



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

## Senator Carlucci Proposes Toll Relief for Commuters

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## **Senator Carlucci Proposes Toll Relief for Commuters Stands with Local Leaders, Business Owners and Commuters**

NYACK- Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester) stood with Nyack Mayor Jen White, John Corlett, Chairman of the Legislative Committee for AAA New York State, Mike Hekker of the Nyack River Club and employees of the club to announce a new first of its kind toll relief plan specifically designed to ease the burden for commuters traveling throughout our area.

The tax credit can be used by commuters who travel through any of New York's bridges and tolls throughout the state. Not only does the plan promise to ease the burden for New Yorkers, it will help increase economic development throughout the area. Currently the only other benefit provided for commuting is a federal benefit that does not include tolls and was recently scaled down in size. Nearly 9 million residents throughout New York commute to work and pay a toll every single day.

Tens of thousands travel across the New York State Thruway and use the Tappan Zee bridge. Annual costs for tolls across the Tappan Zee exceed \$720 a year. With the construction of the New Tappan Zee bridge these costs are only expected to rise. According to the New York State Thruway authority tolls on the Tappan Zee Bridge scan over 500,000 commuter EZ passes every month, over 5 million annually. The Harriman toll which is also located in our area scans over 110,000 monthly commuters and 1,257,192 commuters annually. Senator Carlucci and his colleagues plan on creating a toll tax credit that will give these drivers relief from their commuting expenses.

The income tax credit will be available for drivers who must pay a toll as part of their daily commute. A commuter would be able to claim credit up to \$250 per person. For those married and filing jointly, the \$250 credit maximum can be claimed for each spouse, as long as each spouse commutes separately and incurs these costs individually. The credit would be implemented beginning in the 2014 Income Tax year.

Senator Carlucci Said, "Creating a new and innovative tax credit for commuters who use tolls is another way to keep the Hudson Valley affordable. Commuters are the life force of our small businesses throughout the area. Making sure they can afford

to get to work should be a priority this legislative session.”

John A. Corlett, Chairman of the Legislative Committee for AAA New York State said, “ On behalf of the 2.7 million AAA members residing in New York State, I would like to thank Senator Carlucci for sponsoring this important legislation. Tolls in the New York Metropolitan Area continue to escalate making it more challenging for hard working commuters to make ends meet.” Corlett noted that MTA Bridge and Tunnel tolls cost commuters about \$2,600 per year. Further, in September 2011, the Port Authority on New York & New Jersey implemented the first of five unprecedented toll hikes. Peak E-Z Pass tolls on facilities such as the George Washington Bridge will increase by more than 10% every year until December 2015 when a one way peak bridge toll will be \$12.50.

Nyack Mayor Jen White said, “Any relief commuters can get during these difficult times is a tremendous help. In Rockland County which suffers from a serious lack of mass transit there is no way to get to work at any of the major job centers to valuable jobs without paying a substantial toll. Until the mass transit options increase and improve a toll credit would be particularly helpful to our residents.”

Mike Hekker of the Nyack River Club said, “The River Club conducts our entire business on people's extra money. The price of gas and the cost of commuting is a big expense for our customers and employees. Since the recession we are all working harder for less money.

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