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Governor Deal Pledges to Remove GA 400 Toll Again

ATLANTA, GA – Under intense citizen and media pressure, Governor Nathan Deal pledged today for the second time in two years to tear down the GA 400 toll booth that collects the only mandatory road toll in Georgia history. He set a target removal date of December 31st 2013.

Two days earlier, a group of civic leaders representing VoterGa's Free GA 400 project presented Gov. Deal with 400 petitions requesting that he adhere to the original GA 400 construction agreements between Atlanta and the state. They require that toll revenue only be spent to construct the GA 400 extension inside the perimeter and that the toll be removed now that construction costs are repaid.

VoterGA founder, Garland Favorito, released a statement today on the new pledge: "We are encouraged that Governor Deal has once again pledged to remove the toll so that all Georgia transportation projects are funded in an **equal manner** for all Georgians. His predecessors took the opposite tack. But we are cautious knowing things can change just like before and the new pledge may not be honored either. Toll removal also requires a vote of the SRTA board which has not yet occurred."

He continued: "We are disturbed though that the governor has decided to hide behind the **phony bond excuse** for another year and a half. As we have repeatedly explained, SRTA currently has **\$68 million** which can be used to:

- Pay **\$22 million** for completion of the Buckhead interchange ramps;
- Open a trust, escrow or SRTA account to repay all **\$34 million** bond principal and interest at any time necessary to **avoid penalties**.

"The governor chose to continue, not suspend, Sonny Perdue's pet projects that have nothing to do with the GA 400 extension and **violate the original agreement** with Atlanta. Furthermore, the governor has not yet committed to liquidate the **\$10 million 17th St. property** purchased under Gov. Roy Barnes in 2002 although it had **nothing** to do with the GA 400 extension. **Selling that property could reduce toll collection by 6 months.** If the intent is to restore public trust prior to the T-SPLOST vote, I think he needs to be more open and honest about why the state must continue to raid the Fulton County cookie jar for another year and a half."

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