

*Dallas Morning News*

## **At a glance: Private toll roads in Texas**

12:00 AM CDT on Thursday, August 13, 2009

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### **THE ISSUE**

The state's legal authority to enter into private toll road deals expires next month, in all but a few cases. The issue will be taken up by the Texas Legislature again in 2011.

### **THE CONTROVERSY**

Opponents say such private toll roads result in much higher, and more frequent, tolls for local drivers. But supporters point out that they also greatly reduce the need for tax dollars to build roads and provide more money to build more roads.

### **THE SITUATION**

Texas Transportation Commission chairwoman Deirdre Delisi says Texas has the largest inventory of private toll-road deals in the country. Among them are:

#### **LBJ Freeway**

Spanish firm Cintra will rebuild most of this highway in Dallas County, and it **probably will open by 2015**. Taxpayers provided **\$445 million**, and Cintra will borrow or invest about **\$3 billion** more to build it and maintain it until 2062. The new highway will include rebuilt free lanes and six new tolled lanes.

#### **North Tarrant Expressway**

Another **hybrid of free and new tolled lanes**, this highway will cost **\$2 billion**, but taxpayers are only paying about **\$600 million**. Cintra also won that contract.

#### **Texas portion of Interstate 69 in South Texas**

Private firm Zachry Construction will be paid **\$5 million** to design a **network of toll roads and freeways** in South Texas that could eventually be the Texas segment of the new north-south interstate. Awarded last June, the deal just received an OK by the Legislative Budget Board.

#### **Extension of State Highway 130**

Cintra and Zachry teamed up to **extend SH130 for 40 miles south of Austin** as a toll road. The team paid Texas **\$25 million**, part of a **\$1.3 billion** total investment, and in return gets to collect tolls there for 50 years.

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