



July 28, 2023

To Members of the Traffic Mobility Advisory Board:

Reinvent Albany writes to urge you to expeditiously develop the tolling schedule and policy to implement the MTA/State of New York Central Business District Tolling Program (a.k.a. congestion pricing).

We urge the Board to consider these points in its ongoing proceedings to develop the toll schedule:

1. Congestion pricing for the central business district as policy was legislated by the State of New York in 2019. The role of the TMRB is to recommend specific toll rates and policies regarding any exemptions or credits from the new tolls. The TMRB is not the place to debate or complain about first principles regarding congestion pricing. If that is likely to be your contribution, we suggest you yield your place on the board and ask Governor Hochul or Mayor Adams to appoint a replacement.
2. The law establishing congestion pricing already provides reasonable exemptions for emergency vehicles and those transporting people with disabilities, as well as a state tax credit for individuals making less than \$60,000 in the congestion zone. More exemptions for inefficient trips to the zone mean more traffic and higher tolls for those who do pay.
3. We specifically ask that you drop any toll exemptions for public agency employees, board members or retirees. If public agencies want to credit their employees for certain trips, that should be decided during the state and city budget processes given the fiscal impact; it is not the job of MTA transit riders and toll payers to subsidize these employees.
4. Congestion pricing has huge potential to divert large numbers of motorists from across the region to mass transit. You should encourage this shift by exempting public and private commuter buses from congestion pricing tolls.

5. We ask that the Board assess a per-ride fee on for-hire vehicles paid by the passenger, rather than a once per day toll paid by the driver. Given the intensity of for-hire-vehicle use in the central business district, an increase in passenger fees would contribute significantly to the program's overall revenue and traffic relief goals.
6. The MTA should smartly use credits on some already tolled facilities to reduce excess travel and toll shopping, particularly through environmental justice communities — a key focus of the federal review — and to create strong program benefits in CBD-adjacent areas.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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