

Pols, stop force-feeding N.Y. huge ideas: such as the city's congestion tax scheme.

Daily News columnist Errol Louis points out the folly of politicians foisting big solutions to significant matters without engaging the public in a discussion of the problem and how to get at solutions. This top-down, anti-Democratic approach just never works and ultimately leads to bad outcomes. On important matters, as noted in the excerpts from his column below, an open and honest debate with full disclosure works best. Mr. Louis notes the experience with the city's congestion tax scheme as just one example of how "our system fails when politicians try to short-circuit the process."



Opinions

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The gift I'd most like from New York's political class, one that voters should demand, is a commitment to using hearings and open debate before springing some grand new scheme on a public that inevitably ends up footing the bill.

Too often, government officials simply announce complicated, wildly expensive solutions to thorny matters - including immigration, congestion pricing and the physical development of our city - without so much as an explanation.

When that happens, even sound ideas can seem like a scam.

Mayor Bloomberg, I fear, is making a similar blunder with his congestion pricing proposal.

But the city did a rush job of selling the plan to the public - an early proposal was rammed through to meet an arbitrary federal deadline - and was quickly joined, unfortunately, by respected, credible civic watchdog groups like the Straphangers Campaign.

Everyone, especially the civic groups, should have slowed down the debate long enough to educate the public about the actual problem, its consequences and the best ways to deal with it.

But on the really big questions, our American system of divided government assumes there will be checks and balances and vigorous debate. And our system fails when politicians try to short-circuit the process.

click [here](#) or copy and paste the url below into your browser to read the entire column:

http://www.nydailynews.com/opinions/2007/12/23/2007-12-23_pols_stop_forcefeeding_ny_huge_ideas.html