



Posted 9:15 p.m. Wednesday, February 6, 2013

Despite expected slow initial use, FDOT expects I-4 toll lanes to succeed

ORANGE COUNTY, Fla. —

Some drivers can't wait until Florida finishes the \$2 billion project to improve and widen Interstate 4.

"It's a nightmare, and unfortunately, rush hour is not the only time that it gets backed up," said Orlando resident James Guerino.

Engineers hope that adding a toll lane to each side of the road will ease congestion.

Last week WFTV learned about a study that suggests the toll plan would only remove about 14,000 cars from the 200,000 that drive on the interstate each day.

U.S. Rep. John Mica pushed to allow tolls on I-4.

"Should this project even go forward?" WFTV reporter Tim Barber asked Mica.

"Well, I don't make that determination. What we did in federal law is say that the states can add additional lanes as long as they keep the current lanes free," said Mica.

Mica would not say if he thinks the plans should change or not.

Florida Department of Transportation officials said they expect more drivers to use the toll lanes after the first two years, even though tolls could be pricey.

A weekly commute from Longwood to downtown Orlando could cost more than \$65, according to reports.

"I feel frustrated enough paying the tolls on the 408," said Guerino.

The state believes drivers will use the toll lanes often enough to pay for all of the improvements planned along the 21-mile stretch.

The I-4 project is expected to start next year and should be finished in 2020.