

**PKR slams U-turn on Johor toll increase**  
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Bukit Batu assemblyperson Jimmy Puah has questioned the government's move to reportedly increase the toll charges at the Johor-Singapore Causeway.

In addition, he said the increases are similar to a toll hike that was to take effect in 2012, but was supposedly dropped after Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak intervened.

"Now suddenly, with this new announcement, the government must explain to us whether the new toll rate increase has anything to do with the EDL (Eastern Dispersal Link) and is MRCB (Malaysian Resources Corporation Bhd) still the toll concession holder for the EDL?"

"If the collection is indeed for MRCB's behalf, what is the justification for the ridiculous amount of RM16.50 when MRCB already holds a 34 year concession and the entire EDL is only 8.1 kilometres long?" he said in a statement yesterday.

The EDL is a highway that starts at the Customs, Immigration and Quarantine Complex (CIQ) at the Malaysian side of the causeway and leads to the North South Expressway (NSE).

It was at the centre of a public uproar in 2012 when MRCB proposed to collect its toll RM6.20 (for cars) each way at the CIQ, whether or not it uses the EDL.

The government then stepped in, with Najib telling Parliament that the EDL would be toll-free once the government takes over the highway from MRCB.

Cost of crossing causeway

Meanwhile, China Press and Oriental Daily reported on Friday that all cars entering Malaysia via the causeway would be charged RM9.70 at the CIQ, while car leaving towards Singapore would be charged RM6.80.

The changes will take effect beginning on Aug 1, at 12.01am, according to the reports quoting a Works Ministry statement.

Other vehicles such as lorries and buses will be facing toll increases as well, while motorcyclists will not be facing any toll charges on the Malaysian side of the causeway.

Currently, cars entering Malaysia via the causeway are charged RM2.90, while cars leaving are not charged any toll.

These figures exclude toll charges and vehicle entry permit (VEP) charges imposed on the Singapore-side of the causeway, which Puah said will be increase beginning in August as well.

“The Singapore government has always taken the stand that if there is any increase on the toll rate on the Malaysians’ side, they will reciprocate by increasing their rate in tandem with ours,” he said, adding that Singapore has already announced an increase of the VEP beginning August 1.

The VEP will be charged at S\$35 (about RM90) per day for non-Singaporean registered cars entering Singapore during peak hours.

Johor economy will hurt

The Malaysian federal government is mulling to implement its own VEP scheme for foreign-registered vehicles entering Malaysia as well, at the state government’s request.

“PKR Johor is very concerned with the new toll rate which will definitely have a strong impact on the local economy, especially Southern Johor region and also thousands of Johoreans that commuted to Singapore daily be it for employment or schooling.

“We are anticipating some strong reaction and outcry from local communities which are already divided and concerned with the impact of the soon to be enforced VEP,” said Puah, who is also the PKR Johor legal bureau chief.

He urged the government to reconsider the new toll charges and the VEP, so as not to burden Johor’s residents and the state’s economy.

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