



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

Gallivan Urges Thruway Authority to Avoid Toll Hikes “At All Costs”

PATRICK M. GALLIVAN November 13, 2012

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Renews Call To Separate Canal System From Thruway Authority

As New York State Thruway Authority officials postponed a scheduled meeting for the second time in five days that may have included a vote to approve a 45 percent increase on three-axel vehicles, Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R,C,I – Elma), chairman of the Senate’s Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business Committee, urged the Thruway Authority Board to explore other options to avoid a toll increase and consider his proposal to separate the State’s Canal System from the Thruway Authority.

“A toll increase would be detrimental to the State’s still rebounding economy, serving to raise consumer costs for goods being shipped across New York and forcing trucks to forgo the Thruway in favor of local roads that are far less suited to withstand commercial vehicle traffic,” Gallivan said. “The Thruway needs to look at spending less rather than increasing revenue to meet its budget gap, and I implore them to again consider my proposal to alleviate the Thruway Authority of its cost obligations for the canal system.”

The Thruway Authority has claimed that the toll hike is needed to cover a \$90 million budget deficit. The New York State canal system has been under the umbrella of the New York State Thruway Authority since 1992, consuming more than \$1 billion of the Thruway Authority's resources over that period. Separating the canal system from the Thruway Authority would have saved the Thruway Authority nearly \$107 million in combined operating and capital expenses in 2012, and would realize similar annual savings in future years. Thruway tolls were increased in 2005, 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Gallivan's plan would place the canal system under the control of the New York State Department of Transportation, thereby subjecting its cost and operation to legislative oversight through the annual state budget process. Gallivan also sent a formal letter to the Chairman of the Thruway Authority, Howard Milstein, in September calling on the Thruway Authority's board to endorse his proposal and agree to bridge any remaining budget gap through cost savings, not toll increases.

"As evidenced at hearings conducted throughout the State, the public, the business community, and elected officials from both parties are unified in their opposition to any planned toll increase," Gallivan said. "The Thruway Authority needs to examine every way imaginable to cut costs and avoid a toll hike."

Gallivan has been an outspoken critic of the toll increase since it was proposed in May, submitting a formal letter of opposition to the Thruway Authority in July, and reiterating his opposition in August through formal testimony put forth at a public hearing conducted by the Thruway Authority.

Formal Legislation to sever the New York State Canal System from the Thruway Authority, S.7850, was introduced in September.