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I welcome your investigations into the tolls on three firth road bridges. Being a Fife councillor I am particularly concerned with those across the Forth and the Tay.

I am not opposed to road tolls. Indeed, had it not been for the unfair exemptions I would have heartily supported the now defunct Edinburgh proposals. However what is wrong is when tolls are levied to pay for an expensive but necessary piece of infrastructure such as a bridge, rather than for traffic management reasons.

People in Fife have jibbed from the start at the unfairness of their being the only county in which one has to pay tolls to get into or out of. That is not of course quite accurate; there are the free

options at Friarton and Kincardine, not to mention the railways. It would be interesting to try and find out just how much loss of business, including visits by tourists, can be attributed to the tolls which are not exactly expensive.

I have seen articles in the Press suggesting that while tolls can be removed from the Erskine bridge without causing traffic chaos, the same may not be true for the Forth and Tay Road Bridges. Very well. I suggest therefore that tolls be lifted for an experimental period, possibly just a week, during the school term and let us see exactly what happens. If severe traffic congestion does ensue in the centre of Dundee and outside Edinburgh, then it will be clear to all that simply removing tolls is a non-starter. However if it is decided that tolls must stay without carrying out this dramatic, some might say melodramatic, experiment, then Fifers will be convinced that they are being discriminated against. You have probably seen, as I have, articles saying 'if the Skye tolls can be removed, why not the Forth and Tay ones?' even though there was a substantial difference in levels and the traffic situations were very different; if the Erskine tolls are lifted these complaints will increase.

I hope this suggestion is helpful. May I also say that I agree with removing tolls for buses (although that is unlikely to result in enough of a fare reduction to attract car-drivers) and with an increased rate for single occupancy, especially in the peak 'hours', each of which appears to last at least 150 minutes.