



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Addabbo on Cashless Tolling for our Area Bridges

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR. March 27, 2017

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MTA Bridges and Tunnels will be removing tolling stations along the Cross Bay Veterans Memorial Bridge and the Marine Parkway-Gil Hodges Memorial Bridge, on April 30, as part of Governor Cuomo's plans to implement open road, or "cashless" tolling, for all city bridges and tunnels by the end of 2017.

Sometime around the summer of 1983, Senator Joe Addabbo worked as a toll booth officer at the Cross Bay Bridge. Addabbo had a unique seasonal job, giving beachgoers change from the then-90 cent tolls, while being extremely jealous that while he was working in his brown uniform, others went off to enjoy Rockaway Beach. It was back then that Addabbo realized how unfair that toll was for the residents of Queens. Now, the upcoming cashless tolls reveal that the Toll Booth Officer may witness the same fate of the dinosaur - extinction.

"While the MTA has assured me that there will be no immediate loss of jobs, I am concerned about the possible elimination of the toll booth positions over time. Aside from the likely jobs reduction, there are other issues that will have to be monitored with the new cashless toll arrangement, such as the potential for lax enforcement against toll evaders and unpaid invoices mailed to the registered vehicle owners, which could cause the MTA to lose millions." **Addabbo stated.**

On a positive note, the Senator believes cashless tolling will actually alleviate congestion and odor emissions along the boulevard, which comes as a great relief to his constituents in Broad Channel.

The new open road tolling system will allow drivers with E-Z Pass to drive through gateless tolls along the Cross Bay Veterans Memorial Bridge and the Marine Parkway-Gil Hodges Memorial Bridge. For drivers without E-Z Pass, the new tolling system will take a photo of their vehicle's license plate and a bill will be mailed to the registered owner of the vehicle. In preparation of the new tolling system, Governor Cuomo announced in January, new DMV regulations which will allow the state to suspend an owner's registration for three toll violations over the course of five years as well as new MTA regulations that will impose increasing fines for non-payment of tolls.

While the Governor's plans include provisions to enforce stiffer penalties on toll evaders and out-of-state travelers, Addabbo feels more can be done for the taxpaying residents in his district and throughout Queens. The Senator has been advocating for an idea that has been heard before – remove the toll entirely on the Cross Bay Bridge and if not completely, minimally from Labor Day to Memorial Day.

**Addabbo said,** “access over the bridge should be free for all Queens residents. We all know that the Cross Bay Veterans Memorial Bridge is the only bridge in New York City that requires you pay a toll to travel within the same borough. As I recently drove into the Rockaway part of my district and watched the dismantling of the toll structures there, I thought that this toll should be eliminated totally.”

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