



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas P. Morahan

Senators to Launch Regional Task Force on Mta

THOMAS P. MORAHAN May 14, 2009



Hudson Valley State Senators today proposed a regional taskforce to summarize the current MTA services offered to Hudson Valley area residents in Dutchess, Orange, Putnam and Rockland Counties and make specific recommendations for key, specific, desired improvements to MTA service in the Hudson Valley.

The task force will focus on how the MTA can contribute to the economic vitality of the region and what key, specific improvements should be made by the MTA to serve the Hudson Valley. The regional task force is being put together by area Senators including State

Senator Thomas P. Morahan.

The task force is inviting area business leaders, local officials, MTA Board Members, and other State officials to join with them. The Hudson Valley's representatives all objected to the new MTA tax. Businesses, not for profits, county government, libraries, area colleges, and schools are all now forced to pay a tax on their payrolls. Drivers will also pay more for their licenses and vehicle registrations.

Legislative leaders have agreed to reimburse schools but the promise is not binding and no reimbursement will go to private schools, colleges, counties, and towns—who will have to raise tuition, cut services, or raise property taxes to make up the multi-million dollar regional difference.

"According to a MTA County-By-County cost benefit analysis released by the MTA last year, the County of Rockland and the County of Orange paid a total of \$ 73.63 million more to the MTA in taxes and fees than the MTA provided in services and payments to these counties," said Senator Morahan. "This value gap existed before the recent MTA bailout, and as a result of the bailout, the gap will only increase. Therefore, if the MTA wants us in their region, then the MTA must be made into a true regional service, not one in just name and tax policy."

Task force participants will be requested to lay out key, prioritized areas where improvements can be made. Morahan said the goal is not to develop a laundry list of requests, but rather offer key proposals designed to make the MTA more user-friendly to Hudson Valley residents.

The task force will be composed of leaders of both for profit and not for profit businesses, elected local government officials, commuters, and business development officials.

"We all voted against these taxes and fees. The question is what are we going to do about it," said State Senator John Bonacic, adding "there has to be more than just voting no."

Local MTA representatives will also be invited to participate. The task force is currently being formed and taskforce members will be announced in the next one to three weeks.

"The MTA tax is unfair, unreasonable and unequally distributed" said Senator Bill Larkin.

"This task force will give the Hudson Valley the voice to be heard in New York City and bring our transit needs into the open for discussion and future action. If they expect businesses to pay for services that the vast majority don't use, they had better make room at the table to hear our concerns."

#####