



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Harckham Proposes Tolls on Connecticut Drivers—Or Work on a Regional Transportation Accord

**PETE HARCKHAM** December 18, 2019

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Peekskill, NY – In response to Connecticut’s plan to collect tolls on I-684, New York State Senator Pete Harckham proposed tolls on Connecticut drivers—or commencing work on a regional transportation accord—today at a news conference held in South Salem, NY.

Joining Sen. Harckham at the news conference were several other local officials, including Lewisboro Supervisor Peter Parsons, Pound Ridge Supervisor Kevin Hansan, North Salem Deputy Supervisor Peter Kamenstein and Lewisboro Council Member Jane D. Crimmins.

Harckham noted that thousands of vehicles cross from Connecticut onto the roads of northern Westchester each day, mostly commuters traveling to Metro-North train stations and major highways toward New York City. This use degrades the New York roadways, he said, and New York taxpayers pick up the tab.

“So, it strikes me and many others as particularly galling that Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont and other Connecticut officials are going ahead with put a toll in place on the small 1.4 mile stretch of I-684 that crosses into Connecticut—to pay for roadway infrastructure repairs in Connecticut,” said Harckham.

“Making this even more galling,” Harckham said, “is that since the administration of Governor Rockefeller, New York State has provided all of the services on Connecticut’s portion of 684—road repairs, fire and emergency responses, state police patrol, snow plowing, removal of deer carcasses—everything.”

With no consulting of New York officials on the idea of enacting an I-684 toll; and Connecticut drivers continuing to stream into New York every morning, scot-free; plus, the cost to small businesses in New York increasing about \$6 million a year because of the tolls, Harckham said it was time for action.

“In this prevailing situation where there is no cooperation between Connecticut and New York, I would say that we then have no choice but to propose our own tolls on all Connecticut drivers, and use the raised revenue to repair New York roads,” stated Harckham. “Simply put, this is Ned’s version of the border wall—unwarranted and not negotiated.”

In his new legislation, Harckham will propose enacting a series of tolls—on Route 116 in North Salem, on Routes 35 and 123 in Lewisboro, and Routes 124 and 137 in Pound Ridge, as well as a toll on the Hutchinson River Parkway in Rye Brook, and elsewhere along the Connecticut border, as necessary.

“But better yet,” Harckham added, “I would like to see Governor Lamont and the Connecticut legislature re-think the I-684 toll and instead join me in proposing high-level discussions on regional transportation issues and costs, commencing next month.”

The regional transportation issues that New York and Connecticut share require immediate attention in order to ensure that our roadways and train lines are safe for residents and other using them, Harckham pointed out.

“No, we don’t want to put up toll gates on New York’s state and county highways along Connecticut,” said Harckham. “Without a fruitful discussion, though, between the two states about our regional transportation needs, that may be where we are heading. So, let’s put on the brakes—and start figuring out our problems together. Let’s reach an accord on transportation issues instead of reaching into the pockets of each other’s residents.”

The Town of North Salem has been working with other Westchester and Putnam towns with the prime goals of improving the I-684/84 corridor and keeping traffic on the interstate and off the local roads, mentioned Supervisor Warren J. Lucas. Adding tolls on I-684 the State of Connecticut will do just the opposite, though, and push more traffic onto local roads in New York, “which will further damage our communities,” Lucas said.

“Cut-through traffic from Connecticut is the bane of Lewisboro’s residential streets,” said Lewisboro Supervisor Peter Parsons. “The cause is traffic jams where I-84 meets I-684, and then again where I-684 loses a lane where the Saw Mill Parkway branches off.”

Pound Ridge Supervisor Kevin Hansan stated: “The proposed toll on I-684 by the State of Connecticut is nothing but a tax on New Yorkers and should be dismissed from consideration immediately. Additionally, tolls in lower Connecticut will have an adverse effect on New York border towns like Pound Ridge, as drivers will revert to using our local roads to avoid these tolls. Our roads were not constructed to handle so much through traffic. The State of Connecticut should really ask themselves if the unintended consequences of having drivers taking alternate routes to avoid tolls is worth the safety of Connecticut and New York residents.”

State Senator Harckham represents New York's 40th District, which includes the towns of Beekman, Pawling and the village of Pawling in Dutchess County; the towns of Carmel, Patterson and Southeast, and the village of Brewster in Putnam County; and the city of

Peekskill, the towns of Cortlandt, Lewisboro, Mount Pleasant, New Castle, North Salem, Pound Ridge, Somers and Yorktown, the town/village of Mount Kisco, and the villages of Briarcliff Manor, Buchanan, Croton-on-Hudson, Pleasantville and Sleepy Hollow in Westchester County.

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