



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Addabbo: Budget Break on Cross Bay Bridge Tolls a Step in the Right Direction for Residents

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR April 3, 2012

**Queens, NY, April 3, 2012 – At the end of State Budget negotiations, NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.**

**(D-Howard Beach)**, announced that Governor Cuomo has included in his 2012-2013 Budget a bridge toll discount for Rockaway and Broad Channel residents who have been paying tolls to cross the bridge that connects them to the rest of Queens. The budget includes an allocation where the state pays the MTA for the costs associated with promoting access to reimbursements for E-Z Pass tolls paid by residents of Broad Channel and the Rockaways who travel over the Cross Bay Veterans Memorial Bridge.

The toll on the Cross Bay Veterans Memorial Bridge is the only intra-borough bridge toll in New York City. Besides Addabbo, the State Budget issue action was also a priority for several local state electeds, including Assemblymember Phil Goldfeder (D-Rockaway), all of whom had been working to eliminate the toll, which had been imposed by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in January 2010.

Addabbo and Goldfeder had written letters to the governor recently urging total elimination of the toll for residents of the peninsula and Broad Channel. The governor's offer to residents of both communities provides a toll discount or rebate plan with E-Z Pass. Currently, drivers are only charged for the first two trips over the Cross Bay Bridge, a total of \$2.38, in a 24-hour span. If a driver crosses the bridge 10 times in one 24-hour period, they are still only charged \$2.38 (\$1.19 fee charged each way), as all other trips are currently subsidized by the MTA.

The bridge is the only practical access to shopping and services for residents. The toll had been free for 12 years for those Broad Channel and Rockaway residents who used E-Z Pass, but was reinstated a few years ago to make up shortfalls in the MTA budget.

Senator Addabbo noted, "This is a big win for these burdened communities made up of hard-working families who will finally see some relief from an unnecessary financial hardship and should help business owners there, as well. They

were for years the only people living within one of the five boroughs of New York City who were required to pay a burdensome toll both ways, several times a day, in order to get to work and back, transport children to and from school, and complete other daily chores—just to leave their homes and get to mainland Queens. Their local economy was adversely affected by this extra hardship during the prolonged recession.”

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