



THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF COUNCIL MEMBER I. DANEEK MILLER

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

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Elected Officials, Advocates, Speak Out Against Proposed Congestion Pricing Plan

With lack of transportation options in several parts of Queens, the proposed scheme would hurt residents who's easiest way to travel the borough is by car.

In addition, while City residents contribute a large amount of money to the MTA through tolls and fees, the Capital Projects being implemented or are being proposed will not help those living in transit deserts.

By increasing the costs to use a car, small businesses who rely on public transportation so their customers can visit them will be hurt most by these proposals.

Monday, June 13th 2016 - In front of the St. Albans Long Island Railroad (LIRR) Station, Councilman I. Daneek Miller, elected officials, business leaders, and community advocates spoke out against the recent proposal by MoveNY, increasing tolls to enter Manhattan.

MoveNY's plan does nothing to reduce travel times for those living in transportation deserts and current capital plans do not address the lack of public transportation options in various parts of Queens. These long travel times make it hard for residents to get to and from work and run errands, where they also have less time to spend with their family. This could also hurt Queens' large import/export industry whose trucks travel back and forth frequently over the bridges and tunnels.

"Residents in Southeast Queens have the longest commute times, with no current plans on the books to increase transportation options" said **Councilman I. Daneek Miller**. "In the meantime, City residents contribute billions of dollars to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), but that money is spent in other parts of the State, which only helps people from other counties come into our business districts. Not only do we need to make sure we get that money back, but it needs to be invested in areas where it is needed most so families who call Queens home can easily get to where they need to be. I would like to thank all the elected officials and advocates who came here today to speak out for transportation equity."

"I stand in complete opposition to the proposed Move NY Fair Plan. It is just plain wrong to charge commuters for moving around within their own city," said **Councilman Paul Vallone**.



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"It's even more absurd that this proposed plan doesn't even guarantee that the funds generated would go to improving transportation access."

Councilman Barry Grodenchik: "The negative effects of MoveNY far outweigh the benefits. I represent a district that is known to be a transportation desert, where many people rely on cars to get around; congestion pricing would simply impose a financial burden. MoveNY claims that tolls would be lowered in some places, but there's no guarantee that the lower prices will remain. We need to start investing in and expanding resources for public transportation instead of trying to add regressive fees and tolls."

"With some of the longest commute times in the city, Queens residents have long had to endure our veritable transportation desert" said **Senator Leroy Comrie**. "While it is critical to find smart, sustainable ways to fund better transit options, the Move NY plan will unfairly pass costs onto already overburdened communities like those my colleagues and I represent. Even the so called poison pill of mandating lower tolls prices is capricious at best, as circumstances and subsequently, legislation and therefore prices can and will change."

"Queens commuters need solutions, not another toll tax. Congestion pricing would place an unfair burden on commuters, small businesses, and those who simply rely on these free bridges, like the elderly and disabled. At the end of the day, I cannot think of a better example of highway robbery" said **Assemblyman David Weprin**. "I applaud Councilmember I. Daneek Miller for speaking out against congestion pricing and offering an innovative set of alternatives to this renewed tax on Queens residents."

"For several months we have waited to hear of a concrete plan that takes into account the working families and small businesses in Queens" said **Assemblywoman Alicia Hyndman**. "Currently, there are no guarantees of how money in the supposed lockbox will be distributed nor has there been any mechanism design to keep tolls from rising. There are too many holes in the Move New York plan to make it effective for residents in my district."

"A consensus exists around the need to support Mass Transit," stated **Corey Bearak, Senior Policy Advisory for Keep NYC Free** (KeepNYCFree.com). Unfortunately, some persist to use that imperative to promote [ideologically driven](#) funding toll-tax schemes that lack merit. Those misguided in looking to that scheme for new funding need to understand the dollars and sense. Keep NYC Free (KeepNYCFree.com) cautions against reliance on any toll-tax scheme, Move NY included; we already documented that any toll-tax scheme fails to raise the revenues needed, offers no benefits and hurts the economy."



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Thomas Grech, Executive Director of the Queens Chamber of Commerce said, "Queens is proud to be home to two major airports as well as rail links that bring in products from across the country and the world for both residents and businesses alike. The proposed congestion pricing plan will have a number of consequences to the businesses that import these products and sell in all five boroughs. Move NY's plan will make it harder for Queens businesses to grow, and I would like to thank all the elected officials and civic groups here today advocating for the borough."

Queens has the most Industrial Business Zones in the City, where many import-export manufactures bring in materials from across the country and world, and sell them across the region. Any price increases to go over bridges and tunnels will increase the costs for these businesses and jobs could be lost.

The City already receives a disproportionate amount of capital funds to increase transportation options, despite the fact residents contribute the most amount of money toward the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA).

With 94% of MTA ridership within the five boroughs, in 2014, residents contributed \$4.36 billion of the MTA's \$5.7 billion in fare revenue. Additionally, city drivers paid 57% of tolls on MTA bridges and tunnels. Despite these large payments, the state contributes just 4% (\$603.5 million) of the authority's more than \$8 billion operating budget.

Also, the city only gets back 40% of the surplus toll revenue collected at bridges and tunnels. The remainder supports suburban transit riders on the Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North.

Seventy to 90 percent of Southeast Queens residents use cars as their main mode of transportation because they have no other options. In the meantime, the majority of the people expected to use the Second Avenue subway live in Manhattan. East Side Access serves Long Island, the Third Track project recently for the Long Island Rail Road will only reduce travel times for those living east of Queens. And the MTA is building four Metro-North stations in the Bronx on a line that serves Westchester and upstate counties. Even the proposed BQX street car will only serve populations that have other public transportation options.

Twenty-one Council Members have signed onto Councilman I. Daneek Miller's Resolution calling for the MTA to allow riders travelling within New York City limits to pay a fare for commuter rail equal to that of a MetroCard ride on New York City Transit subways and buses;



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and allow for free transfers between commuter rail and New York City Transit subways and buses.

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