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****ANNOUNCEMENT--Texas Transportation Commission Waives Fee for Select Veterans Driving on Toll Roads throughout Central Texas, Beyond****

In a gesture to honor veterans, the Texas Transportation Commission approved a measure at today's Commission meeting to grant free passage for select veterans on several toll roads in Texas.

In central Texas, those toll roads where some veterans will be able to drive free of charge include Loop 1, SH 45 North, SH 45 Southeast and SH 130 (Segments 1-4) in the Austin area. Additionally, qualified veterans will be able to travel free of charge on the Camino Colombia, which is SH 255 near Laredo and Loop 49 in Tyler.

The full Press Release is attached. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Wendy Reilly
Legislative Liaison
State Legislative Affairs Division
Texas Department of Transportation

Texas Transportation Commission Waives Fee for Select Veterans Driving on State Toll Roads

Disabled Vets, Purple Heart & Medal of Honor Recipients to Drive Free of Charge on Loop 1, SH 45 North, SH 45 Southeast, SH 130 (Segments 1-4), SH 255 and Loop 49

AUSTIN — In a gesture to honor those men and women who have made great personal sacrifices to ensure our freedom and protect our nation, the Texas Transportation Commission today approved granting free passage for select veterans on several Texas toll roads. The decision will benefit veterans who are either disabled or recipients of the Purple Heart and/or Congressional Medal of Honor.

In central Texas, those toll roads where some veterans will be able to drive free of charge include Loop 1, SH 45 North, SH 45 Southeast and SH 130 (Segments 1-4) in the Austin area. Additionally, qualified veterans will be able to travel free of charge on the Camino Colombia, which is SH 255 near Laredo and Loop 49 in Tyler.

House Bill 3139, passed by the Legislature in 2009 and enacted in the Transportation Code

(Section 372.053), stated that the state's toll authorities may develop a discount program for various veterans.

Governor Rick Perry recently called on the Transportation Commission to begin implementing a program that would help support Texas veterans getting around Texas with less financial burden.

“Our veterans are motivated by a higher calling that is rooted in the fundamental values of our nation,” Gov. Perry said. “In Texas, we understand and appreciate the sacrifices the men and women of our armed forces make in defense of our freedom, and we consider it an honor to support them.”

Currently, there are 7,360 specialty license plates indicating drivers are disabled vets, Purple Heart and Congressional Medal of Honor recipients in Travis, Williamson and Hays counties closest to the central Texas toll roads. Statewide there are 160,666 similar specialty plates.

“We are able to celebrate our freedom each and every day due to the unwavering sacrifice of our military's brave men and women, so making it a bit easier for them to move through our great state is the least we can do,” said Phil Wilson, Executive Director of TxDOT. “We thank Texas veterans for their service and hope the free use of our toll roads recognizes the price they paid for our freedom.”