



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Chris Jacobs

## Jacobs Hails Announcement of Cashless Tolls

SENATOR JACOBS August 22, 2017

| ISSUE: **CASHLESS TOLLING, REMOVING GRAND ISLAND TOLL BARRIERS**



(Grand Island, NY) – New York State Senator Chris Jacobs (60<sup>th</sup> SD) celebrated today’s announcement that the New York State Thruway Authority is moving forward with the implementation of cashless tolling at the Grand Island Bridges as “a victory that will benefit all of Western New York.”

“The Grand Island toll plazas have caused environmental harm, created a less safe and longer commute for motorists and served as an impediment to moving people and goods between Erie and Niagara Counties,” said Senator Jacobs. “I am thrilled that our efforts are paying off

and that the negative impact of the tolls will soon be a thing of the past.”

Shortly after taking office in January of this year, Jacobs began his call for the New York State Thruway Authority to remove the Grand Island toll booths, or implement cashless tolling technology similar to that currently being used downstate at the Tappan Zee Bridge. In a letter to Thruway Authority Executive Director Bill Finch dated January 31<sup>st</sup>, Jacobs called on the authority to “bring parity to Upstate and Downstate in the use of this technology.”

After the Governor’s budget proposal included plans to build a new, \$20 million state-of-the-art Welcome and Visitors Center on Grand Island, Jacobs wrote to Cuomo and state economic development officials asking for their support to implement cashless tolling. Jacobs and Assemblyman Angelo Morinello also introduced legislation in their respective houses calling for the removal of the tolls, while regional tourism organizations on both sides of the bridges also called for their removal.

“This was a priority for me from day one, but it was also a collaborative effort, and I appreciate the support and participation of Assemblyman Morinello, Congressman Higgins, Supervisor McMurray, and citizen advocate Brian Michel from WNY for Grand Island Bridge Toll Barrier Removal.”

In meetings and conversations with Thruway authority officials in Albany, Jacobs had been stressing environmental, economic development, traffic safety and parity with thruway investments downstate as reasons to make removal of the old toll barriers a priority now.

“Now that cashless tolling is coming to the Grand Island bridges, I am confident that Grand Island residents will enjoy a safer and faster commute while we maximize the state’s investment in a more accessible new welcome center,” Jacobs concluded.