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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Gann Files Bill to Protect Oklahomans from Overreaching 'Road User Charge' Plan

OKLAHOMA CITY – Rep. Tom Gann, R-Inola, today filed what he called "a pivotal bill aimed at safeguarding Oklahomans' freedom and privacy."

House Bill 2970 comes in response to what Gann termed are growing concerns over the Oklahoma Road User Charge (RUC) Task Force's controversial "Road User Charge" proposal.

"Under their Orwellian proposed plan, Oklahomans would be monitored on every mile they drive, and pay a tax for each of these miles," Gann said.

He said he believes this could lead to excessive government control over personal travel and play, and that he is echoing the worries that many citizens have expressed. He sees the proposal as unfairly penalizing motorists, especially those in rural areas of the state who do not have alternative options for commuting.

"It's quite inconceivable to me that in the near future, motorists might face variable-rate, per-mile fees for driving beyond a government-approved limit," Gann said, highlighting his concerns about the recommendations' potential to put government in charge of every motorist's driven mile.

Gann also raised alarm over the suggested requirement for surveillance infrastructure to track mileage. He said he fears this system could be exploited by state and federal authorities for various oppressive purposes, including targeting individuals with differing political views.

Gann said the first stage of the Oklahoma version of the Road User Charge plan – a pilot program and a task force established in 2021 by House Bill 1712– is already in motion. He said the next phase – voluntary participation – has been recommended by the task force for legislative consideration in 2025.

He said he believes a third phase – mandatory participation – may soon follow. He said he bases this observation on Oregon's version of the plan, where that state initially created a volunteer plan, but discussion in their Legislature has since turned to mandating participation.

Gann's bill seeks to repeal House Bill 1712, halting any future advancement of this initiative.

Gann, who voted against House Bill 1712 in 2021, said he believes the bills implications were not fully understood.

"House Bill 2970 is about reassuring Oklahomans that their Legislature won't enforce a socialist, Orwellian green agenda and a surveillance state here," Gann said. "This is also a chance for the Legislature to correct its course, realize its mistake and repeal House Bill 1712."

Gann said he also intends to update his bill in committee to withdraw Oklahoma's membership from the Western Road Usage Charge Consortium, in opposition to that organization's efforts to promote the road user charge system in Oklahoma and other states.

"House Bill 2970 represents a crucial step in protecting the rights and privacy of Oklahomans and ensuring government policies reflect the will of the majority of the people," Gann said.

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Tom Gann serves District 8 in the Oklahoma House of Representatives. His district includes parts of Mayes, Rogers and Wagoner counties.