



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Tedisco

## Tedisco: Stop the Thruway Grinch from Raising Tolls on Low-Income New Yorkers!

SENATOR JIM TEDISCO November 24, 2020

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Senator Jim Tedisco (R,C,I-Glenville) today announced that he will be introducing new legislation to protect low-income motorists in New York from being hit with a 30 percent higher toll hike under the new cashless toll system that's begun implementation on the New York State Thruway.

On December 1<sup>st</sup>, the Thruway Authority Board of Directors is scheduled to approve a 30 percent toll increase for non-E-ZPass users plus a \$2 surcharge for each mailed bill. Currently, E-ZPass requires users to keep their account current with a credit card, electronic debit through a bank account, or putting a \$10 deposit down for a tag and constantly maintaining a positive cash balance on the account.

Senator Tedisco noted that while that system may work for some people, the problem for low-income New Yorkers is that many are struggling to make ends meet and do not have a credit card or a bank account with sufficient funds and credit or the ability to write a check or pay cash far in advance to keep their E-ZPass account positive with cash.

Tedisco's legislation, the "Thruway Toll Equality Act," which is being drafted, will waive any toll increase, fee or surcharge for low-income New York State motorists, based on the Federal Poverty Level guidelines.

"First and foremost, we were promised that the Thruway was going to be toll-free by the 1990s and since then, tolls have just increased, but that's a fight for another day," said Senator Jim Tedisco, Ranking Member of the Senate Consumer Protection Committee.

"As we celebrate Thanksgiving and the Holiday Season in this very difficult year where so many New Yorkers, particularly low-wage earners, are struggling to make ends meet and pay their bills due to the pandemic, the last thing they need is a 30 percent toll hike from the Thruway Grinch," said Senator Jim Tedisco. "Many of these individuals do not have available credit or a bank account with the sufficient funds to sign-up for an E-ZPass tag or the ability to send a check or cash payments far in advance to keep their account positive. My legislation, the 'Thruway Toll Equality Act,' will help those New Yorkers who can least afford it from having to pay more of their hard-earned money in higher tolls and fees."