

One major concern I discussed a few weeks ago regarding the Trans Texas Corridor is where the land will come from. Another concern is where the money will come from. Official government websites for the TTC assure that public-private partnerships will shield the taxpayer from bearing too much of the cost burden, but a careful reading shows the door is definitely open to public funding sources, while at the same time there is no doubt of the intention to charge tolls on the road. Taxpayers already pay for their transportation system through hefty gasoline taxes, vehicle registration fees, and other fees. They have every right to expect the roads they have already paid for to be properly maintained and toll-free. However, private foreign corporations have flocked to this country eager to participate in toll collection on our poorly managed toll roads, and they make a lot of money doing so. Taking over the management and maintenance of an existing toll road is one thing. Converting taxpayer built roads into cash cows for big corporations is quite another. Using eminent domain to take privately owned land, and taxpayer funding to build a highway that is designed to bring in private revenue is nothing short of highway robbery. Cintra/Zachry, a private Spanish firm, is poised to make billions from TTC tolls. Yet my fear is that as planning progresses, more and more public burden will creep into the process, and more profit will be pledged to the private corporation. The costs will be socialized and the profits will be privatized. And to add insult to injury – private lands will be taken for this road which will be, for all intents and purposes, a private business. The government should not use the power of eminent domain to seize and redistribute land for the benefit of a private company. This is wrong and unconstitutional. Cintra Zachry should negotiate with each individual land owner and go through the normal private land acquisition process to start its new business. If mutual agreements can be reached, fine. If not, government force is not appropriate. Our government should protect property rights, not facilitate theft. Toll roads should not be paid for with taxpayer dollars, or even bond funding that pledge future tax dollars. Taxpayers should not have to pay additional fees for something they have already paid for. Eminent domain should absolutely not be used for private businesses. This public-private partnership has all the makings of the worst of both worlds. I am doing my part at the Federal level in Congress to limit the damage to the taxpayer. I introduced a bill in that prohibits the use of federal funding for any part of the TTC and I will continue to push for this bill, and other bills protecting property rights, taxpayers rights and our national sovereignty. The government should not fund and enforce private efforts like this and thumb their nose at land owners and taxpayers.