



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George D. Maziarz

Statement From Senator George Maziarz on the Mta Bailout

GEORGE D. MAZIARZ May 7, 2009

It is astonishing, but not surprising, that the legislative leaders in Albany spend a great deal of time and money on a bailout of the New York City-based Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Where is the bailout for Western New York? I wish they had spent as much time worrying about what the tax burden is on Western New York homeowners as they do about what the fare is on a bus in Brooklyn.

Like the state budget, the final MTA bailout scheme was negotiated in secret and rushed to the floor for a vote once the deal was struck. Although individual legislators had little or no time to review the final plan, one thing leapt out at me very quickly: Western New York taxpayers will have a significant role to play in bailing out a downstate authority that they may never have benefited from or even heard of.

A key component of the complex bailout scheme is that school districts in the MTA service region, now forced to remit new payroll taxes along with other area employers, will be reimbursed from the state's General Fund. Who pays into the General Fund? You, me, and all taxpayers across the state. The cost could be as much as \$100 million.

After a horrendous state budget, which was balanced on the backs of Western New York families and businesses, now the seesaw has tipped even more toward downstate.

Also, improvements to the Upstate transportation infrastructure, which historically have been considered at the same time, were not addressed at all in the MTA bailout. Amazingly, the legislative leaders from downstate asking us to trust them to fix the rest of the state's roads and bridges later in the year. Trust them? Their priority, as clearly demonstrated in their actions, is New York City first, then the rest of the state later.