



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

Senate Transportation Committee Holds Public Hearing Examining Bridge Strikes

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. October 25, 2012



Photo caption: Senator Fuschillo (left) asks a question during the recent public hearing on commercial vehicles striking bridges. He is joined by Senator Jack Martins (center) and Assemblyman Dave McDonough (right).

The New York State Senate Transportation Committee, chaired by Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick), today held a public hearing examining the problem of bridge strikes by commercial vehicles on parkways.

“Bridge strikes are a continuing problem that have caused damage and delays on our parkways for years. Today’s public hearing, coupled with the testimony of experts, brings us one step closer to understanding why these bridge strikes occur,” said Senator Fuschillo. “I thank those who offered their time and testimony to the Committee for participating.”

Commercial trucks are currently prohibited from driving on state parkways because the bridge overpasses do not provide sufficient clearance for them to fit under. However, many trucks are entering the parkways and striking these bridges, causing extensive damage and significant traffic delays which can last for hours at a time.

There have been approximately 200 bridge strikes each year since 2005, according to the New York State Department of Transportation. A recent Newsday report also noted that a quarter of these strikes occurred on Long Island between 2010 and 2011, with bridge strikes costing \$7 million on Long Island alone over the last five years.

Just yesterday, a truck slammed into a bridge overpass on the Saw Mill River Parkway in Westchester, spilling debris and diesel fuel all over the road. The result was the closure of all northbound lanes near the accident and massive traffic delays for the other drivers on the road.

During the hearing, members of the Committee heard from a number of experts who offered their input on bridge strikes by commercial vehicles in New York State, including:

- Dr. Anil Kumar Agrawal, Professor of Civil Engineering, The City College of New York/
Principal Investigator for the Bridge Vehicle Impact Assessment
- Assistant Commissioner Phillip Eng, Chief Engineer, New York State Department of Transportation

- Sergeant Ira Promisel, Chief Technical Sergeant/State Coordinator, New York State Police/Regional Bridge Strike Mitigation Task Force
- Kenneth Tirone, Vice President of Operations/Board Member, Hub Truck Rental/New York State Motor Truck Association
- Kevin McCaffrey, President, Teamsters Local 707
- Jeffrey Frediani, Legislative Analyst, & Christopher McBride, Community Transportation Specialist, AAA New York

Discussion at the hearing focused on the recent influx of bridge strikes by commercial vehicles, findings from the Bridge Vehicle Impact Assessment, how commercial vehicle bridge strikes can be prevented, and how the current laws, if necessary, can be enhanced to mitigate occurrences of bridge strikes.

The hearing was held at Farmingdale State College in Farmingdale, New York.