

PKR slams new JB highway as 'most expensive'

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PKR has questioned the high proposed toll charge and collection system of the new Eastern Dispersal Link (EDL) highway in Johor Bahru, that makes it the “most expensive highway in Malaysia”.

The EDL is a new 8.1km highway linking Johor Baru's Sultan Iskandar Customs, Immigration, and Quarantine Complex (CIQ) to the North-South Highway via the Pandan interchange.

eastern dispersal link edl toll rates 040312It costs RM1 billion with a 34-year concession, and has an elevated section of about 4.4 km.

Not only did the highway cost up to RM200 million more compared to several other similar highways, it also has a significantly higher toll rate per kilometre, said PKR's national deputy secretary-general Steven Choong.

Choong in a statement today compared the EDL with 18.1 km long Duta - Ulu Kelang Expressway (Duke) and the 7.9 km long Ampang - Kuala Lumpur Elevated Highway (Akleh) in Kuala Lumpur.

He noted that EDL's proposed toll is RM6.20, or 76 sen per km while the rates per km for the Akleh is 18.9 sen per km and the Duke is 11.1 sen.

“Why the proposed toll rate for EDL is so much since the number of years of concession as well as construction costs is more or less the same (as the other cited highways)?” he asked.

Non users also charged?

The PKR leader also questioned the toll collection system that charges traffic passing through the Immigration booths at the Johor Bahru Causeway for both inward and outward bound vehicles.

“This would mean that all vehicles leaving and entering the JB CIQ would be charged the proposed toll of RM6.20 each way.

“A return trip will cost RM12.40 more (even) for those who would not be using the EDL,” claimed Choong.

“For those who would use the EDL, it will be the most expensive highway in Malaysia,” he added.

Choong said the matter was compounded by Singapore's announced move to increase its toll to match Malaysia's, costing the motorist an “additional RM24.80 irrespective of whether or not he motorist will be using the EDL”.

“What is so special about the EDL that warrants such expensive rate apart from the fact that it is in Johor Bahru?” he asked.

Choong slammed the EDL concessionaire for basing its toll calculation on the traffic traversing the Causeway with Singapore, at 62,000 vehicles.

He pointed out that the figure includes those not using the EDL, for example, Singapore traffic visiting Johor Bahru city or those headed for destinations away from the EDL.

The PKR deputy sec-gen called for the rejection of the proposed EDL toll rate that may set the precedent for toll increases elsewhere, and wants a fairer rate and implementation.

“A coalition of NGOs and political parties called ‘Reject EDL’ or ‘Tolak EDL’ ...has been formed to

campaign against such method and rate of collecting toll from motorists crossing the Causeway,” he said.

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