



**Testimony to MTA Board
September 21, 2022**

***Re: Congestion Pricing Essential to Future of Mass Transit in NYC, and
Metrics Dashboard a Step Towards MTA Open Data***

Good morning. I am Rachael Fauss, Senior Policy Advisor for Reinvent Albany. We advocate for more transparent and accountable New York government, including for authorities like the MTA. I would like to address two issues today: first, the continued urgency of congestion pricing, and second, the MTA's new beta metrics dashboard.

Congestion Pricing

Reinvent Albany strongly supports congestion pricing because it is the law, and has been shown globally to reduce motor vehicle congestion, air pollution and travel times. The MTA's environmental assessment shows a 15% to 20% reduction of motor vehicle traffic in the Central Business District, which will reduce delays to emergency and commercial vehicles and help MTA bus riders whose trips are the [slowest in the nation](#).

Congestion pricing will provide the MTA with a reliable, environmentally beneficial source of revenue that the metro region needs now to fix our buses, subways, and commuter rails. This is particularly crucial as the MTA has a looming operating budget crisis, and cannot afford to borrow any more from its own resources to fund its capital program, with its debt load already at [20% of operating revenues](#). The MTA has [amended its 2020-2024 capital plan](#) once to adjust for increased costs due to inflation, and further delays will make it even more expensive to complete capital repairs.

As the MTA and the Traffic Mobility Review Board considers final tolls, it is important to not expand upon the exemptions provided in law. Toll exemptions and credits must be seen as fair and transparent, because granting these to certain groups and not others will breed cynicism and undermine public support. The environmental assessment shows that the more exemptions are provided, the higher the toll is for the remaining drivers, which defeats the purpose of ensuring "fairness."

Metrics Dashboard and Open Data

Reinvent Albany championed the passage of the MTA Open Data Law, sponsored by Senator Leroy Comrie and Assemblymember Bobby Carroll, and appreciates that the MTA is [working to implement the law](#), while also seeking to streamline its board books.

We look forward to digging into the new beta [metrics dashboard](#), which contains many datasets previously in the board books.

We encourage the MTA to continue to meet with stakeholders to ensure that the open data and metrics portals are easy to use, and provide high-value information in open data formats. The MTA should also ensure that all data available on the metrics portal is available for download, not just in visual formats, with links to the state open data portal. Additionally, the MTA should provide a general board update about its implementation of the open data program.

Thank you for your consideration.