



News...

FROM COUNCIL MEMBER
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Press Release

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Avella and Weprin Hold Anti-Congestion Pricing Rally

Today, Council Members Tony Avella and David Weprin held a rally at the foot of the 59th Street/Queensboro Bridge opposing the Mayor's Congestion Pricing Plan in conjunction with the Queens Chamber of Commerce and the Queens Civic Congress.

Councilman Avella stated, "Congestion Pricing in any form is nothing more than an undue tax on working and middle class families and small businesses. It is not a viable option or solution for reducing traffic; it is merely a revenue generating plan. It should be the responsibility of the leaders of the city to find ways of increasing revenues to improve mass transit without placing the fiscal burden upon those who can least afford it."

Councilman Weprin, Chair of Finance Committee, stated, "No one can ignore the fact that we do have a congestion problem but the idea of taxing the working class as the only means of reducing traffic is short-sighted. Traffic mitigation alternatives include more vigorous enforcement of existing traffic and parking rules, like cracking down on double and triple parked cars, preventing trucks from parking in loading zones once they have completed their deliveries, reducing non-emergency deliveries during the day and stopping taxis from middle of the street pick-ups and drop-offs. Improving traffic management, offering incentives to motorists and businesses to use mass transit, and improving the public transportation system especially in the boroughs outside of Manhattan will also reduce traffic without having to impose another tax."

Al Pennisi, President of the Queens Chamber of Commerce, a group that represents over 1,500 businesses and business organizations stated, "The Chamber early expressed its concerns with what appears to be a congestion tax scheme before the City Council. The congestion tax is a business killer and impacts unfairly on smaller businesses."

"The pushers of this unfair congestion tax say and promise anything to promote their unjust scheme," stated Corey Bearak, Policy Advisor for Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free. "The pushers falsely claim this unjust scheme will clean our air - it will not; that their unfair tax will measurably reduce traffic congestion and speed in Manhattan's midtown and downtown business district - it does not; that this inequitable tax will raise substantial funds for mass transit projects and lead to transit improvements that will make a difference throughout the city; it will not. Shame on them! Why are they putting so many dollars to make us buy their false promises and phony guarantees?"

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“Queens Civic Congress puts all elected officials and would be ones on notice,” stated Transportation Chair James Trent of the borough-wide coalition of civic and condo, cooperative, tenant, and other community organizations. “Anyone who supports the congestion tax cannot hope to receive a ‘Five-Unispheres’ rating when Queens Civic Congress publicizes to members of our member organizations the positions of candidates for public office with respect to core issues advocated in our CIVIC 2030 plan. I submit to you that five unispeheres means a bit more than some other ratings from groups that have threatened to oppose anyone who votes against the congestion tax.”