



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## Lanza Authors Legislation Which Forces Port Authority Board Members to Attend Public Hearings & Delivers Petition Signed by 2,240 Staten Islanders Who Oppose the Toll Hikes

ANDREW J LANZA August 18, 2011

| ISSUE: **PANYNJ (PORT AUTHORITY OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY)**

In wake of this week's public hearings concerning toll & fare hikes, at which voting members of the Port Authority board were a no-show, Senator Lanza has introduced legislation that would require every voting member of the Port Authority Board to attend a minimum of 2 public hearings in each county directly affected by any proposed toll or fare increases.

Senator Lanza said, "I am outraged that the voting members of the Port Authority Board did not even have the decency to present themselves before the people of Staten Island at a public hearing concerning such exorbitant bridge toll hikes. It is clear that the Port Authority Board does not consider itself accountable or answerable to the public whom they serve. They are wrong, and should present themselves before the people any time they make decisions that affect us. The fact that the Board did not even show up is a slap in the face to the good people of Staten Island, and one which should never happen again."

Accordingly, Senator Lanza has introduced legislation which would force the entire board of the Port Authority to present itself at at least 2 public hearings in each country directly affected by any proposed toll or fare increases. The bill will be sponsored by Assemblyman Matthew Titone.

"None of the Port Authority's Board of Commissioners attended the public hearings, which is insulting," said Assemblyman Matthew Titone. "If the Commissioners don't want to hear what the public has to say, then the Commissioners should resign. To add injury to insult, despite having half of the Port Authority crossings, the Port Authority originally scheduled only one public hearing on Staten Island, early in the morning, in a remote, inaccessible location. After an uproar, demands for a second meeting were eventually met. Staten Islanders and all those affected by the Port Authority deserve the opportunity to voice their opinions, and they deserve to have their voices heard, and this legislation ensures that."

In light of the fact that Port Authority Board members had no interest in hearing the people of State Island, Lanza also delivered a petition with the signatures of Staten Islanders who have joined his fight to stop the Port Authority's proposed hikes. In just six short days, 2,240 Staten Islanders signed Lanza's online petition in opposition to the Port Authority's proposal. The signatures were mailed to Chris Ward, Executive Director of the Port Authority, along with a letter which urged board members to vote "NO" at tomorrow's meeting.

"These proposed toll hikes are unwarranted, unreasonable and unfair," said Lanza. "It is immoral for the Port Authority to consider raising tolls on Staten Island's three Port Authority bridges when they have already gouged Staten Islanders to the tune of billions of dollars in profits at these crossings over the

years.”

If these proposed hikes were to go through Staten Island’s four bridge crossings would have the highest tolls of any bridges in the country.

Lanza will encourage Governor Cuomo to make good on the promise he made to the people of New York concerning no new taxes or fees during this economic crisis.

#####