
PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF THE **AUDITOR GENERAL**



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Auditor General DeFoor Releases Pennsylvania Turnpike Audit; Sees Improvement from 2022 Audit and Renews Call for Solutions to Control Debt Obligations

HARRISBURG – Auditor General Timothy L. DeFoor today [released a second performance audit of the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission](#), which found its financial position has improved but that debt management and unpaid toll collection continue to be challenges.

“I am pleased to say that a lot has improved since our first audit in 2022,” Auditor General DeFoor said. “The Commission has worked with the legislature to implement our recommendation to make it harder for drivers to dodge their toll bills, made headway on its debt payments, and improved its credit rating. However, it still has more debt than the entire general obligation debt for government activities for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania largely due to Acts 44 and 89 requiring it to pay PennDOT another \$1.6 billion through 2057.”

The audit has five findings and 19 recommendations for improvements. The performance audit covers the time from June 1, 2022, through May 31, 2025.

- **In Finding 1**, auditors found that the Commission continues to face significant challenges to raise toll revenue to make future payments to PennDOT under the Act 44/89 financial structure, associated debt payments, and capital contributions.
- **In Finding 2**, auditors found toll increases driven by Act 44/89 continue to burden travelers, including the need for the Commission to annually increase toll rates through 2055. However, since the annual payment to PennDOT decreased, the Commission's credit rating has improved, and they have been able to invest in the Turnpike's future improvement beyond maintenance.
- **In Finding 3**, auditors found the implementation of Open Road Tolling (ORT) resulted in a mix of increases and decreases to both passenger and commercial vehicles' toll rates. However, by implementing the new formula, the Commission aligned the Turnpike with the industry standards that base tolls on the number of vehicle axles and vehicle height.
- **In Finding 4**, auditors found that the Commission has seen a significant increase in bad debt expense and the amounts reported for uncollected and unbillable tolls since the implementation of all electronic tolling in June 2020. The Commission had \$229 million still owed to it from June 2024 to May 2025 from in-state and out-of-state travelers.
- **In Finding 5**, auditors found that the Commission must continue to seek new ways to collect tolls from travelers. Although the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the Commission

implemented additional toll collection enforcement methods since our prior audit report, we found those efforts did not result in the actual collection of outstanding tolls.

“We made 19 recommendations to improve the financial status of the Turnpike and collect the money it is owed,” Auditor General DeFoor said. “The fact remains, the Turnpike Commission didn’t get into this situation alone, and the legislature and Governor need to help improve its financial viability.”

Some of the recommendations include:

- Putting together a task force to develop and enact legislation that will help mitigate the Turnpike’s massive debt;
- Closely monitor the performance of the two debt collection agencies to help recover the money it is owed and add more agencies if higher collection rates are not achieved;
- Make it easier for travelers to pay toll bills through tools like Venmo and Cash App; and
- Finding ways to attach unpaid bills to the traveler’s credit score like any other creditor.

[Visit our Be Audit Smart Guide](#) to see the full audit and a breakdown of this performance audit.

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