

**FROM THE OFFICE OF
HON. LEROY COMRIE
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Deputy Majority Leader of The NYC Council
Chair, Committee on Consumer Affairs**

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Statement Regarding Council's Congestion Pricing Vote

NEW YORK, NY- Council Member Leroy Comrie (D-27th District), issued the following statement today regarding the City Council's passage of the home rule message on congestion pricing:

“I am very disappointed that this body was not able to come together to develop a real plan to help all New York City residents deal with the issues of congestion and health. The lack of outreach was evident and an opportunity to create a real five-borough plan has been missed. In my opinion, the residents of Queens will be unfairly taxed by the current congestion plan.

“As a long-time member of this body- as an elected official and as a staffer -over the past twenty years I've heard numerous promises made by several administrations regarding improved public transportation and capital improvements in Queens, which were never delivered. And despite the assurances of this administration, I've seen nothing that will assure me that the projected benefits of this congestion plan will ever be delivered upon.

“We have no control of the MTA's capital budget- they can change it whenever they want to. Several years ago, when the MTA took over the private bus lines in Queens, there were promises made for additional express bus services. We still haven't seen them. And the MTA's inability to open their real financial books to the public only reaffirms my belief that the people of Queens will be paying into a system that places executive perks over real transportation improvements. I have absolutely no faith in MTA to be honest with New Yorkers.

“I want to applaud my colleagues who stood against this plan, especially my colleague from Brooklyn, Council Member Lew Fidler. Real leadership comes not when you are agreeing with majority- that's the easy part -but when you dissent as minority, based on your principles and your belief that what you do and how you vote is a true reflection of the community you serve.

“Today, I cast my vote for the residents of Queens, who this evening will be packed like sardines on the E train to Jamaica Center. Who will be frustrated sitting in traffic on the Grand Central. Our economy is in recession and the mortgage crisis now threatens to erode the entire Southeast Queens community. Our federal government has seen fit to bail out billion dollar Wall Street firms, while real families in this City are losing homes and jobs. And the message from this Council, in the midst of this crisis, is to impose another tax. We are unwilling to raise taxes on the wealthy, but see fit to continue pricing working class residents out of the City.

“I will not in good conscience vote in favor of this plan.”

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