



# PRESS STATEMENT

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## Press Statement for immediate release

I refer to the DAP Secretary-General YAB Lim Guan Eng's statement yesterday that accused the BN government only looks after its cronies to earn extraordinary profits at the expense of 30 million Malaysians by allowing the North-South Highway to continue unjustifiably to collect toll.

I am incredulous that YAB Lim considers the 14.55 million Employee Provident Fund (EPF) members as "cronies".

In order to rationalise the overall toll structure of all the highway concessions in PLUS Group and to prevent unnecessary toll increases which was signed during the reign of a previous Prime Minister who is now with the opposition, this current government had privatized PLUS Highways Berhad in the year 2011.

PLUS is now 51% owned by the government and 49% owned by the EPF. Not a single share is now owned by what YAB Lim considers as private "cronies":

EPF's ownership of PLUS Highways allows its members to receive a stable return every year from a mature cash-generating asset.

Due to this timely move to privatize PLUS, it has to be noted that tolls for the North-South Highway have not been increased for the past 11 years since the year 2005.

In fact, with the introduction of certain discounts and rebates in recent years, actual toll rates for the North South Highway have also gone down.

Since the takeover, on top of spending about RM1 billion yearly for operating costs, maintenance, patrolling and upgrading of the 986.5km PLUS highways systems, PLUS had also spent billions to widen the roads to 3 or 4 lanes in order to alleviate congestion and to provide a safer and more comfortable journey for motorists.

Last year, YAB Lim had also asked for tolls for the PLUS highways to be abolished and called for our road tax collection to pay for the maintenance and upgrade costs.

Malaysia's road tax charges are among the lowest in the world where the majority of car owners pay only RM90 a year.

Total collection of road tax is about RM2.4 billion per year.

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Assuming the 14.55 million EPF account holders - whom YAB Lim seems to suggest are cronies - agrees to his suggestion to sustain billions in losses immediately and forego tens of billions more in future dividends, the RM2.4 billion yearly road tax collection alone is not enough to maintain the PLUS highways systems on top of the 50,000 km of toll-free Federal roads and still provide annual allocations to the individual states to maintain their state roads.

Under the Federal Government's Malaysian Road Records Information System (Marris), billions are allocated to the state governments to maintain their state roads - including about RM500 million to Selangor this year while Penang received RM94.4 million in 2014, RM101.5 million in 2015 and RM107.6 million for 2016 from the Federal Govt.

It is hoped that YAB Lim spends more time to understand the true situation instead of issuing populist statements that are not grounded on reality and irresponsibly labelling any and all parties as cronies.

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**MINISTER OF WORKS, MALAYSIA**

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