



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Rising Cost To Drive

JAMES L. SEWARD August 14, 2009

Every New Yorker who drives a car, a truck, a motorcycle, an ATV, or a boat will be paying more as the latest round of massive tax and fee hikes approved by Democrats in Albany takes effect next month. This time their target is motor vehicle fees, most of which will go up 25 percent for virtually every type of vehicle New Yorkers use every day.

If you drive a car you will pay more to get or renew your license and register the vehicle. If you own a boat, an ATV or other vehicle, it will cost you more not only to register it, but to transport it as well, as fees on trailers will go up.

In upstate New York driving is a necessity. In areas where public transportation options are limited, people depend on their motor vehicles to get to work, go grocery shopping and travel to the doctor. Many New York City politicians fail to understand the importance of driving, and don't seem to care that the average upstate family will now be forced to pay an extra \$100 a year to maintain a needed lifeline.

Registration fees are scheduled to increase September 1, 2009 for passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, trailers, taxis, busses, motorcycles, all terrain vehicles, construction vehicles, motorboats and custom vehicles. Drivers' licenses and registration fees will go up by 25 percent, creating an additional cost to New York drivers projected to be almost \$152

million over the next two years. The cost of a driver's license will also increase 25 percent starting September 1st.

On September 1, 2009, the following motor vehicle registration fees will be increased:

- \* Passenger vehicle registration fees increase from \$44 to \$55 (two year average depending on vehicle);

- \* Commercial vehicle registration fees increase from \$1.21 (per 500 lbs of vehicle weight) up to \$1.51 at the low end of the range and increase from \$11.50 to \$14.38 (per 500 lbs) at the high end;

- \* Trailer registration fees will increase from an average of \$34 to \$42.50;

- \* Taxi registration fees, on average, will increase from \$48 to \$60;

- \* Average bus registration fees will increase from \$73 to \$91.25;

- \* Motorcycle registrations increase from \$14 to \$17.50;

- \* All terrain vehicle (ATV) registrations increase from \$10 to \$12.50; and

- \* Average motorboat registrations will rise from \$40 to \$50.

In addition, fees will be increased to re-register vehicles, register custom vehicles and make photocopies of motor vehicle documents. Also, starting on April 1, 2010, New Yorkers obtaining or renewing their vehicle registrations will be required to purchase brand new license plates, whether they need them or not. That means another \$25 on top of the normal registration fee, and if you want to keep your existing plate number it will be an additional

\$20.

The increased fees will not only hit the family pocketbook, but they will also hurt the bottom line for upstate businesses. The cost for companies to maintain their vehicle fleets will rise, transportation costs will go up and these higher expenses will be passed on to small business owners and eventually, consumers.

Every month brings a new round of tax and fee hikes that the governor and his downstate allies in the senate and assembly forced on New Yorkers in the state budget. This month it's motor vehicle fees, next it will be hunting and fishing licenses, earlier this year it was higher taxes for wine and beer, internet purchases and car insurance. And the biggest hit will come this fall when homeowners don't get their STAR rebate checks to help pay their property taxes because the Democrats took them away.

Despite all of the new taxes and fees the state budget is already out of whack. The New York State Division of Budget says the current year deficit is over \$2.1 billion and growing. Which tax will the governor look to raise next?