



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

Gallivan Continues to Pressure Thruway Authority to Cut Costs Rather Than Raise Tolls on Trucks

PATRICK M. GALLIVAN August 10, 2012

| ISSUE: **AGRICULTURE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AUTHORITIES AND COMMISSIONS, ENVIRONMENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Dear Chairman Mitrstein,

I am writing in opposition to the planned forty-five percent Thruway toll increase on any vehicle with three or more axles. In the short time since I was named the chair of the Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business Committee, I have heard time and again about the high cost of doing business in New York. The planned toll increases are another additional cost that will only make it more difficult to do business in this state.

These toll increases will be detrimental to our still recovering state economy. While the toll increases will only raise the cost of a trip from Buffalo to New York City about \$40, when this cost is aggregated over a large number of trips and combined with the state's ton mileage tax and high gas tax, I am afraid that businesses operating on tight margins will not be able to absorb these costs. Additionally, it is likely that much of this rate increase will be passed along to consumers in the form of higher prices on the many goods that are transported by truck across the state. During a time when many business are having difficulties remaining profitable and many families are struggling to make ends meet, a toll increase may be the proverbial straw that breaks the camel's back.

I am cognizant of the Thruway Authority's obligation to pay for debt it has acquired, but, instead of raising tolls, I urge you to look at ways to cut the cost of the Thruway authority. Since 2005 traffic has decreased by ten percent, while costs have increased twenty percent. I find it unlikely that there are no efficiency or downsizing options which will allow the Thruway to operate and meet its debt obligations without raising tolls.

Again, I would like to reiterate my opposition to the planned forty-five percent Thruway toll increase. Neither businesses nor consumers in New York can afford to face higher prices. I believe that the Thruway Authority should first look to cut costs to pay for its operation and debt obligations.

Chairman of the Senate's Commerce, Economic Development, and Small Business Committee, Senator Patrick M. Gallivan, formally requested that the New York State Thruway Authority consider cost saving measures before anything as drastic as a 45 percent toll hike on three-axled vehicles is considered.

In the letter to Thruway Authority Chairman, Howard Milstein, Senator Gallivan said that any such toll hike would have a serious impact on the western New York economy, area farms, and consumers.