4 April 2019

Subject: Clarity on e-tolls

Dear President Ramaphosa,

On the 2nd of November last year, Premier Makhura marched against e-tolls, and stated that ‘e-tolls have no future in the plans of this province as long as the ANC is in charge’. The Premier also reassured us, time and time again, that he was engaging with you on the matter of e-tolls. However, the Premier barely touched on the issue in his State of the Province address, and did not say anything about the measures that will be taken to address e-tolls and whether scrapping the system is guaranteed. We also did not receive any feedback on his engagement/s with you on this issue.

Then, last week, just over a month to go before the elections, The South African National Roads Agency (Sanral) announced that it will immediately suspend the process of pursuing e-toll debt through the courts, but may ‘revisit’ this decision in future. Is this an election gimmick Mr President? Almost as soon as this statement was made, Minister Mboweni stated that Sanral must reverse its 'very bad' decision on e-toll debt. As you can imagine Mr. President, all this flip-flopping and the lack of a cohesive voice on this issue has left us, the citizens of this province, very confused. As such, this open letter is a last-ditch attempt to obtain clarity on e-tolls once and for all.

This is a critical issue, Mr. President, because the e-toll system has made criminals of ordinary South Africans. Something which I believe is neither justified, nor deserved. What the people of this province struggle to understand, is that our roads are already paid for, so where does the e-toll money go? Because we have been burnt so many times by corruption in the past, I cannot help but wonder whether the lack of transparency and clear direction on e-tolls is because a web of corruption underlies this system, like so many others, in our province. Are we being duped?

What we need, Mr. President, is leadership, and I am calling on you, our President, to provide this. I would like to challenge you to come and meet with myself, and DA leader Mr Mmusi Maimane, within 7 days to explain exactly what the future of e-tolls will be. We need, and deserve, a clear response.

I sincerely hope that you will rise to this challenge Mr. President.

I await your response.

Regards

Solly Msimanga MPL