

The Song Remains The Same

Monday's Albany play by Senator Espada uses tired old discredited arguments in an attempt to look good to former critics. And on top of this, the guy goes parochial and tried to hide it. The facts remain each free bridge serves as a connector to local streets and connect naves in one borough to another. People and commerce freely cross over from Brooklyn, Queens and The Bronx to Manhattan and vice-versa. The congestion tax aka tolls or [congestion pricing](#) failed because it remains lousy public policy that can NEVER deliver the goods. Further [it](#) remains unfair, inequitable, and inefficient. [Discussions](#) of net revenues belie the questions – and we question whether any revenues may be realized. We've seen the same numbers and they do not [lie](#). Better [alternatives](#) exist. Just visit [KeepNYCFree.com](#)

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Monday, March 22, 2010

By **JAMES M. ODATO**, Capitol bureau
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As the Legislature begins public discussions about budget plans today, Senate Majority Leader Pedro Espada Jr. promises to stir things up. He is promoting ideas such as freezing state salaries and adding tolls to some bridges downstate.

He also is reversing his position on raising money for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Last year, he had blocked proposed new bridge tolls for MTA financing. Now he is calling for \$2 tolls each way on the four bridges over the East River. The tolls would raise \$525 million and the money would be used to restore student fare cards.

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Senate set to OK Gov. Paterson's state budget

BY [Kenneth Lovett](#)

DAILY NEWS ALBANY BUREAU CHIEF

Monday, March 22nd 2010, 4:00 AM

The Senate plan casts aside a proposal to sell wine in grocery stores and doesn't include an idea pitched by Senate Majority Leader Pedro Espada Jr. (D-Bronx) to put \$2 tolls on East River bridges.

Espada, a former critic of tolls at the Brooklyn, Manhattan, Williamsburg and Queensboro bridges, said last night he favors the levies - as long as the projected \$500 million in annual revenue goes toward helping the MTA avert program cuts like the elimination of the free student MetroCards.

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Read more: http://www.nydailynews.com/news/2010/03/22/2010-03-22_senate_set_to_ok_govs_budget.html#ixzz0j2WTsdvK

NEW YORK POST

Bloomberg waits for Albany to make move on bridge tolls

By TOM NAMAKO, Transit Reporter

last Updated: Tue., Mar. 23, 2010, 05:35pm

Mayor Bloomberg said today that he's taking a wait-and-see approach to Sen. Pedro Espada's sudden announcement that he is for tolls on the four East River bridges.

"Look, we had a plan to generate revenues starting a few years ago that would be used to improve mass transit," Bloomberg said, referring to congestion pricing, which would have charged drivers to come into certain areas of Manhattan.

"The Albany Legislature said no [to congestion pricing], and now we'll have to see what they come up with," he added.

Read more:

http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/bloomberg_waits_for_albany_to_make_RpUxQ1hxRi5iGEowaf3oeJ#ixzz0j1dUi9cC

From Crains, March 23, 2010

Espada reverses course

A Democratic insider says Pedro Espada Jr.'s proposal yesterday to add a \$2 toll to the free East River bridges, with the resulting revenue dedicated to rescuing student MetroCards, is a last-ditch effort for the state senator to save face in Albany.

“He's just trying to not be the most hated,” the insider says. “He saw Hiram Monserrate get decimated, and he doesn't want the entire world going after him like that.” Monserrate was expelled from the Senate last month. It might be too late, though: Espada's dealings are being investigated by state Attorney General Andrew Cuomo; the senator has denied any wrongdoing.

Not all toll advocates are pleased with Espada's proposal. Construction unions want toll revenue to fund capital projects, not operating costs. “Three of the next five years of the MTA capital plan to maintain and expand mass transit infrastructure have no funding whatsoever,” says Gary LaBarbera, president of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York.