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June 27, 2023

Assemblyman David Weprin's response to the Federal Highway Administration approval of Congestion Pricing

“I am deeply disturbed by the Federal Highway Administration’s blanket approval of the Central Business District Tolling Program, also known as Congestion Pricing. New Yorkers cannot afford this \$1 Billion tax hike, which is being camouflaged as investment in the MTA – an unaccountable and untrustworthy steward of the public’s funds. Congestion Pricing will impose burdensome expenses on working- and middle-class citizens who are already struggling to meet the rising cost of living. It will dissuade tourism in Manhattan and make taxi, limousine, and app-based rideshare services financially untenable. Congestion Pricing will cripple our businesses – both small and large – which have yet to recover from the COVID19 crisis and are currently in the grips of unprecedented inflation and supply chain disruptions. This blank check for the MTA comes from the bank accounts of my constituents, and those who would celebrate Congestion Pricing as progress must be prepared to face the consequences!

Any solution to New York’s traffic issues – and as a driver I acknowledge that there are problems – must begin by fixing the MTA. Hard data on the consequences of imposing Congestion Pricing are needed. How will the ill and infirm make their way to hospitals below 60th St.? When can our disability community expect to have their needs satisfactorily addressed – only about 30% of stations in the entire system are “accessible”? What adverse health and environmental impacts will arise from new, increased patterns of traffic in the communities outside the Central Business District?

We must explore alternative streams of funding and delay the implementation of Congestion Pricing. This year in Albany, I introduced legislation (*A6309*) calling for a moratorium on the implementation of the Central Business District Tolling Program until January 1st, 2029 at the earliest.”

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