

Mayor Villaraigosa, are you watching?

Print

By James Moore

Published: January 18 2007 02:00 | Last updated: January 18 2007 02:00

From Prof James E. Moore.

Sir, Transportation economists have argued for more than 40 years that congestion tolls offer the only path to systemic relief from inefficient levels of congestion. Robert Wright ("Congested isle: how user pricing can ease an impasse on the roads", January 11) compares this strategy to building additional infrastructure, but his story omits an important point. The standard economic argument calls for using congestion tolls to build roads. When you run out of road toll revenues, you have optimised both congestion levels and road supply.

I hope Antonio Villaraigosa, Los Angeles' mayor, subscribes to the Financial Times. The example London is setting with its congestion-pricing programme is instructive, and Mayor Villaraigosa's transportation policymaking tool kit would benefit from this kind of innovation.

James E. Moore,

Chair, Daniel J. Epstein Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering,

University of Southern California,

Los Angeles, CA 90089, US

Copyright The Financial Times Limited 2007