



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

Senators Fuschillo & Martins: New York State Department of Transportation Needs to Act More Urgently to Prevent Commercial Vehicles From Striking Parkway Bridges

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. April 24, 2013

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Following yet another commercial vehicle striking a parkway bridge overpass and causing traffic delays on Long Island, Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick), Chairman of the Senate's Transportation Committee, and Senator Jack Martins (R-Mineola) are calling on the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) to act more urgently and increase its efforts to prevent commercial trucks from illegally entering parkways.

Commercial trucks are prohibited from driving on state parkways because the bridge overpasses do not provide sufficient clearance for them to fit under. However, many trucks are entering the parkways and striking these bridges, causing extensive damage and significant traffic delays which can last for hours at a time.

“Commercial vehicles illegally entering the parkways, striking bridges, and causing major damage and traffic delays are not a new problem; DOT has known about it for years. They have added signs and done public service announcements, but these measures are not fixing the problem. DOT cannot continue to simply do more of the same old, same old. They need to act much more aggressively to solve this problem and they need to do it now,” said

Senator Fuschillo.

"Tractor trailers have no place on our parkways. The State must take action to prevent future injury to motorists and damage to our bridges. A simple height-detection system - a board suspended from chains - would go a long way towards protecting lives and property. The time is now," said Senator Martins.

While the DOT has increased signage, created informational brochures, and done public service announcements to alert trucks that they are not allowed on parkways, the problem of commercial vehicles striking parkway bridges continues to persist. There have been approximately 200 bridge strikes each year since 2005, according to the DOT. This month alone, two trucks struck bridge overpasses on the Northern State Parkway on Long Island and another stuck an overpass on the Hutchinson Parkway in Westchester County.

Senator Fuschillo chaired a Senate Transportation Committee public hearing last October, which Senator Martins participated in, to examine how commercial vehicle bridge strikes on parkways can be prevented. Experts offered possible solutions to the problem, including the use of over-height detection systems at parkway entrances. These systems, which could use lasers or be as simple as a beam attached to hanging chains, provide a warning to truck drivers that their vehicles will not fit under the parkway bridges before they enter the parkway.

Senator Fuschillo and Senator Martins called on DOT to immediately install and utilize these systems at parkway entrance ramps to prevent further crashes.