private toll roads to piggyback on the national system,” and recommends “actions to facili-

## Dana Levenson on Privatization

Levenson, the Royal Bank of Scotland banker and former Chicago's chief financial officer, is an unabashed cheerleader for turning over public infrastructure to private interests. In a 2007 interview with *Governing* magazine, said he believed that states and cities have an obligation to consider selling their assets.

“Absolutely,” he said. “With as much money as is amassing in these funds, I can't imagine anything less intelligent than dismissing it out of hand. . . . It comes down to a matter of how willing should states and municipalities be to unlocking the value that happens to exist in their portfolios—even though they may not have looked at their entities as portfolios in the past.”

“We're shifting the financial risk to a private operator, while at the same time never losing use of the asset,” he said. “It's not like the Spanish and the Australians will pick up the road and go away with it.”

RBS has estimated that some \$175 billion has been raised for purchases of government infrastructure assets, and that, with leverage, that provides some \$700 billion of “investment” capacity.