



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Tedisco

## Resistance to Cuomo's Highway Heist Grows

SENATOR JIM TEDISCO September 4, 2019

| ISSUE: **NEW LICENSE PLATES**

The resistance to Governor's Cuomo's "Highway Heist" is growing.

Senator Jim Tedisco (R,C,I,REF-Glenville) and Assemblywoman Mary Beth Walsh (R,C,I-Ballston) today joined with eight area County Clerks to announce their opposition to the Governor's new DMV license plate tax cash grab to charge millions of motorists a \$25 tax to obtain a new license plate and another \$20 tax to keep their current plate number, creating a \$70 million windfall for state coffers.

Tedisco and Walsh were joined by Saratoga County Clerk Craig Hayner, Rensselaer County Clerk Frank Merola, Herkimer County Clerk Sylvia Rowan, Columbia County Clerk Holly Tanner, Warren County Clerk Pamela Vogel, Fulton County Clerk Linda Kollar, Hamilton County Clerk Jane Zarecki, and Essex County Clerk Joseph Provoncha, who all run local DMV offices, to oppose the tax grab, and question the excess \$70 million windfall for state coffers and ask where the money will be going.

They also announced their support for Tedisco's call for the legislature to hold hearings this fall to get public input on the license plate tax, and examine what happened to the old plates that the state DMV says needs to be replaced, and why the state isn't seeking to claw back costs from the previous license plate vendor, 3M, rather than further gouge taxpayers.

“The resistance to Governor Cuomo’s highway heist to raise license plate fees on millions of motorists is growing and it starts right at the front offices of the people on the ground who actually will have to administer this \$70 million cash grab by the state: our local County Clerks!” said Senator Jim Tedisco. “The \$45 license plate tax is a bad idea. It’s not necessary and the Governor should listen to the overwhelming chorus of people who are outraged by it and do the right thing by revoking it.”

“Another day, another tax in New York State,” said Assemblywoman Mary Beth Walsh. “Governor Cuomo’s push for new license plates is just another greedy money-grab by the state to take money out of the pockets of our hard-working families and collect more personal data. If these new plates are necessary to improve detection in cashless toll booths and red light cameras, then the state should be covering the costs!”

“Unreadable license plates need to be replaced, as they are important identification markers for vehicles and their owners. However, requiring plates that are in good condition to be replaced is wasteful. Vehicle owners shouldn’t be slapped with a blanket mandate and frivolous fees just because the state decides they want to change the plate design and Albany bureaucrats are seeking an easy way to generate revenue. The state would better serve the people of New York by developing a long-term plan that addresses replacement of damaged plates, such as including license plate examination as part of the New York State Vehicle Inspection process,” said Saratoga County Clerk Craig Hayner.

“This is nothing but a NYS money grab, pure and simple. I’m surprised the Governor can keep a straight face defending this ridiculous replacement program,” said Rensselaer County Clerk Frank Merola.

“As Herkimer County Clerk, my office interacts with motorists every day through the Herkimer County DMV. New Yorkers already pay some of the highest registration fees in the

nation. This proposal by the Governor would just compound the pain on our motorists. I want to thank Senator Jim Tedisco for his leadership in standing up for taxpayers and strongly opposing this cash grab by the state,” said Herkimer County Clerk Sylvia Rowan.

“At a time when transparency in government is important, the Governor and the NYS DMV, with surprise programs, new fees and new mandates – are doing a disservice to NYS motorists. Without the input of the County Clerks who are responsible for 52 local DMV offices across the state, this program will be a nightmare for the DMV offices and for the public that we are trying to serve,” said Warren County Clerk Pamela Vogel.

“The Governor’s new license plate fee is unnecessary and will just further burden New York State’s overtaxed motorists and add further burden on our local County DMVs. The Governor should rescind these new fees,” said Columbia County Clerk Holly Tanner.

“I am strongly opposed to the proposed new plate issuance with the fee increase. The \$25 fee for a new set of plates, and additional fee of \$20 to keep the same number, will break the average motorist, even though it is a onetime fee. Many of the older Liberty plates are in good condition and should not have to be replaced. Governor Cuomo has come up with too many fee increases over the years,” said Fulton County Clerk Linda Kollar.

“I am very much opposed to this new license plate proposal. It is JUST a money grab and here in the North Country this just adds and additional burden on our already overstressed taxpayers who are just trying to hold it together to feed their families. Being we have no public transportation, their vehicles are their life line to support the ones they love. It pains me to see this happen, another mandate we have no control over and just shoved down our throats,” said Hamilton County Clerk Jane S. Zarecki.

“The NYS DMV Commissioner has let County Clerks and DMV Offices down. With no consideration of existing workloads. NYS DMV continues to pile on the work with no regard to customer service, office functionality or monetary compensation. It is exceptionally frustrating to have to answer to my constituents for excessive fees, prohibitive requirements, and long wait times that are a result from NYS DMV implementing policies without feedback from those of us on the front lines,” said Essex County Clerk Joseph A. Provoncha.

Last week, Senator Tedisco [sent a letter to Senate Transportation Committee Chairman Timothy Kennedy \(D-Buffalo\) requesting a public hearing](#) to get public input on the license plate fees and also bring the DMV in to justify the costs and ask why the state isn't recouping taxpayer dollars from the previous license plate vendor, 3M, which by many accounts, has produced an inferior product that is causing license plates to peel and fade.

According to an [analysis by Tedisco's Office](#), the manufacture of New York State license plates cost taxpayers \$2.3 million per year, creating a \$70 million two-year windfall for the state with revenue collected from the \$25 per plate fee. This does not even consider additional revenue the state would receive from those who want to keep their current plate number and pay an extra \$20 per plate for that “convenience.”

Previously, [Senator Tedisco wrote to the Governor and DMV Commissioner urging them not to impose the \\$25 new license plate fee and the additional \\$20 fee](#) on those who want to keep their current license plate number. Tedisco also has an [online petition drive](#) calling on the Governor and DMV to rescind the \$45 in new fees. Tedisco noted that [Part H of NYS budget bill A.159B of 2009](#), which Tedisco did not vote for nor did any other Republican legislator is clear that the state can charge up to \$25, but is not required to levy such a fee.