



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## Senator Andrew Lanza & Assemblyman Michael Cusick Secure Inclusion of Vzn Toll Discount Program in Legislative Budget Resolutions

ANDREW J LANZA March 11, 2015



Senator Andrew Lanza and Assemblyman Michael Cusick today announced that both the Senate and Assembly budget resolutions include \$5 million allocations for a total of \$10 million for continued toll relief for Staten Island residents using the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

Last year, the Senate and Assembly each included \$3.5 million and the Governor added \$7 million for a total of \$14 million in funding to provide relief to Staten Islanders using the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. The historic agreement reduced tolls for Staten Islanders enrolled in the E-ZPass resident discount program to \$5.50 for each tolled crossing -- a significant discount from the previous rates which were \$6.36 for residents crossing one or two times per month, \$6.00 for three or more crossings per month and

\$16 for those not enrolled in E-ZPass. Additionally, a 20 percent toll discount was secured for commercial vehicles using the bridge in either direction.

The 2014-2015 budget agreement for this plan stipulated that the budget lines had to be renewed annually. This year's Executive budget proposes that the Verrazano Narrows Bridge Rebate Program may only continue if 50 percent of the funding for the program is made available from the legislature. Senator Lanza and Assemblyman Cusick secured that funding in their respective houses.

Senator Lanza said, "Assemblyman Cusick and I made a commitment to the people of Staten Island that we would fight for the continuance of the historic Verrazano-Narrows Bridge toll relief program and we are happy to report that the funding is included in both the Senate and Assembly Budget Resolution."

"This discount program is crucial to Staten Island residents and businesses as the Verrazano bridge toll goes up almost every year. While negotiating this program with Senator Lanza and Governor Cuomo last year, we took into consideration the fact that the tolls will be increased. This added money will keep the toll at \$5.50 for Staten Island residents and continue the business discount. I applaud Speaker Heastie for understanding the needs of Staten Island businesses and commuters," said Assemblyman Cusick.

"With the recent MTA tolls hikes going into effect in March, it was again imperative that we secured funding to continue the resident discount program implemented last year. Without legislative budget relief, Staten Island residents are held captive by these continuous toll increases. I thank Governor Cuomo, Senator Skelos and Assemblyman Cusick for their help in securing this critical funding," said Lanza.

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