



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## Senate Republicans Blast Governor Hochul's Plan to Revive Congestion Pricing

ROBERT G. ORTT November 14, 2024

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“Hochul’s Congestion Pricing Con: Higher Costs, Broken Trust”

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**Manhattan, NY – New York State Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt, joined by Senator Rob Rolison, Senator-elect Steve Chan, members of Chinese American Citizens Alliance Greater New York and community business advocates, today blasted Governor Hochul's announcement that she will revive congestion pricing now that Election Day is over. She previously put the**

destructive taxes on a so-called “pause” in order to take heat off her vulnerable Democrat colleagues in a tough election year. Hochul’s duplicity on this issue continues with her claim that she’ll **reinstate the onerous tax** at a reduced level of \$9 despite her lack of statutory authority to do so. Senator Ortt and his colleagues warned that **Chapter 59 of the Laws of 2019**, which enacted congestion pricing, requires legislative approval to reduce the rate below \$15.

“Senate Republicans have recognized from the start what congestion price really is: yet another burdensome tax on hardworking New Yorkers. Kathy Hochul is not fooling anybody. Her decision to pause enactment of this plan until Election Day was safely in her rearview mirror further proves her phony ‘pause’ was done to protect vulnerable Democratic candidates, not overburdened New Yorkers. Elected officials from both political parties ought to be fighting against this onerous new tax, which comes at exactly the wrong time as everyday New Yorkers struggle in this economy to make a living,” **said Senator Ortt.**

“The suspension of congestion pricing was nothing but an election year dog and pony show. Of course it’s back on the table just days after the election - who didn’t see this coming. Early this year, 64 percent of New Yorkers rejected congestion pricing in a poll. It’s about time Governor Hochul starts listening to the voice of the people,” **stated Senator- Elect Steve Chan, 17th SD.**

“Governor Hochul should not look to revive her ill-advised plan. As I have stated previously, Albany is spending too much money and not providing enough value to our state's overburdened taxpayers, in particular Orange County commuters who still lack a continuous single-seat ride into New York City. A new tax targeted at working commuters, also known as congestion pricing, is not the answer. By clawing back unpaid tolls and fares that total in the hundreds of millions of dollars while helping it to live within its means, we can improve public transit for New Yorkers and rightsize the MTA for many years to come. For instance, the MTA identified \$700 million in lost revenue to toll and fare scofflaws in its own blue-ribbon report issued in 2023. Expand service choices first, then let's talk,” **stated Senator Rob Rolison, 39th SD.**

“The governor’s decision to reintroduce congestion pricing right after the election is a clear betrayal of New Yorkers who hoped for meaningful relief from this unfair policy. Pausing it before the election, only to bring it back now, reveals a lack of transparency and respect for the struggles

of hardworking families and small business owners already grappling with the high cost of living. I stand firmly against this tax and I am proud to stand with my colleagues as we continue to fight for real solutions that prioritize the needs of our communities,” **said Assemblyman Michael Novakho, 45th Assembly District.**

Per legislation that created congestion pricing, [Chapter 59 of the Laws of 2019](#), the toll must be sufficient to bond for \$15 billion for the MTA Capital Plan. There is no provision in the legislation allowing the Governor to unilaterally change the amount of this tax. The State Legislature must act to lower or repeal this tax.

From the time congestion pricing was first debated in the State Legislature, every member of the Senate Republican Conference saw the scheme for exactly what it was: another economic hardship inflicted upon hardworking New Yorkers. The Republican Conference attempted several times to repeal this disastrous tax, but each time were rejected by the Senate Democratic Majority that supported this tax.

“If Governor Hochul’s new congestion pricing plan comes back before the Legislature for a vote, I look forward to my colleagues across the aisle – who now say they oppose congestion pricing despite initially voting for it– soundly rejecting this tax once and for all,” **concluded Senator Ortt.**