

Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COMPTROLLER REPORT FINDINGS SCREAM 'STOP THE CONGESTION PRICING TAX': GROUP

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New York-Oct. 11...An ominous report issued Monday by the office of New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli about struggling midtown and downtown commercial districts provides “a red-flag warning” to New York government leaders to halt implementation of a congestion pricing tax in Manhattan that could cost as much as \$35 per vehicle, Keep New York City Congestion Tax Free today said.

Mr. DiNapoli’s report paints a dire picture for the future of midtown and downtown commercial spaces which are grappling to recover from a Covid-19 pandemic that transformed many work environments from in-person to virtual. While Mr. DiNapoli’s report did not delve into the congestion pricing issue, common sense suggests that adding a tax to enter commercial districts south of 60th Street — the areas hurting most — would be counterproductive in the extreme, Keep New York City Congestion Tax Free said.

“The Comptroller’s report is clear: midtown and downtown Manhattan will be struggling to rebound for years; adding a congestion pricing tax on top of existing problems could be disastrous,” said Keep New York City Congestion Tax Free spokesman Joshia Bienstock. “New York State needs to rethink congestion pricing, and instead look to federal infrastructure dollars

to meet MTA needs. They should be looking at incentives to repopulate our core business sectors, never disincentives.”

The Comptroller's report found that Covid erased nearly \$27 billion in market value within Manhattan’s office market this fiscal year alone, costing the state more than \$850 million in lost real estate tax revenue.

“Midtown and the Financial District are two of the largest business districts in the world,” Mr. DiNapoli said. “When the pandemic hit, companies shifted office workers to remote work, rents fell, and vacancies rose. I am optimistic for the sector’s recovery but it’s short-term future remains uncertain as employers assess future use of the space. The city should closely monitor trends in the sector and consider the future impact on tax revenues.”

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[Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free](#) represents a diverse coalition of civic, business, and labor organizations and businesses throughout New York City. We share a simple vision: to keep our city congestion tax free. Our coalition opposes the imposition of tolls to enter the City's (Manhattan) Central Business District ("CBD") via toll readers installed on City Streets or on the City's FREE East River and Harlem River Bridges. Our members previously opposed the \$8 fee (\$21 for trucks) that then Mayor Bloomberg proposed to impose on drivers entering Manhattan below 86th Street and all subsequent iterations of so-called congestion pricing, including the most current scheme that proponents advocate charging drivers as much as \$25 per day (\$125 per week; over \$500 monthly; more than \$6,000 annually) to enter the CBD! Our members urge New Yorkers to deliver a simple message to our legislators: "Say no to any toll-tax fee scheme that seeks to charge us to enter Manhattan's CBD." Many supporters and coalition members propose alternatives that better address traffic issues in our entire City and provide new and fair sources to support mass transit.