



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Steven D. Rhoads

L.I. Senators call for the Governor to end her support of Congestion Pricing and for residents to make their voices heard

STEVEN D. RHOADS December 11, 2023

| ISSUE: **CONGESTION PRICING**



Long Islanders want an end to the highway robbery by the MTA!

Mineola, NY - On Monday, December 11, 2023 **Long Island's New York State Senators, New York State Assemblymembers and Cathy Powell, President of the Wantagh Chamber of Commerce,** gathered to call on the governor to end her support for the MTA's newest attempt to dig even deeper in the pockets of commuters and small business owners. This new hidden tax implemented by the MTA is costing Long Island commuters, delivery drivers, taxi drivers,

tour buses and rideshare drivers up to \$36 per day to enter anywhere south of 60th Street, Manhattan, including the financial district.

New York State Senators and Assemblymen are encouraging residents to voice opinions and make their voices heard during this 60-day public comment period taking place through the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority.

q

“Congestion Pricing is nothing less than a license for the MTA to steal from Long Island residents and businesses. At a time when Long Islanders and all New Yorkers are struggling with record crime, record high inflation, a bad economy and one-party rule in Albany that continues to tax and spend residents out of our State, Congestion Pricing is yet another attack on the suburbs to pay for the MTA’s woeful mismanagement and lack of accountability,”
Senator Steven Rhoads, 5th Senate District, continued, *“If Congestion Pricing were truly about reducing pollution and traffic congestion, the MTA could have cut LIRR, bus and subway fares to encourage the use of mass transit. Instead they raised them again, in addition to making it harder for people who need to drive into Manhattan for work, school, medical appointments or entertainment. This is an MTA money grab that will kill jobs and drive even more New Yorkers out of our State.”*

“The MTA is trying to fix their NYC system by adding more of a financial burden on the backs of Long Islanders and our residents deserve better. Everyone wants New Yorkers to utilize mass transit, but after enacting policies that have made everyone feel less safe, Albany is again going to penalize our residents with this unfair plan. It is time for New York State to stop reaching into the pockets of Long Islanders to fix a broken system and instead focus on working harder to give our residents the safe mass transit they need and deserve,”

said Senator Mario R. Mattera, 2nd Senate District.

"This is just another money grab, targeting downstate commuters and to make matters worse, the money collected is being thrown into the massive blackhole of the MTA, where tax dollars go to be wasted," **said Senator Dean Murray, 3rd Senate District.**

"Instead of fixing the MTA's mismanagement once and for all and opening the forensic audit I've been calling for, the Governor and the radical politicians in Albany are hitting overburdened residents with another tax. It's time for this madness to stop. I encourage every Long Islander to let their voice be heard in public comment and demanding action by the Governor," **said Senator Steven Rhoads, 5th Senate District.**

Congestion pricing is just Albany's latest attack in their long war on New York's suburbs. Commuter taxes, bail reform, forced housing, a migrant crisis – Long Island always gets stuck holding the bag for the NYC driven mistakes from Albany - today we again say, "enough!" **said Senator Jack Martins, 7th Senate District**

"Congestion pricing will have unintended consequences as it imposes crushing expenses on important organizations such as the American Red Cross. Requested Exemptions may be given to save these good organizations, but once exemptions begin abuses will follow. Congestion pricing is a bad idea and unintended consequences and unnecessary expenses to New Yorkers will continue to pile up," **said Senator Alexis Weik, 8th Senate District.**

“The implementation of congestion pricing continues to fuel frustration among our residents as they bear the brunt of the financial repercussions. Once again, the burden falls disproportionately on hardworking individuals, particularly the law-abiding middle class who are already grappling with various economic challenges. This approach places an undue burden on taxpayers, exacerbating the financial strain on those who are already contributing to the system. Instead the MTA should be chasing fare evaders and reassessing their own spending practices. The implementation of these policies warrant a thorough reevaluation, considering the tangible impact on taxpayers and the need for a fair and equitable solution that doesn't disproportionately burden specific segments of the population. To claim this is about clean air and "climate concerns" is being dishonest with the public about what this really is,” **said Senator Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, 9th Senate District.**

“This is a backdoor tax on Long Islanders due to the Albany and NYC Democrats’ failed economic policies,” **said Assemblyman Ed Flood, 4th Assembly District**

"This is just another tax on our working class men and women. With record inflation and stagnant wages, the last thing that workers need is to be nickel and dimed on their way to work. I stand with the working class families of my district in opposing unnecessary fees that impact their ability to put food on their table and a roof over their families' heads,” **said Mike Durso, 9th Assembly District**

“While households across Nassau County have been challenged to keep up with costs amidst inflation, adopting a congestion pricing plan now is another example of how Albany is out of touch with the realities of the people of our state. Hard working individuals, students, seniors heading into the city for appointments and commerce will all be impacted greatly by this ill-conceived plan, further exacerbating the outmigration problem and shuttering small businesses,” **said Assemblyman John Mikulin, 17th Assembly District.**

“It’s imperative to consider the consequences of the new congestion pricing toll. This measure hurts hard-working, middle-class commuters the most and places detrimental surcharges on taxis and for-hire vehicles that will now be taxed on their livelihood. We must focus on curbing unnecessary expenditures in our state instead of continuously burdening residents with new fees and charges. The billions of dollars the MTA already has should be used toward the governor's goal of improving infrastructure. Encouraging the use of public transportation over private vehicles without considering the notorious unreliability of the MTA will only funnel congestion into another flawed system,” **said Assemblyman Ed Ra, 19th Assembly District.**

“At a time when Long Island families are already facing rising prices and high taxes, the fact the MTA would announce a plan to take more of working families’ hard-earned money is just plain wrong. Many members of our community travel into the city to make a living and feed their families, and what this plan will do is essentially make people pay to work. I remain steadfast in my opposition to this plan and my support to ease the burden on working families. It seems New York Democrats are out of step not only with Long Island working families but with other Democrats as well. We see this in New Jersey with Gov. Murphy and

his opposition because he realizes it will charge working families in his state to enter the city. Democrats in New York are so out of touch they see bipartisan opposition to their policies as a sign to move forward with them,” **said Assemblyman Brian Curran, 21st Assembly District.**

“Governor Hochul’s misguided congestion pricing plan is nothing more than a new tax on already overtaxed New Yorkers. I will continue fighting this blatant cash grab by Governor Hochul,” **said Congressman Anthony D’Esposito, 3rd Congressional District.**

“Congestion pricing it's just another idea that is going to hurt the working class in New York State. In October Newsday citing the census department stated 545,598 thousand people moved out of the state of New York citing New York is unaffordable. Congestion pricing will make it more unaffordable by adding another \$15 to every drive into Manhattan below 61 street. Every taxi, Lyft, Uber driver will be forced to charge more, every delivery to Manhattan the trucking companies will simply pass the charge along to the customer/ businesses and they in turn will pass it on to their customs and the residents of Manhattan, which in turn will make Manhattan even more unaffordable. The same Newsday article quoted a business owner who is on the Long Island Regional Planning Board stating, “people are not going back to the office as much, they are working from home”. If employers expect their employees to come to work in Manhattan below 61 street their employees will expect to get reimbursed for this unneeded tax, because people don’t feel safe using the NYC subway system,” **said Frank Camarano, President of Nassau Council of Chambers of Commerce.**

But every dark gray cloud of government there is a silver lining. For example, those who are politically connected the NYC Council is discussing granting exemptions from the

congestion tax. In Nassau County we invite any NYC business to relocate to Nassau where crime is under control and there is no congestion tax," **continued Frank Camarano, President of Nassau Council of Chambers of Commerce.**