

Thursday, April 3, 2008

## Congestion Pricing: Wrong Plan at a Bad Time

Ft. Hamilton Station, NY – Conservative Party State Chairman, Michael R. Long, is urging New York legislators to reject the Mayor’s proposal to force a congestion-pricing plan on those who want or need to enter Manhattan. “Now is not the time to force those who must travel to Manhattan, below 60th Street, to be burdened with an additional tax when all other aspects in our daily lives are reeling with additional costs,” Long said. The Conservative Party issued the following memo to urge the Members of the Legislature to reject any form of congestion pricing:

Party Position: We are all aware of the righteous reasons that Mayor Bloomberg and others are trying to force “congestion pricing” on New Yorkers, and while some may be commendable, this is not the time to place another tax on those who come to New York via automobiles.

Is there too much traffic in Manhattan? Of course, we do not dispute that fact, nor do we dispute the fact that traffic congestion can be the cause of health concerns, however, the reports of increased asthma and other lung diseases are not limited to “south of 60th Street”.

The proposal to charge drivers and businesses in the name of improving mass transit to reduce traffic at a time when New York State is increasing every other tax they can to close a budget gap of almost \$5 billion and to increase spending by an additional \$4 billion is simply ludicrous.

To believe Gene Russianoff (New York Post Opinion April 2, 2008) that the money collected will be placed in a “lockbox” is even more ludicrous. They told us forty years ago that Lottery proceeds would be used to fund education and we citizens would have to pay less of our taxes to education. Today, newspapers report that education needs more and more money and this year’s education budget will be awarded almost \$2 billion in additional funds while students are failing in far greater numbers than forty years ago.

Taxis are exempt yet each trip will have a surcharge of \$1.00 for the congestion pricing “lockbox.”

Those without “EZ Pass” have only a short time to pay the fee without outrageous late fees being applied and while proponents point to London’s system for support, they do not tell you that “cloned license plates” are the latest gimmick to avoid paying the fee when the watchful eye of the camera snaps a photo of your license plate.

If congestion pricing is the panacea to traffic congestion, why is Mayor Bloomberg offering “pork handouts” so profusely? (New York Daily News column by Juan Gonzalez – April 2, 2008).

Congestion pricing, congestion mitigation, what ever legislators choose to call it...New Yorkers who will be forced to pay it, know it is simply another money grab that will not be able to produce enough to pay for what it promise, thereby “forcing” government to take even more money from us in the future.

When does it stop? When New York City becomes another Detroit, where no one is left to pay for all the good ideas government officials had?

We urge you to defeat Congestion Pricing.