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Traffic JUNE 29, 2015

# Miami-Dade expressway agency to give toll refunds to frequent drivers



BY GLENN GARVIN  
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Still battling public complaints and criticism over last year's \$52 million increase in highway tolls, the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority is expected to approve a program that will refund to drivers

any toll money that's left over after it pays for highway construction and maintenance.

MDX's board of directors will vote on the refunds, which will be divided among drivers who spend at least \$100 a year traveling the agency's five highways, at a public meeting at its headquarters at 4 p.m. Tuesday.

The refunds, an expansion of the MDX Advantage Program — a kind of frequent-driver program that provides registered drivers with cash and merchant discount coupons — are the latest of several moves aimed at defusing public anger and political fallout over “Tollmageddon,” as the increase has come to be known among its multitude of critics.

Earlier this year, MDX promised it wouldn't hike tolls again before 2019 and that any future increases will be tied to the Consumer Price Index. It also pledged that future MDX expansions must pay for themselves with their own tolls, rather than from price hikes across the whole system of highways.

But MDX's conciliatory moves haven't done much to quiet complaints. Less than two months ago, there was even a proposal before the state Legislature to shrink and shuffle the membership of the authority's board of directors and replace chairman Maritza Gutierrez with Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez.

The effort was ultimately unsuccessful, but it was a clear warning that controversy over the toll increase hasn't died out.

Members of the MDX Advantage Program — anybody who has a SunPass can sign up for free at <http://www.mdxway.com/advantage> — are already eligible for up to \$30 in toll rebates per quarter.

But to qualify for the rebates, they must use MDX expressways at least 66 times every 90 days and spend at least \$50 in tolls during that time.

Those eligibility requirements will be significantly eased under the new plan. Anybody who spends \$100 a year or more on tolls will get some kind of refund, though MDX hasn't said yet how much. The authority also plans to reopen registration for the MDX Advantage Program, which closed in April, for another month starting July 13.

MDX officials say there will be money left over from last year's toll increase because the agency's credit rating has been upgraded, which means it will cost less for MDX to borrow money.

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Gracian L. Casas ·  Top Commenter · Miami, Florida

MDX can take it's rebates and shove it where the SUNPASS DON'T SHINE! We pay for our roads through taxes. And their rates are ridiculous to cut across from the turnpike to down through 836. They found a cash cow and are exploiting the plight of the people who work downtown.. Why don't you take whatever you have accumulated and build a damn metro rail from FIU to downtown to take care of the real problem. We need more stations so we can reduce the amount of traffic. You people will never learn..

Reply · Like ·  10 · June 29 at 11:29pm



Tony Theissen

"We pay for our roads through taxes." Not these roads, Gracian. MDX does not receive gas tax funds and like it or not, it is providing exactly the service it was created to perform.

Reply · Like ·  2 · June 30 at 5:51am



Skip Van Cel ·  Top Commenter





Too little, too late. Please do an expose on who the MDX board members are and what industries they come from and/or lobby for. This is the real story.

Reply · Like · 2 · June 30 at 5:18am



Michael Andrew · N/A

Yes expose those thieves for who and what they are.

Reply · Like · 1 · June 30 at 5:42am



Willie Bones · Works at Urban Warrior

MDX – If I were you, I would ROLL THEM BACK, and I mean WAY BACK, and I would do this AS FAST AS YOU POSSIBLY CAN. Your farce of an idea to rebate drivers who pay over \$100 a year is not nearly good enough. Take me, for example. I live in Kendall, and work in Downtown. I personally break the \$100 barrier EVERY 2 ½ MONTHS!!! The anger over my Sunpass bill outpacing the majority of my other bills cannot and will no longer be contained.

The alternative is that the people of Miami will FORCE you to do so, by PUBLIC LYNCHING if need be... And yes, it is heading that way, and FAST!!!

Reply · Like · 1 · June 30 at 6:50am



Ca RI Os

Im paying \$100 a month just to go to work. MDX is making it hard for me to make a living. Its ridiculous that I have to pay to work. Like living in this city isnt hard enough

Reply · Like · 2 · June 30 at 7:35am



Jorge Martinez · Top Commenter

The wright thing for MDX Should give all working commuters a substantial discount.

Reply · Like · 1 · June 30 at 8:05am



Maria Elena Marin

I believe that they should have a REDUCE set fee/toll for the people who go thru them daily for work or NONE AT ALL!!

Reply · Like · 1 · June 30 at 9:06am



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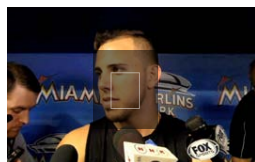


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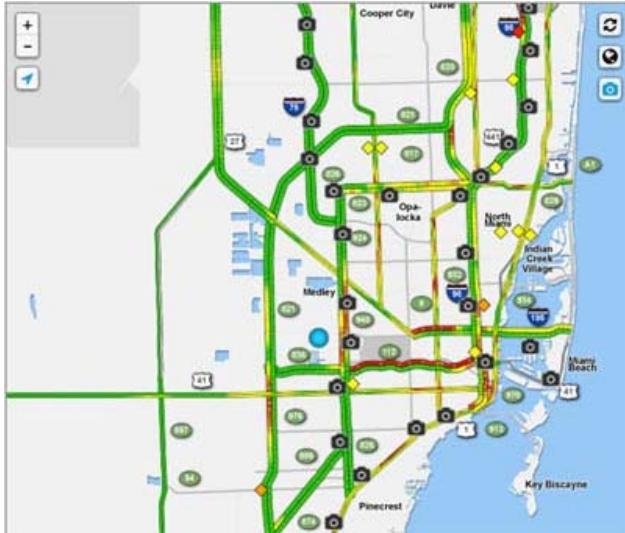


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