



NEWS FROM
Senator Chris Jacobs
REPRESENTING THE 60TH NEW YORK SENATE DISTRICT

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**JACOBS CALLS FOR THRUWAY AUTHORITY TO PAY FOR
NEGATIVE COMMUNITY IMPACT OF GRAND ISLAND TOLLS**

*“Community Impact Fund” would pay to offset
environmental and economic impacts of tolls*

(Albany, NY) New York State Senator Chris Jacobs (60th SD) has introduced legislation (S6743) requiring the New York State Thruway Authority to pay an annual “impact fee” to the communities detrimentally harmed from the tolls on the Grand Island Bridges.

“The congestion caused by these tolls has done significant environmental and economic damage to these communities, said Senator Jacobs. “The least the Thruway Authority can do is share some of the massive proceeds they make from these unnecessary tolls,” Jacobs added.

Jacobs offered legislation last week that would mandate the Thruway Authority allocate 10% of the annual revenue from the Grand Island Tolls to the three “impact communities” of Grand Island, Tonawanda and Niagara Falls. The tolls generate nearly \$20 million dollars per year, thus the fund would provide approximately \$2 million to these “impact communities.” Grand Island would receive 50% of the impact proceeds as the bridges land twice on the Island, while Tonawanda and Grand Island would receive 25% respectively.

“The Thruway Authority has kept the tolls on these bridges long past the stage of paying off the costs of building the bridges and the tolls generate far more than maintenance costs, if they refuse to do something about the congestion caused by the tolls then they should at least share in the proceeds they generate,” said Jacobs.

“Traffic congestion at the Grand Island Bridges has always presented a problem for Tonawanda residents and businesses located in proximity to the Grand Island tolls,” said Tonawanda Supervisor Joseph Emminger. “A dedicated annual revenue source from the Thruway Authority would greatly assist our efforts to improve the quality of life in the communities around the bridges,” said Emminger.

A recent State Department of Environmental Conservation report showed elevated levels of five airborne pollutants in the Grand Island/Tonawanda/Niagara Falls area associated with tailpipe emissions.

Jacobs, along with other leaders and activists have called for removal of the Grand Island tolls or installation of "cashless tolling," either of these would decrease traffic congestion and pollution on the bridges. To date, the Thruway Authority has taken no action on the Grand Island toll issue.

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