



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

## Senator Fuschillo Announces New Proposal to Crack Down on Toll Dodging

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. August 21, 2013

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Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick), Chairman of the New York State Senate's Transportation Committee, today announced a new proposal to crack down on toll dodging which is costing New York millions of dollars each year.

"Toll dodgers are stealing money from the state which could be used to maintain roads, make repairs, and improve our infrastructure. They are also raising costs on law abiding drivers who are the ones that ultimately make up the cost of these thefts through higher tolls. These new measures would give authorities stronger tools to ensure that toll dodgers ultimately pay what they owe just like everyone else," said Senator Fuschillo.

Earlier this year, the Senate passed legislation Senator Fuschillo sponsored (S746) to enhance penalties for toll dodgers by allowing individuals who steal transportation services in excess of \$1,000 to face class E felony charges. Senator Fuschillo will be expanding the legislation to incorporate additional measures aimed at curbing toll evasion, including:

**Creating new penalties for tampering with or hiding a license plate to evade tolls:** Drivers are increasingly using devices which hide, rotate, or obscure their license plates while going through a toll plaza to avoid being charged. Under the legislation, drivers who use these

devices to hide their license plates while going through a toll plaza or tamper with their license plate in any manner to prevent it from being recorded by the tolling authority with the intent to avoid payment would face a new class A misdemeanor charge and have their vehicle registration automatically suspended for sixty days. This would not only give law enforcement stronger tools to prosecute toll dodgers, it would create a much stronger deterrent for drivers not to use these devices to beat the system.

**Making it easier for the State to suspend the registrations of vehicles that repeatedly avoid paying tolls:** Under current law, an authority can only ask the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to suspend a toll dodger's registration if they commit 5 separate violations within 18 months and fail to either pay the tolls or respond to a notice to schedule a due process hearing.

Senator Fuschillo's proposal would allow authorities to act much more quickly in requesting a registration suspension. After the second toll dodging violation in which the vehicle owner does not pay or respond to a notice, the tolling authority would notify the Department of Motor Vehicles and request that the offender's registration be suspended.

Authorities are losing significant revenues to toll dodgers. According to data provided by the New York State Thruway Authority, there were over 186,000 E-Z Pass violations on the Thruway alone in 2012, costing the authority over \$6.7 million in tolls and fees.