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Congestion Pricing By Any Other Name Is Just As Stinky

Dear Editor:

On December 4, the Commission on MTA Financing chaired by former MTA Chairman Richard Ravitch released its proposals. It included an inefficient and inequitable toll tax that makes little sense and merits rejection.

The imposition of tolls on the currently free East River and Harlem Rivers bridge crossings – including our Queensborough Bridge – essentially recycles the congestion tax. Both the congestion tax and this new re-packaged son of the congestion tax scheme would take \$2 for administration for every \$3 for transit. The Assembly correctly shunned the parent scheme earlier this year.

Instead of the Ravitch plan that also disappointingly lets Albany and City Hall off the hook, we urge Queens Ledger readers and our public officials to look at our coalition plan that makes both the State and the City step up to the plate.

We identify specific revenues that empower the city and the state to fund this core responsibility. This includes a modest \$0.04 state gasoline levy (\$255 million), a vehicle registration fee increase (\$250 million), increased fines for illegal parking (\$75 million), higher parking meter rates (\$50 million) and more realistic (city) fees for the use of street space by construction contractors and utilities (\$500 million).

Other initiatives raise significant funds to support mass transit, including a non-resident income tax that apportions its proceeds between City and suburban transit projects (\$1.8 billion) and a modest real property tax surcharge on real estate development that benefits from mass transit (\$741 million).

For more information, please visit our website, www.KeepNYCFree.com.

Sincerely,
Corey Bearak
Policy Advisor
Keep NYC Free