

# Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free

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## ***CITY BUDGET SURPLUS HITS \$4.9 BILLION; +\$8.9 BILLION FOR THE STATE***

### **Send Money to MTA and Kill Congestion Pricing Tax Nightmare: Group**

*New York-Feb. 14...* New York City and New York State are sitting on massive budget SURPLUSES — the City has a \$4.9 billion surplus this fiscal year and the State has an \$8.9 billion surplus — but, ridiculously, they're still moving forward with the State's regressive Congestion Pricing Tax scheme that would disproportionately hurt low-income New Yorkers, economically and environmentally, and deter Manhattan office workers from returning to their desks, the group Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free today said.

Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free, which has previously called for a complete and independent audit of the chronically mismanaged MTA, is now calling on the City and State to scrap the planned \$9-\$23 Congestion Pricing Tax paywall at 60th Street in Manhattan and instead apply the lion's share of its budget surpluses to the perennially struggling transportation agency.

"Every smart economist will tell you that large government surpluses are best spent on non-recurring capital projects, not operating budgets, and that's what the City and State should do here," said Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free spokesman Joshua Bienstock. "Why should struggling New Yorkers have to be taxed and inconvenienced more when money is available now to shore up the MTA? Anyway you look at the planned Congestion Pricing Tax, it's unfair, counterproductive, and environmentally harmful to communities of color."

The Black Institute recently released an 85-page study showing that Congestion Pricing would disproportionately affect New Yorkers of color. The study, titled "Just Call It a Black and Brown Tax", is available [here](#). It's also been shown that a Congestion Pricing Tax would divert carbon-belching truck traffic into low-income areas of the city, especially in the Bronx, that are home to some of the nation's highest childhood asthma rates. Moreover, the City and State have been vocally struggling to get suburban and outer borough workers back into Manhattan's core business districts — they account for billions of dollars in annual tax revenues — and common sense tells one that adding a daily paywall tax to their potential commute would be a significant deterrent to them returning to the office place, the group said.

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*Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free, a diverse coalition of civic, business, and labor organizations and businesses throughout New York City, argues that implementing a tax on vehicles traveling south of 60th Street in Manhattan will, among other things, permanently damage efforts to revitalize the two districts.*