

## **New Yorkers Against Congestion Pricing Tax**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Statement by Susan Lee, President, New Yorkers Against Congestion Pricing Tax**

### **The Big Reveal-Congestion Pricing is a Tax**

*New York-November 19...* Let's call the Congestion Pricing Scheme what it is, a tax — a regressive one too. MTA Board Member Neal Zuckerman stated what we all know: "No one wants a new tax. Call it what you will; it is a tax."

Yesterday, we heard that the decision makers only listened to 23% of New Yorkers. Congestion Pricing Tax is nothing but a cash grab from the MTA. Congestion Pricing Tax neither improves the environment nor brings about equity. It will hamper the economic recovery in New York City.

The MTA seeks to rely on the Congestion Pricing Tax to fund its capital program. If cars entering the district significantly decline in number, the MTA would not meet their revenue goals. The tax is designed to raid our pockets, not reduce driving. Traffic alleviation in the Central Business District will not have a significant impact on the environment but instead will move congestion to the other boroughs. What is known, is that Environmental Justice areas such as The Lower East Side will suffer worse air quality experiences from increased traffic on the FDR Drive. Unlike the Bronx, no mitigation was offered for the increase in poor air to Lower East Side residents. Our law suit calling for a complete Environmental Impact Statement also demands an economic impact analysis impact.

The negative economic impact on businesses will be profound. The New York City Planning Department issued a report in November that states that Manhattan has the highest store vacancy rate at 14.2%. This tax will hinder New York's economic recovery. Workers, who are the lifeblood of the city, who can choose other destinations to work, will leave their jobs and move out of the CBD. Other sources of revenue to fill the MTA's budget gap that will not harm the working class and residents who live in the zone, need to be discussed.

Over the last three years NYACPT has offered at least five different revenue sources, none of which would adversely affect hard working New Yorkers, all of which would generate more than \$1 billion annually but no one wanted to meet with us. There was no interest in finding solutions that work for all New Yorkers.

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*New Yorkers Against Congestion Pricing Tax is a coalition of residents from diverse neighborhoods around New York City who have initiated a lawsuit to demand that the Federal Highway Administration perform an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to show the real impacts of Congestion Pricing (CP) on our communities. The federal government and the Metropolitan Transit Authority rushed an incomplete Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS) instead of applying the more extensive and comprehensive EIS. An EIS would properly examine the three E's: Environmental Impacts, Economic Hardship, and Equity.*