



## **Testimony to MTA Board Supporting Open Data and Congestion Pricing Implementation**

**July 19, 2023**

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.

We thank the MTA staff for moving forward with two important initiatives that will be discussed by the Board today: open data implementation, and congestion pricing.

We championed passage of Senator Comrie and Assemblymember Carroll's [MTA Open Data Law](#), signed by Governor Hochul in 2021, and appreciate that MTA staff released a [2023 program update](#) earlier this year, and look forward to their board update.

The work of the data analytics team to rationalize MTA data reporting is a win-win: It will help MTA staff have better access to data as well as the public. We appreciate that the team is looking closely at additional financial and capital program data to publish on the [NYS open data portal](#), including data from the MTA board books, capital dashboard, and forthcoming 20-year needs assessment.

This new window into MTA spending is particularly crucial as congestion pricing is being implemented. Open data on MTA spending, performance, and capital projects will allow the public to better see exactly where their tax dollars, fares, and tolls are going, building greater public trust in the MTA.

Lastly, as the Traffic Mobility Review Board begins its work to determine congestion tolls, credits and exemptions, we echo the recommendations of our colleagues:

- Assess a per-ride surcharge on for-hire vehicles paid by the passenger, rather than a once per day toll paid by the driver.
- Smartly use toll credits to reduce excess travel and toll shopping – particularly through environmental justice communities, a key focus of the federal review.
- Commuter buses, both public and private, should be exempt from tolls.
- No additional exemptions should be granted besides commuter buses and legislatively mandated exemptions.

Thank you for your consideration.