



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

Senator Smith Finds Progress In Congestion Mitigation Committee's First Meeting

MALCOLM A. SMITH September 25, 2007

New York State Senate Democratic Leader Malcolm A. Smith (D-St. Albans) expressed confidence and optimism following the first meeting of the New York City Traffic Congestion Mitigation Committee held today at Baruch College.

The 17-member Commission, comprised of appointments made by State and City officials, is set to review a plan for reducing traffic congestion in New York City and issue recommendations on how such a plan should be implemented.

"Following Mayor Bloomberg's foresight and leadership, we now have an opportunity to come up with a comprehensive plan for urban sustainability that provides a strong example of what must be done to ease traffic congestion, reduce greenhouse emissions, preserve natural resources and improve our overall health and lifestyle," said Smith.

"No doubt there will be challenges in fulfilling this ambitious mission, but we must always be mindful of the vision guiding it, and of the need to act now for the sake of our children," he continued.

Participating in the Commission's meeting was Senator Smith's appointee Gerard Romski.

"Today we started laying the ground work to have an open-minded discussion about how we can improve traffic gridlock in the city. I am confident that in the coming months we will be able to tackle major problems within our urban transportation infrastructure while helping our city breathe fresher air," said Ronski.

Based upon Senate Democrats' recommendations, in today's meeting Mr. Ronski proposed that the Commission organize informational meetings around the city to give the public an opportunity to have an input in the final plan. Ronski also proposed that the Commission further explore investing resources in other modes of transportation that will make commuting from the outer boroughs more efficient and less expensive.

The New York City Traffic Congestion Mitigation Committee was created in July, following an agreement between the Legislature and Governor Eliot Spitzer. The measure stemmed from New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg's plan to charge motorists a congestion pricing fee for entering certain zones in Manhattan during high-traffic periods. The Legislation empowered the Commission to come up with additional alternatives to reduce traffic congestion.

Following the agreement, the U.S. Dept. of Transportation announced it would award the City \$354 million for transit improvements and costs associated with implementation of a congestion mitigation plan.