



Hi my name is Reyna Cohen and I am the State Policy Associate for the New York League of Conservation Voters. NYLCV is a statewide advocacy organization that fights to protect against climate change, conserve land and water, and protect public health in New York State through policy advocacy.

As hurricane Ida barreled through the Northeast earlier this month, it made one truth abundantly clear: climate change is no longer a future threat, it is here and we are woefully underprepared. Given this reality, New York must do everything in its power to drastically our reduce greenhouse gas emissions and upgrade our infrastructure to become more resilient.

Fortunately, New York has already approved a program that will do all of this and more: congestion pricing. Congestion pricing will take dirty, polluting cars off of our most congested roads and in turn provide crucial funding to the MTA so that it can make much needed infrastructure upgrades. We cannot drive our way out of the climate crisis: Cars are the number one polluter from New York's transportation sector, contributing 36 percent of climate pollution as well as air pollution so incentivizing commuters to get out of their cars and onto public transit will be a massive step toward the emissions reduction targets set forth in our landmark climate legislation, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. This program is required to raise \$1 billion year over year, promising to support \$15 billion for the MTA's capital plan, an investment all the more necessary due to lost revenue during the COVID-19 pandemic. This revenue will further help the MTA invest in resilient infrastructure to help protect our vulnerable subways from flooding in a world where storm surge is increasingly common.

Congestion pricing will also make our streets safer, our public transit more reliable and accessible, and expand our system to serve even more New Yorkers. New York needs congestion pricing now to ensure that we are effectively tackling the climate crisis while investing in our critical transit infrastructure.

Beyond the issue of congestion pricing, which promises crucial and substantial funding for future needs, we need monies to maintain and improve transit infrastructure in the interim. In light of the aforementioned missed revenue due to COVID-19, we fear that public transportation may face service cuts, scaling back mass transit at a time where we need it most. Cutting down on transportation services could also perpetuate a cycle of funding shortcomings, as service cuts may exclude the MTA from receiving critical funding from the Federal Transportation Authority

through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal, the Build Back Better Act, and existing federal funding streams. We accept that developing and implementing congestion pricing is a necessarily prolonged process to ensure residents' opinions are fully considered and that the environmental assessment is completed; however, we worry that the MTA may miss out on these additional funding opportunities in the meantime. While congestion pricing is essential to investing in public transportation in the future, federal funding is essential to investing in public transportation now.

The New York metropolitan region's extensive public transportation system is a point of pride for New Yorkers. MTA subways, commuter trains and buses provide an accessible and affordable way for New York residents, tourists, and local workers to get around while also helping to curb pollution and fight climate change by providing a cleaner alternative to cars. With congestion pricing, we can keep away cars polluting our streets with noise and emissions while delivering investments to the city's valued public transit network.