

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY OCTOBER 7, 2016 10:32 AM

Miami-Dade's toll authority wanted to start charging again Friday. Gov. Scott said no.



BY DOUGLAS HANKS
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With Hurricane Matthew safely past Miami-Dade, the county's tolling authority asked to resume charging drivers Friday. Florida Gov. Rick Scott's administration rejected the request.

At a Friday morning briefing, Scott said he denied a request by the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority to resume tolls, which were suspended statewide in advance of Matthew. He said he wanted to keep state roads toll free until the storm crisis had passed.



In an interview, Mario Diaz, spokesman for the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority, described a confusing back-and-forth between state transportation officials and the local agency. He said the Transportation Department contacted MDX Director Javier Rodriguez Friday morning and said he should email a written request to lift the toll suspension enacted Wednesday as Matthew threatened the Miami area with tropical-storm winds. It was part of a statewide lifting of tolls as more northern areas of Florida's East Coast ordered evacuations of coastal regions.

When MDX sent the requested email, Diaz said, "we were told no."

"We never really wanted to make that initial request," he said. "But we were asked to make it so they could consider it."

The rare freezing of tolls for MDX, which falls under state authority but is overseen by a board of state and county appointees, means a loss of revenue used to pay for maintenance and cover debt payments on construction projects. The agency collects about \$500,000 on an average day on its five highways, including State Road 836, which is best known as the Dolphin. But with schools, government offices and major employers closed Thursday and Friday, traffic has been significantly lighter.

At the request of the Miami Herald, Diaz provided an email exchange between Rodriguez and Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti, director of Florida's Turnpike system. Rodriguez asked to start charging tolls again by 11 a.m. Gutierrez-Scaccetti wrote Florida's transportation secretary endorsing MDX's request. But Secretary Jim Boxold wrote back at 8:50 a.m., denying permission to lift tolls in Miami-Dade.

"We will not reinstate tolls any sooner than 24 hours after storm conditions have passed in that county," he wrote. "We will assess this request later."

Miami Herald staff writer Julie Brown and Mary Ellen Klas contributed to this report.



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Chris Johnson

What on earth? Baldy the Governor says that the storm was so awful that the tolls have to be lifted for Miami-Dade (which wasn't even hit) but he won't extend the voter registration deadline for all the people who have lost power, roofs, and even homes. He is such an a hole.

Reply · 1 · Oct 7, 2016 10:44am



Juan Yglesias · Miami Dade College

Everyone has had more then plenty of time to register. You snooze you loose.

Reply · 8 · Oct 7, 2016 1:29pm



Chris Johnson

Juan Yglesias Nope, that is not how constitutional rights work. That is such an ignorant comment.

Reply · Oct 7, 2016 3:55pm



Eric Haskins · Tampa, Florida

Chris Johnson Its called personal responsibility. People have plenty of time if you dont place deadlines deadbeats and liberals will push the issue everytime. Grow up if they want to vote they will find a way to get it done.

Reply · 3 · Oct 7, 2016 11:02pm

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Enrique Bertran · Miami, Florida

500k a day? They must be flooded in cash. These people are drunk on money, with a g-damn sunpass every 500 feet. Unbelievable.

Reply · 7 · Oct 7, 2016 10:55am



Bradley L. Gerber · Copywriter at Golin Harris International

I don't know about that number. \$500,000 a day means more than \$182 million a year on average.

Reply · 2 · Oct 7, 2016 12:30pm



Enrique Bertran · Miami, Florida

Bradley L. Gerber check it http://mdxway.com/pdf/annual_reports/CAFR_2015.pdf

Reply · Oct 7, 2016 12:42pm



Jacqueline Blaszkamp · Boca Raton, Florida

Bradley L. Gerber Who needs a state income tax when they are bleeding you to the poor house with all the taxes, add on fees and tolls they charge you. Penny here and a penny there on sales taxes going to Schools. Don't we pay school taxes already? Why do i pay to get into a County Park on weekends in Broward county? Aren't I am already paying taxing to maintian to begin with. Or homestead allowing many in this State to pay less for the same services you get. How ingenius is that. How much easier would it be to pay your fair share? How much time do we pay the tax appraiser and tax collector to keep this amount of paperwork to do all of this?

Reply · 2 · Oct 8, 2016 1:46am

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Ariam Galindo · Construction Engineering Inspector (CEI) at Metric Engineering, Inc

What a bunch of lyers, these guys are pathetic.

Reply · 2 · Oct 7, 2016 8:52pm

Reply · 5 · Oct 7, 2016 6:52pm



Jacqueline Blaszk Campbell · Boca Raton, Florida

500.000 a day on tolls just for that one day. How much of that goes to Overentitled Salaries and benefits and Cash rich companies than really going back to taxpayers. Many of us don't drink the Kookaid. Look how bad roads are in this state anyway. You can't move on many of them. If we really did have a Massive Storm we wouldn't be able to get out of harms way anyway. This is how overbuilding works and no mass transportation plans or even roads that fit to how many live in these overpopulated areas.

Reply · 1 · Oct 8, 2016 1:38am



Carl Armant · Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta

The MDX is a ripoff. Why can't they made public their expenses on "maintenance and cover debt payment on future projects..."? No agency in the world has collected more money doing absolutely nothing.

Reply · 1 · Oct 8, 2016 5:36am



Manny Fernandez · Florida International University

It is public and their budget and expenses are part of the Florida Public Records laws, which, I may add, were passed when the Democrats controlled Florida.

Reply · 1 · Oct 8, 2016 8:43am



Manny Fernandez · Florida International University

Hey, there will be an election in thirty days and Slick Rick is being, well Slick

Reply · Oct 8, 2016 8:34am

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