



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elijah Reichlin-Melnick

Senator Reichlin-Melnick and AM Zebrowski Slam Congestion Pricing Plan as Unfair for Rockland, Plan Legislative Fix

ELIJAH REICHLIN-MELNICK August 24, 2022

ROCKLAND, NY - Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick (D-Rockland/Westchester) and Assemblymember Kenneth Zebrowski (D-Rockland) joined with local officials in opposition to requiring Rockland residents to pay congestion pricing—the MTA’s plan to charge drivers additional tolls to enter parts of Manhattan which is proposed to go into effect in 2023.

The legislators announced they will be introducing a bill to ensure Rockland residents aren’t “double tolled” by being forced to pay to get to Manhattan by bridge or tunnel then charged again to enter the congestion pricing zone. Unlike other parts of the metro area, Rockland residents have no quick or easy way to get into NYC by mass transit.

The event was also a call-to-action for Rockland residents. On Thursday, August 25 public hearings about the proposed congestion pricing plan, also referred to as the Central Business District (CBD) Tolling Program, begin. [Individuals can sign-up to speak during any of the six virtual public hearings scheduled to take place from August 25-31.](#) Written comments can be submitted online at any time through September 10.

q

Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick said, “Charging Rockland drivers a huge new toll to get to Manhattan without quick and easy mass transit alternatives will be worse than useless for reducing congestion. It will force people to pay an unfair tax that could run to thousands of dollars a year for commuters to subsidize a transit system that doesn’t equitably serve our community—frankly, it’s bullshit.”

q

The Senator continued, “As an environmentalist and a former regional planner, I strongly support investment in public transportation, but we can’t put the cart before the horse and try to get people out of their cars when there are no good alternate options for Rockland residents to get to NYC.”

Assemblymember Ken Zebrowski said, “There is no question that congestion pricing would disproportionately impact Rockland County residents, who continuously face limited transportation options to get into the city. The legislation we're introducing will ensure that Rocklanders don't face double tolling by the congestion pricing zone for using bridges or tunnels when traveling into Manhattan. I've fought against congestion pricing since it was first proposed, and I will continue to do so while working to bring more options for commuters from this side of the Hudson.”

Haverstraw Town Supervisor Howard T. Phillips, Jr said, "At a time when New Yorkers are paying some of the highest prices in the nation and with the cost of everything rising and thousands of New Yorkers leaving the state, it is insane to pass this legislation which will only hurt the taxpayers and businesses. It is a major disincentive to go to Manhattan, which still has not fully recovered from the Covid-19 crisis. Additionally, burdening the businesses and residents is not a solution that we should be pursuing."

b

Representatives from the Villages of Haverstraw and West Haverstraw attended the press conference, and the mayors reflect the concerns of their constituents in the below comments.

Haverstraw Mayor Michael Kohut said, “Rockland, and in particular North Rockland, continues to be underserved by the MTA, yet we continue to have to pay the surcharge. Now, to add insult to injury, we are to be hit with congestion pricing. Enough is enough. We deserve more and better service from these people or stop hitting us with more costs.”

West Haverstraw Village Mayor Robert D’Amelio said, “Traveling to and from Manhattan is already a financial burden to the residents of West Haverstraw. Adding any additional costs would be detrimental and, in my opinion, unacceptable.”