

Statement by Senator Ruben Diaz posted to NY Times City Room Blog:

April 1st,

2008

3:15 pm

The congestion pricing plan proposed by Mayor Michael Bloomberg and approved by the New York City Council, including all of the members of the Bronx delegation, except for Councilwoman Helen Foster who was absent, is a detrimental, dangerous, abusive and almost discriminatory plan that will possibly affect the neediest members of our community.

Bronx County has the highest rates of asthma in the entire nation, our children and adults suffer with respiratory problems and many lives are lost due to problems with pollution in our air. This plan from the Mayor does not guarantee that these conditions will be reversed. On the contrary, there is a possibility that drivers from Westchester County or other areas will park their vehicles in the Bronx, in order to take the train and avoid the \$8.00 fee. This would increase traffic in the Borough, the respiratory ailments and asthma in our children.

This plan will force poor people to pay \$8.00; however, rich individuals with their limousines entering Manhattan will only pay \$1.00. Buses from millionaire companies such as Greyhound, would be exempt from paying, yet, buses from organizations transporting senior citizens and/or community groups are obligated to pay the full \$8.00. Any person, who does not pay the \$8.00 within 40 days, will be obligated to pay between \$40.00 and \$65.00 including interest.

Furthermore, there are no guarantees that the \$8.00 fee or “new tax” for drivers will not rise annually as it did in Europe which began charging \$10.00 to drivers and rose to \$16.00.

For these any many more reasons, I am asking all of you, as legislators representing the County of the Bronx, that we together, send a solid and concise message to Mayor Bloomberg, that we as Bronx legislators in Albany will not vote for a plan that is as detrimental for our communities.

cc: Senators: Efrain Gonzalez, Jose Marco Serrano, Ruth Hassell-Thompson, Jeff Klein, Eric Schneiderman, Assemblymembers: Jose Rivera, Ruben Diaz Jr., Carmen Arroyo, Michael Benedetto, Michael Benjamin, Luis Diaz, Jeff Dinowitz, Peter Rivera, Aurelia Greene, Naomi Rivera, Carl Heastie

— Posted by Senator Rev Ruben Diaz

<http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/04/01/is-it-already-too-late-for-congestion-pricing/>