

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 29, 2022

1 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT CONGESTION PRICING PROGRAM

2 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PUBLIC HEARING

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4 VIDEO CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM

5

6 DATE: AUGUST 29, 2022

7 TIME: 1:03 p.m.

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1 A P P E A R A N C E S:

2

3 Paul Friman, Hearing Officer

4 Allison C. de Cerreño, MTA Deputy Chief Operating
5 Officer

6 Nicolas Choubah, Chief Engineer for the New York
7 State Department of Transportation

8 Patrick Smith, Senior policy advisor from New York
9 City Department of Transportation

10 Rick Marquis, New York Division Administrator for
11 the Federal Highway Administration

12 Monica Pavlik, Project Manager

13 Leah Flax, Moderator

14 Michael Wojnar, Moderator

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1 MR. FRIMAN: Good afternoon. We
2 will now begin the hearing. Today is
3 Monday, August 29, 2022 and the time
4 is 1:03 p.m. My name is Paul Friman
5 and I will be today's hearing officer.

6 This hearing is being
7 live-streamed and recorded and will be
8 available publicly on the MTA YouTube
9 channel and the Central Business
10 District Tolling Program project
11 website at mta.info/CBDTP.

12 Stenographers are present and
13 will create a written record of
14 today's hearing. By attending this
15 virtual hearing, you consent to be
16 recorded.

17 Today's hearing will begin with
18 opening remarks, followed by a
19 presentation on the Central Business
20 District Tolling Program Environmental
21 Assessment, and then public comments.

22 There are 238 speakers signed
23 up. Speakers will be called in the
24 order they signed up.

25 After we get underway, through

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1 the Q&A function, we will send each
2 speaker present today your place in
3 the speaker list. Please give us a
4 little time as it will take some time
5 to get this message to each speaker in
6 attendance.

7 Throughout the day, we will
8 regularly let everyone know where we
9 are in the list so you can gauge how
10 much longer you may need to wait to
11 speak.

12 If you've joined the Zoom under
13 a name that is different from the one
14 you used when you signed up to speak
15 or if you did not sign up to speak but
16 would like to speak, please identify
17 yourself in the Q&A function.

18 You may also request to speak
19 anonymously. If this is your
20 preference, please indicate this in
21 the Q&A function and we will give you
22 further instructions.

23 Please do not use the Q&A
24 function for comments you would like
25 to submit on Central Business District

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1 Tolling Program. Comments can be
2 submitted by visiting mta.info/CBDTP,
3 calling (646)252-7440, via mail to CBD
4 Tolling Program, 2 Broadway, 23rd
5 Floor, New York, New York 10004, or
6 via email at CBDTP@mtabt.org.

7 You may also submit comments
8 directly to the Federal Highway
9 Administration via email at
10 CBDTP@dot.gov or by mail at FHWA-New
11 York Division, Re: CBDTP, Leo W.
12 O'Brien Federal Building, 11A, Clinton
13 Avenue, Suite 719, Albany, New York
14 12207. Comments submitted by mail,
15 phone, e-mail, online forum or
16 verbally at a hearing will be
17 considered equally and carry the same
18 weight.

19 In addition, and again in
20 recognition of the overwhelming
21 interest, we have added the ability to
22 submit personally-recorded video
23 comments. As with oral comments at
24 the hearing, video comments should be
25 limited to three minutes. Recorded

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1 video comments may be submitted via
2 e-mail to CBDTP@mtabt.org. Such
3 comments shall be considered equally
4 and carry the same weight as all other
5 methods for submitting comments.

6 CART Captioning and American
7 Sign Language interpreters are
8 available at today's hearing. To turn
9 on CART Captioning use the CC button
10 on the bottom of the screen. Sign
11 Language interpreters will appear on
12 screen for all attendees. To hear the
13 translated audio, use the
14 interpretation button on the bottom of
15 the screen.

16 We will now start with opening
17 remarks from Dr. Allison C. de
18 Cerreño, MTA's Deputy Chief Operating
19 Officer.

20 DR. DE CERRENO: Thank you.

21 And thank you all for joining us
22 today. We are excited to be here as
23 we continue our public outreach on
24 this historic project. I'd like to
25 thank you for taking the time to learn

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1 more and share with us your thoughts
2 and comments.

3 This afternoon, I am
4 representing the Triborough Bridge and
5 Tunnel Authority and MTA more broadly,
6 and am joined by Nichola Angel, Vice
7 President of Triborough Bridge and
8 Tunnel Authority and other members of
9 the agency, as well as other
10 colleagues from the other project
11 sponsors for this effort. Nicolas
12 Choubah, Chief Engineer for the New
13 York State Department of
14 Transportation, and Patrick Smith,
15 Senior Policy Advisor from New York
16 City Department of Transportation.

17 We also have with us today, Rick
18 Marquis, New York Division
19 Administrator for the Federal Highway
20 Administration, the lead Federal
21 agency for the project. He will be
22 joined by Monica Pavlik, Project
23 Manager.

24 Key personnel from all four of
25 our agencies are also in attendance

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1 today, listening to what you have to
2 say; your comments will be recorded
3 indexed and responded to as part of
4 the Environmental Assessment process.

5 Last year, we held ten
6 webinar-style public sessions, nine
7 similar sessions focused on
8 environmental justice communities, and
9 several meetings each of the
10 Environmental Justice Technical
11 Advisory Group and Environmental
12 Justice Stakeholder Working Group.

13 Since then, we have incorporated
14 comments heard during these sessions
15 into the technical analyses for the
16 Environmental Assessment, or EA.

17 I want to thank you all for your
18 earlier input; I believe you will see
19 firsthand how your comments affected
20 what we explored and how we addressed
21 concerns.

22 On August 10, 2022, we released
23 the Environment Assessment for public
24 review. If you have not yet had an
25 opportunity to read the entire

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1 Environmental Assessment, the
2 Executive Summary, which has been
3 translated into multiple languages, is
4 available on our website.

5 The rest of the document is also
6 on the website, and you can find a
7 hard copy of the entire Environmental
8 Assessment at numerous locations
9 throughout 28 counties in New York,
10 New Jersey, and Connecticut. A
11 complete list of locations is also
12 available on the Project website.

13 In a few moments, we will begin
14 with a presentation that provides a
15 summary review of the EA findings. It
16 is a bit longer than one might expect,
17 but there is a lot of important
18 information here and we want to ensure
19 that everyone has an opportunity to
20 hear about the areas in which they may
21 be interested.

22 After the presentation, we will
23 listen to those of you who would like
24 to provide oral public comments. The
25 formal comment period on the EA

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1 continues through September 9th. For
2 those who prefer not to speak but
3 still want to submit comments, we will
4 provide information on other ways to
5 do that again, later in the session.

6 Now, let's begin our
7 presentation.

8 [Taped presentation begins -
9 Narrated by Dr. C. De Cerreño.]

10 So what is the Central Business
11 District Tolling Program? In 2019,
12 New York State enacted the MTA Reform
13 and Traffic Mobility Act, which
14 authorized the Triborough Bridge and
15 Tunnel Authority or TBTA to design,
16 develop and implement a vehicular
17 tolling program to reduce traffic
18 congestion in the Manhattan Central
19 Business District.

20 As defined by the act, vehicles
21 entering or remaining in the Manhattan
22 Central Business District on or below
23 60th Street, which is shown in the map
24 in orange, would be tolled. The FDR
25 Drive, West Side Highway, Battery Park

1 Underpass and any surface roadway
2 portion of the Hugh L. Carey Tunnel
3 connecting to West Street. In
4 essence, the dark red line along the
5 edges of the orange area on the map to
6 the right, would be excluded from the
7 toll.

8 After covering the
9 project-related capital and operating
10 expenses, revenue collected would fund
11 MTA's 2020 to 2024 capital program and
12 successor capital programs.

13 By law, 80 percent of the net
14 revenues would be used for New York
15 City transit capital improvements, ten
16 percent would be used for Long Island
17 Rail Road and ten percent for
18 improvements for Metro-North Railroad.

19 With respect to how the
20 Manhattan CBD Tolling Program would
21 work, locations for infrastructure
22 would include detection points placed
23 at entrances and exits to the
24 Manhattan CBD. On the avenues, these
25 detection points would generally be

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1 between 60th and 61st Streets and an
2 algorithm would be used so those who
3 stay on excluded roadways are not
4 tolled.

5 In essence, as someone is coming
6 down the roadway, the detection points
7 would detect their vehicle and
8 determine how long it should be before
9 they are seen at the next location.
10 Assuming they continue to be seen at
11 each location within the allotted
12 time, no toll would be charged.

13 If, however, the vehicle is not
14 seen and then not seen again, at some
15 point the system will determine that
16 they must have entered the Central
17 Business District and a toll would be
18 charged.

19 On the right, you can see an
20 example of what the infrastructure and
21 the tolling system equipment would
22 look like. It's predominantly poles,
23 as you see on the right, and mast
24 arms, as you see on the left.
25 Importantly, the tolling system

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1 equipment will be clustered and housed
2 in a single-unit enclosure as shown on
3 the bottom.

4 The enclosures are purposely
5 designed to minimize the amount of
6 equipment on the poles and to reflect
7 light in a way that makes them less
8 visible to someone walking or driving.

9 With respect to how customers
10 would pay, it would be very similar to
11 what people experience today. They
12 would be able to pay with E-ZPass or
13 Tolls by Mail, or an image is taken of
14 the license plate and a bill is mailed
15 to the registered owner of the
16 vehicle. And we will also have the
17 capability for future third-party
18 providers. In essence, these are
19 companies that may use different types
20 of technology that can link into the
21 technology that the system would have.

22 The benefits of the program
23 would include reduced vehicular
24 traffic in and near the Manhattan
25 Central Business District, improved

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1 travel times within the Manhattan
2 Central Business District, including
3 for buses and deliveries, and a new
4 source of local recurring capital
5 funding for subways, trains and buses
6 as well as improved regional air
7 quality.

8 So why is an Environmental
9 Assessment or EA needed for this
10 project? Well, some roadways in the
11 Manhattan Central Business District
12 have received federal funds, so
13 approval for tolling is needed from
14 the Federal Highway Administration.

15 Before a federal agency makes a
16 decision, the National Environmental
17 Policy Act, or NEPA, requires the
18 federal agency to understand and
19 disclose the environmental effects of
20 the action. In this case, the
21 tolling. An EA is performed to ensure
22 federal agencies consider the
23 environmental impacts of their actions
24 in the decision-making process.

25 For a proposed action that is

1 not likely to have significant effects
2 or when the significance of the effect
3 is unknown, the EA aids in determining
4 the significance of the adverse
5 effects. Since the project could have
6 effects on environment justice
7 populations, Federal Highway
8 Administration and the project
9 sponsors incorporate an enhanced
10 public outreach and coordination with
11 federal and state resource agencies.

12 The project's purpose is to
13 reduce traffic congestion in the
14 Manhattan Central Business District in
15 a manner that would generate revenue
16 for future transportation improvements
17 pursuant to acceptance into Federal
18 Highway Administration's Value Pricing
19 Pilot Program, or VPPP.

20 The need is to reduce vehicle
21 congestion in the Manhattan Central
22 Business District and create a new
23 local recurring funding source for
24 MTA's capital projects. The purpose
25 and need are refined through four

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1 objectives; to reduce daily vehicle
2 miles traveled, or VMT, within the
3 Manhattan Central Business District by
4 at least five percent, to reduce the
5 number of vehicles entering the
6 Manhattan Central Business District
7 daily by at least ten percent, to
8 create a funding source for capital
9 improvements and generate sufficient
10 annual net revenue to fund \$15 billion
11 for capital projects for the MTA
12 capital program, and to establish a
13 tolling program consistent with the
14 purposes underlying the New York State
15 legislation entitled the MTA Reform
16 and Traffic Mobility Act.

17 You may be asking why do we need
18 to toll the Manhattan Central Business
19 District. Well, traffic congestion
20 has been a problem in the Manhattan
21 Central Business District for many
22 years and one of the most challenging
23 policy problems for generations.

24 Many efforts have been made and
25 yet, congestion in New York City

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1 consistently ranks among the worst in
2 the United States. Indeed, congestion
3 costs 102 hours of lost time, equating
4 to almost \$1,600 per year per driver
5 in delay.

6 Between 2010 and 2019, travel
7 speeds fell 22 percent in Manhattan
8 Central Business District and local
9 bus speeds have declined 28 percent
10 since 2010. The average speed of
11 Select Bus Service, New York City's
12 bus rapid transit service routes in
13 the Manhattan CBD is 19 percent slower
14 than in the outer boroughs.

15 With respect to MTA's subway,
16 rail and bus systems, they need to be
17 repaired and modernized. Funding from
18 the project would support the 2020 to
19 2024 capital program and the successor
20 programs that prioritize investing to
21 improve reliability, committing to
22 environmental sustainability, building
23 an accessible transit system for all
24 New Yorkers easing congestion and
25 creating growth, and improving safety

1 and customer service through
2 technology.

3 I'll now walk you through the
4 findings of the Environment
5 Assessment. There were two project
6 alternatives that are evaluated in the
7 Environmental Assessment. The
8 no-action alternative in which there
9 is no program to toll vehicles in the
10 Manhattan Central Business District,
11 no comprehensive plan to reduce
12 congestion, and no new annual
13 recurring funding for MTA capital
14 programs.

15 And there is the central
16 business tolling or action alternative
17 where we implement a tolling program
18 consistent with the Mobility Act to
19 toll the vehicles entering or
20 remaining in the Manhattan Central
21 Business District. We install tolling
22 infrastructure and tolling system
23 equipment and signage within and near
24 the Manhattan Central Business
25 District, and generate funds for MTA's

1 capital investments to subways, buses
2 and commuter railroads.

3 The Environmental Assessment
4 explores each of the topics in this
5 chart. The specific chapters that
6 address the analysis for each area are
7 identified here. As you can see, the
8 analysis shows that most of the areas
9 have beneficial effects or no adverse
10 effects, but there are few areas with
11 potential adverse effects. The slides
12 a bit later in the presentation will
13 address each of the areas and identify
14 any mitigation that is needed.

15 This slide has a lot of
16 information and it is in the executive
17 summary and in chapter two of the
18 Environmental Assessment for further
19 review. I am going to spend a few
20 moments reviewing and explaining it
21 here so everyone can understand its
22 importance.

23 As I said a moment ago, there
24 are two alternatives for this
25 Environment Assessment, the no-action

1 and the Central Business District
2 Tolling Alternative.

3 Within the Central Business
4 District Tolling Alternative, there
5 are a number of tolling scenarios that
6 vary in several ways. Modeling these
7 different scenarios helped us to
8 understand the full range of effects
9 of the Central Business District
10 Tolling Alternative since the decision
11 on the actual tolling scenario has not
12 yet been made.

13 For those of you who
14 participated in the early outreach,
15 you may notice that we now have seven
16 tolling scenarios when we originally
17 discussed six. That is because we
18 added a tolling scenario, which I will
19 get to shortly, as a result of
20 concerns raised during the early
21 public outreach.

22 So let me walk you through.

23 Along the top, are the tolling
24 scenarios. Tolling Scenario A we
25 referred to as the base plan. This is

1 the plan that is characterized in the
2 legislation. Tolling Scenario B has
3 that same base plan but starts to add
4 caps in the form of how many times a
5 vehicle can be tolled and certain
6 exemptions.

7 Tolling Scenario C adds what we
8 call low-crossing credits for vehicles
9 using tunnels to access the Central
10 Business District with some caps and
11 exemptions. Those crossing credits,
12 when they are low are roughly \$6.50.
13 When they are high, as you see in
14 tolling scenarios D, E and F, the
15 credits are roughly \$13. And this was
16 used for modeling purposes.

17 In D, E and F, you see those
18 high-crossing credits. In D and E,
19 they are applied to the tunnels that
20 enter into the Central Business
21 District. And in F, vehicles using
22 all of the toll facilities that enter
23 Manhattan would be eligible for
24 crossing credits.

25 Moving down the left side, you

1 see the distinction on the items that
2 are varying. First, the potential
3 crossing credits. Again, these are
4 credits that would be applied toward
5 the Central Business District toll,
6 for tolls paid at facilities prior to
7 entering the Central Business
8 District.

9 As you move to the right, you
10 can see the nos and yeses which
11 determine whether or not that
12 potential crossing credit applies to
13 the facilities that are identified.

14 Moving to the next group, are
15 potential exemptions and discounts in
16 the form of caps on the number of
17 tolls per day. Importantly, by
18 legislation and in the modeling, and
19 in the program, passenger vehicles
20 would be charged only once per day.
21 But other vehicles could be charged
22 more than that.

23 And as you read across to the
24 right, you will see under each of the
25 different tolling scenarios how these

1 different types of vehicles were
2 treated with respect to caps or
3 exemptions.

4 Finally, as you move to the
5 bottom, we have the approximate toll
6 rate for autos, small trucks and large
7 trucks that resulted from the
8 modeling.

9 The one tolling scenario I'd
10 like to mention is tolling Scenario G,
11 all the way to the right. This
12 tolling scenario has a base plan with
13 the same tolls for all vehicle
14 classes. We'll talk about that a
15 little bit later in the presentation.
16 But importantly, as you see on the
17 bottom, the toll rate is set the same
18 for every type of vehicle.

19 So that was a lot of
20 information. And so, I'd like to
21 leave you with some key takeaways.

22 First and foremost, tolling the
23 Manhattan Central Business District in
24 all scenarios, reduce traffic entering
25 the Manhattan Central Business

1 District and results in a net benefit
2 in congestion reduction for the
3 region.

4 Discounts, crossing credits and
5 exemptions result in the need for
6 higher toll rates. Higher toll rates
7 lead to a greater degree of traffic
8 reduction in the Manhattan Central
9 Business District, but also lead to
10 increased traffic diversions,
11 including increases along the Cross
12 Bronx Expressway and the Staten Island
13 Expressway.

14 Crossing credits lead to more
15 parity in the total cost among
16 different routes that are taken by
17 vehicles entering the Manhattan
18 Central Business District, but those
19 same crossing credits change the
20 balance of effects on traffic.

21 It results in less effect
22 reducing traffic from Queens and much
23 less effect reducing traffic from New
24 Jersey. They result in greater
25 effects reducing traffic from north of

1 60th Street in Brooklyn and they
2 result in more traffic at the
3 Queens-Midtown tunnel, the Hugh L.
4 Carey Tunnel and the Long Island
5 Expressway.

6 Before we move on, I thought it
7 was helpful to give at least a sense
8 of where are the commuters actually
9 coming from into the Manhattan Central
10 Business District.

11 On the left, you can see the
12 28-county region. Again, this is all
13 in the Environmental Assessment for
14 further review. The colors on the map
15 denote the proportion of total
16 commuters to the Manhattan Central
17 Business District from each county in
18 the 28-county region.

19 The map also shows how many
20 commute by transit, car or some other
21 transportation mode to reach the
22 Manhattan Central Business District.
23 Not surprisingly, counties that are
24 further away tend to have fewer
25 commuters to the Manhattan Central

1 Business District.

2 For example, of all the
3 commuters to the Manhattan Central
4 Business District, fewer than one
5 percent come from counties like New
6 Haven and Dutchess. About one to three
7 percent come from counties like
8 Rockland, Morris and Richmond. And
9 roughly four to five percent come from
10 Bergen, Hudson and Westchester
11 counties.

12 Closer in, about six to ten
13 percent come from Nassau County and
14 the Bronx. While the remainder of the
15 New York City boroughs contribute 11
16 to 22 percent of the commuters to the
17 Manhattan Central Business District.

18 On the right in the figure, you
19 can see that of all the people
20 commuting to work in the Manhattan
21 Central Business District, the vast
22 majority, 85 percent, commute by
23 transit. Of the 11 percent who
24 commute by car, approximately eight
25 percent of them are from counties in

1 New York, roughly three percent in New
2 Jersey and less than one percent from
3 Connecticut.

4 Now we'll go through the effects
5 of each of the topic areas. On the
6 top right of each slide, you'll see
7 that we've identified whether effects
8 are beneficial, not adverse or
9 adverse. In this case, this is the
10 regional effects of transportation.
11 Broadly speaking, all tolling
12 scenarios reduce the number of vehicle
13 entries into the Manhattan Central
14 Business District and reduce vehicle
15 miles traveled in the Manhattan
16 Central Business District.

17 The table on the bottom left
18 provides the degree to which the
19 traffic is reduced. In this case,
20 there is a reduction of vehicles
21 entering the Manhattan CBD of nearly
22 20 percent to roughly 15 percent,
23 depending upon which tolling scenario
24 one is looking at.

25 On the right-hand side, you see

1 the increase or decrease in daily
2 vehicle miles traveled for each of the
3 areas throughout the 28 counties. And
4 as you can see, broadly speaking,
5 regionally again, there's largely a
6 benefit.

7 In the Manhattan Central
8 Business District, VMT decreases
9 anywhere from a little over nine
10 percent to about seven percent.
11 Throughout New York City, the
12 reduction is roughly 1.5 percent to
13 about 0.7 percent and so on down the
14 group.

15 With respect to highways, we
16 have beneficial effects and we do have
17 some adverse effects in a few
18 locations where mitigation will be
19 required. Some locations experience a
20 decrease in congestion, which is a
21 beneficial effect. There were three
22 highway segments, though, that would
23 experience adverse effects in the form
24 of increased delays at certain times.

25 As you can see here, it's the

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1 Westbound Long Island Expressway near
2 the Queens-Midtown tunnel in the
3 mid-day, approaches to the Westbound
4 George Washington Bridge on I-95 also
5 in the mid-day, and in the evening,
6 the Southbound and Northbound FDR
7 Drive between East 10th Street and
8 Brooklyn Bridge.

9 For mitigation, the project
10 sponsors implement a monitoring plan
11 prior to the project beginning that
12 identifies thresholds for adverse
13 effects. If the thresholds are
14 reached, as a result of the project,
15 the project sponsors will institute
16 Transportation Demand Management
17 measures such as ramp metering,
18 motorist information or signage, at
19 identified highway locations with
20 adverse effects.

21 In addition,
22 post-implementation, the project
23 sponsors will monitor effects. And if
24 needed, Triborough Bridge and Tunnel
25 Authority, TBTA, will modify the toll

1 rates, crossing credits, exemptions
2 and/or discounts to reduce those
3 adverse effects.

4 Note the call-out in the upper
5 right and recall what I mentioned
6 regarding tolling Scenario G earlier.
7 During our early outreach in
8 conversations with environmental
9 justice communities we shared
10 information regarding changes in
11 traffic patterns. Here on the left,
12 you can see one of the maps that was
13 used for analysis related to traffic
14 and air quality effects. These are
15 areas with environmental justice
16 communities. Under this tolling
17 scenario, some of these communities
18 would experience reduced vehicle miles
19 traveled. Others would see some
20 increases as traffic diverts to avoid
21 the toll. As noted earlier, as the
22 toll goes up, these diversions
23 increase.

24 Participants raised concerns
25 about the increased traffic along the

1 Cross Bronx Expressway and asked what
2 that meant in terms of truck traffic,
3 as trucks are associated with
4 particulate matter and associated
5 health effects. The team reviewed the
6 initial six scenarios at a specific
7 location, Macombs Road and found the
8 daily increases in truck traffic in
9 the table to the right. During the
10 same outreach period, the trucking
11 associations also raised their
12 concerns that people can move to
13 transit to avoid the toll. But trucks
14 cannot do this.

15 Further, the tolled bridges
16 roadways and tunnels typically charge
17 higher tolls for trucks given the wear
18 and tear on the roadway. The purpose
19 of this project is to reduce
20 congestion.

21 The project team looked closer
22 at why trucks were diverting in the
23 modeling. We found that the extent of
24 the diversion was linked to the truck
25 toll and price differential in the

1 initial six tolling scenarios where
2 trucks are tolled at a higher price.
3 To test this, we created tolling
4 Scenario G, which prices all vehicle
5 types the same.

6 The results, as you can see,
7 reduced the diversions along with the
8 relative incremental number of trucks
9 on the Cross Bronx Expressway. Given
10 the concerns raised, the project team
11 decided to include this tolling
12 scenario formerly in the Environmental
13 Assessment.

14 With respect to local
15 intersections, again, there were
16 beneficial effects and adverse effects
17 where mitigation is required.
18 Specifically, most intersections would
19 experience decreases in delay.
20 Tolling Scenarios D, E and F, the
21 high-credit scenarios, have four out
22 of a 102 intersections that
23 experienced adverse effects in the
24 modeling in the form of increased
25 delay at certain times. And you can

1 see them here on the right.

2 Project sponsors will monitor
3 those intersections where adverse
4 effects are identified and implement
5 appropriate signal timing adjustments
6 to mitigate the effect for New York
7 City Department of Transportation's
8 normal practice.

9 In terms of transit, we found
10 beneficial effects and some adverse
11 effects where mitigation is required.
12 With respect to beneficial effects,
13 reduced roadway congestion would
14 result in reliable faster bus trips.
15 There is an increase in transit
16 ridership of one to two percent
17 system-wide for travel to and from the
18 Manhattan Central Business District,
19 but no adverse effects from increased
20 ridership on any lines or transit
21 stations.

22 We do see that in some scenarios
23 increased ridership could adversely
24 affect passenger flows at specific
25 stairs or escalators, what we refer to

1 as stationed elements.

2 With respect to mitigation, in
3 tolling Scenarios E and F, TBTA will
4 coordinate with New Jersey Transit and
5 the Port Authority of New York and New
6 Jersey to implement a monitoring plan
7 with specific thresholds for
8 pedestrian volumes on a specific
9 Station Stair in Hoboken Terminal.

10 If the thresholds are reached,
11 TBTA will coordinate with these
12 agencies to implement signage and
13 wayfinding. In all the tolling
14 scenarios, TBTA will coordinate with
15 MTA's New York City Transit to
16 implement monitoring plans with
17 specific thresholds at the locations
18 bulleted here.

19 At 42nd Street and Times Square,
20 there's a specific stair affected.
21 And if the threshold is reached, the
22 center handrail will be removed and
23 the riser will be adjusted. At Union
24 Square Subway Station and Flushing and
25 Main Street Station, there are two

1 escalators, one in each, that could be
2 affected. If the thresholds are
3 reached, we would increase escalator
4 speeds. And at Court Square, there's
5 a stair affected. If the threshold is
6 reached, we would construct a new
7 stair to increase capacity.

8 With respect to pedestrians and
9 bicycles, the EA found that increases
10 in passengers at transit hubs would
11 have no adverse effects. There would
12 be some increases in bicycle trips
13 overall and near the transit hubs, but
14 again, no adverse effects.

15 Outside the Manhattan Central
16 Business District, increased transit
17 usage at individual stations would not
18 adversely affect pedestrian conditions
19 on nearby sidewalks, crosswalks or
20 corners. But within the Manhattan
21 Central Business District, there are
22 two crosswalks and one sidewalk that
23 would be adversely affected.

24 You can see here, on the right
25 with the red lines that they occur on

1 8th Avenue near West 32nd Street and
2 7th Avenue and on West 34th Street and
3 Avenue of the Americas. For
4 mitigation, the project sponsors will
5 implement a monitoring plan with
6 threshold for action. If the
7 threshold is reached, pedestrian space
8 would be increased and obstructions
9 will be removed or relocated.

10 With respect to parking and to
11 social conditions, specifically
12 population characteristics and
13 neighborhood character, we found
14 either beneficial effects or no
15 adverse effects.

16 With respect to social
17 conditions, improvement in travel time
18 and safety, reduced vehicle operating
19 costs, and reduced emissions would
20 occur from the project. There would
21 be no adverse effects on neighborhood
22 character or access, travel to
23 employment within the Manhattan
24 Central Business District or reverse
25 commuting, traffic patterns on local

1 streets or community facilities and
2 services.

3 With respect to parking, the
4 study found a reduction in parking
5 demand within the Manhattan Central
6 Business District and increased
7 parking demand at subway and commuter
8 rail stations and park-and-ride
9 facilities outside of the Manhattan's
10 Central Business District. But the
11 increase at any individual location
12 would not be large enough to result in
13 an adverse effect from the project.

14 Economic conditions found
15 increased productivity as well as
16 safety improvements. There were no
17 adverse effects to any particular
18 industry or occupational category in
19 the Manhattan Central Business
20 District.

21 Depending on the tolling
22 scenario, the toll could reduce taxi
23 and for-hire vehicle revenues in the
24 Manhattan Central Business District.
25 While the industry would remain

1 economically viable overall,
2 individual drivers could be adversely
3 affected, and this is dealt with a
4 little bit later in the presentation.

5 In terms of energy and noise,
6 again, there are beneficial effects
7 and no adverse effects. With respect
8 to energy, the region would benefit
9 from reductions in regional energy
10 consumption as a result of reductions
11 in the vehicle miles traveled.

12 In terms of noise, 102
13 intersections were assessed and all
14 the crossings into the Manhattan
15 Central Business District. The study
16 found imperceptible increases or
17 decreases in noise levels resulting
18 from changes in traffic volumes.

19 With respect to air quality, the
20 Environmental Assessment found that
21 regionally, air pollutants would be
22 reduced including precursors to
23 greenhouse gases. There would be no
24 local exceedances of air quality
25 standards.

1 Recognizing that air quality is
2 of great concern to many constituents,
3 we have several enhancements though
4 there were no local exceedances of
5 those standards. New York City
6 Department of Transportation will
7 coordinate to expand the New York City
8 community air survey network of air
9 quality monitors. This will be
10 supplemented by a small number of
11 real-time monitors for particulate
12 matter.

13 Also, based on feedback during
14 outreach for the project, MTA will
15 prioritize Kingsbridge and Gun Hill
16 Bus Depots, both located in and
17 serving primarily environmental
18 justice communities in Upper Manhattan
19 and the Bronx, when electric buses are
20 received in MTA's next major
21 procurement of battery electric buses.

22 In terms of environmental
23 justice, the study did find adverse
24 effects where mitigation is required.
25 The map to the right shows the

1 communities that are environmental
2 justice communities throughout the
3 region. They are widespread and as
4 shown earlier in some cases, certain
5 EJ communities will benefit directly
6 from this project.

7 However, the project would have
8 the potential for disproportionately
9 high and adverse effects on low-income
10 drivers who do not have an alternative
11 transportation mode for reaching the
12 Manhattan Central Business District
13 and on taxi and for-hire vehicle
14 drivers in New York City, many of whom
15 identify as part of an environmental
16 justice population.

17 This adverse effect occurs
18 specifically in tolling scenarios that
19 toll their vehicles more than once per
20 day. We have a number of mitigation
21 for low-income drivers which you can
22 see here on the left.

23 There will be a tax credit for
24 Central Business District tolls paid
25 by residents of the Manhattan Central

1 Business District whose New York
2 adjusted gross income for the taxable
3 year is less than \$60,000. TBTA will
4 coordinate with New York State
5 Department of Taxation and Finance to
6 ensure availability of documentation
7 needed for drivers eligible for the
8 credit.

9 TBTA will also post information
10 related to the tax credit on the
11 project website with links to the New
12 York State Department of Taxation and
13 Finance website to guide eligible
14 drivers to information on claiming the
15 credit.

16 TBTA will also eliminate the \$10
17 refundable deposit required for
18 E-ZPass customers with no credit card
19 linked to their account. They will
20 increase promotion of existing E-ZPass
21 payment and plan options and will work
22 with MTA to increase outreach and
23 education on eligibility for existing
24 discounted transit fare products and
25 programs.

1 The project sponsors will
2 establish an environmental justice
3 community group that will meet on a
4 biannual basis with the first meeting
5 six months after project
6 implementation to share updated data
7 and analysis and hear about potential
8 concerns.

9 For effects on taxi and FHV
10 drivers, the project sponsors will
11 work with appropriate city and state
12 agencies so that when passengers are
13 present in the vehicles, the
14 passengers will pay the toll rather
15 than the driver.

16 Again, these mitigations would
17 be for New York City taxi and FHV
18 drivers if a tolling scenario is
19 implemented with tolls of more than
20 once per day for their vehicles.

21 TBTA will work with MTA New York
22 City Transit to institute an
23 employment resource coordination
24 program to connect drivers
25 experiencing job insecurity with a

1 direct pathway to licensing, training
2 and job placement with MTA or its
3 affiliated vendors at no cost to the
4 drivers.

5 For those who may not want a
6 commercial driver's license, TBTA will
7 coordinate with MTA New York City
8 Transit to submit a request to the
9 Federal Transit Administration for a
10 pilot program that will help increase
11 eligibility of taxi and FHV drivers to
12 use their vehicles to provide
13 paratransit trips and MTA's New York
14 City Transit will implement this
15 program if approved.

16 With respect to construction
17 effects, no adverse effects were
18 found. Construction would consist of
19 replacement of existing poles or
20 installation of new poles and mast
21 arms excavation and construction of
22 foundations, placement of new support
23 poles or structures attachment of
24 tolling system equipment, and
25 restoration of the roadway, sidewalk

1 or ground surface.

2 The construction would occur on
3 streets and sidewalks and take
4 approximately one to two weeks per
5 location. During this time, there
6 would be temporary disruptions to
7 traffic and pedestrian patterns and
8 temporary noise disruptions at nearby
9 land uses such as residences and
10 businesses. The project sponsors
11 would require the contractor to
12 develop and comply with plans and
13 procedures to minimize construction
14 effects.

15 With respect to visual
16 resources, there were also no adverse
17 effects. Infrastructure is similar in
18 form to street light poles, sign poles
19 or similar structures already in use
20 throughout New York City. Signage is
21 similar in size and character to signs
22 already present and the color would
23 match existing light pole colors.

24 On the bottom right, there's a
25 rendering of tolling system equipment

1 that would be placed on existing
2 infrastructure. Again, as noted
3 earlier, the tolling equipment is
4 clustered into those single enclosures
5 to reduce visual impact and cameras
6 would use infrared illumination at
7 night so there would be no visible
8 light needed. The project would have
9 a neutral effect on viewer groups and
10 no adverse effect on visual resources.

11 With respect to Section 4(f), a
12 de minimis impact is one that after
13 taking into account any measures to
14 minimize harm, results in either a
15 Section 106 finding of no adverse
16 effect or no historic properties
17 affected on a historic property, or a
18 determination that the project would
19 not adversely affect the activities,
20 features or attributes qualifying a
21 park, recreation area or refuge for
22 protection under Section 4(f).

23 Central Park and the High Line
24 have the potential for a de minimis
25 use. Federal Highway Administration

1 is soliciting input from the public on
2 the effects of installing equipment
3 and signs within and on these
4 properties. Signage and for
5 replacement poles with tolling
6 technology would be installed in
7 Central Park.

8 Tolling technology equipment
9 would be added to the underneath of
10 the existing structure of the High
11 Line. You can see some of the
12 renderings at the bottom here.

13 With respect to the findings,
14 the Central Business District Tolling
15 Alternative does not result in adverse
16 effects pursuant to Section 106 of the
17 National Historic Preservation Act.
18 And it does not adversely affect the
19 activities, features or attributes
20 that qualify the resource for
21 protection under Section 4(f).

22 Federal Highway Administration
23 has concurrence on a proposed finding
24 from officials with jurisdiction over
25 Central Park and the High Line and

1 will consider public input on its
2 proposed finding received during this
3 public review of the Environmental
4 Assessments.

5 There were two final additional
6 enhancements I would like to mention,
7 and again, they were in response to
8 outreach during the early outreach
9 period.

10 First, the project sponsors are
11 committed to ongoing data collection
12 and reporting on the potential effects
13 of the project. Data will be
14 collected in advance and after
15 implementation and a formal report
16 will be issued one year after
17 implementation and then every two
18 years thereafter.

19 The reporting website will make
20 data, analysis and visualizations
21 available in open data format to the
22 greatest extent possible with updates
23 provided on at least a biannual basis
24 as data becomes available and analysis
25 is completed.

1 Again, through our conversations
2 and public outreach and particularly
3 with environmental justice
4 communities, we are also committed to
5 prioritizing equity and bus service
6 improvements. New York City's buses
7 serve a greater share of low-income
8 minority households and other modes
9 including subways.

10 MTA developed a new approach
11 that combines considerations of equity
12 and air quality to identify equity
13 priority areas, which are then used to
14 target improvements and investments to
15 promote equity and access to
16 opportunities in transit-dependent,
17 historically marginalized and
18 underserved areas.

19 Information on our early public
20 outreach is here on the left. During
21 that period, we held ten virtual
22 public outreach meetings as well as
23 nine environmental justice outreach
24 meetings.

25 We had three meetings of the

1 Environmental Justice Technical
2 Advisory Group and two meetings of the
3 Environmental Justice Stakeholder
4 Working Group. During the 19 public
5 outreach and EJ outreach meetings, we
6 had over a thousand participants
7 registered and nearly 400 speakers.

8 All of the sessions were left on
9 our project website and people could
10 access them through YouTube. To date,
11 we've had over 14,000 views and we
12 received over 7,300 comments. Our
13 current public outreach sessions will
14 include six public hearings starting
15 on Thursday, August 25th and running
16 through Wednesday, August 31st.

17 We will also have another
18 meeting of the Environmental Justice
19 Stakeholder Working Group and another
20 meeting of the Environmental Justice
21 Technical Advisory Group.

22 With respect to schedule, this
23 shows where we currently are. We did
24 our early public outreach in 2021. In
25 early 2022, we prepared the

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1 Environmental Assessment, we've
2 notified agencies and organizations
3 and individuals of the Environmental
4 Assessment's availability and we're
5 now in the midst, in orange here, of
6 public review and comment on the
7 Environmental Assessment.

8 After the formal comment period
9 closes, there will be a determination
10 whether the action, in this case, the
11 tolling, will result in significant
12 effects.

13 Ultimately, we're expecting that
14 in early 2023, Federal Highway
15 Administration will issue a decision
16 document. If adverse effects are not
17 significant or can be mitigated below
18 significant levels, FHWA would issue a
19 FONSI, a Finding of No Significant
20 Impact. If there are significant
21 effects that cannot be mitigated, then
22 an Environmental Impact Statement or
23 EIS would be required.

24 As noted, our public comment
25 period is open until September 9,

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1 2022. If you would like to submit
2 written comments, you may do so in the
3 following ways: Through our project
4 website, by email, mail, phone or fax,
5 or to the Federal Highway
6 Administration by email or mail.

7 All of this information is also
8 available on our website and the
9 information on the project website
10 email, mail, phone and fax for MTA
11 bridges and tunnels is also in the
12 Environmental Assessment. In
13 addition, formal oral comments can be
14 made at the public hearings as many of
15 you are doing today. They will be
16 recorded by the stenographer.

17 Thank you again for attending
18 this public hearing to learn more
19 about the Environmental Assessment for
20 the Central Business District tolling
21 program. And now, we look forward to
22 hearing from you.

23 [Taped presentation ends.]

24 MR. OLIVA: Good afternoon. My
25 name is Lou Oliva. I am the second

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1 hearing officer for today's hearing.

2 We encourage anyone joining via
3 Zoom or livestream to take a short
4 survey using the QR code or link
5 currently being displayed. The link
6 can also be found in the chat section
7 of the Zoom.

8 We are gathering public comment
9 today on the Environmental Assessment
10 for the Central Business District
11 Tolling Program. Comments will be
12 recorded, indexed and responded to as
13 part of the Environmental Assessment
14 process.

15 There are 238 speakers signed up
16 to speak today. Each speaker is
17 limited to three minutes. At the
18 two-and-a-half-minute mark, the clock
19 will turn red and you will hear it
20 beep notifying you that you have 30
21 seconds remaining. We ask that
22 speakers keep their remarks to the
23 three-minute time frame out of respect
24 for all other speakers.

25 We will be calling speakers in

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1 the order that they signed up, but
2 anyone who wishes to speak will have
3 an opportunity. Due to the volume of
4 speakers, there may be extended wait
5 times to speak. Comments submitted by
6 mail, phone, e-mail, online form, or
7 verbally at a hearing will be
8 considered equally and carry the same
9 weight.

10 If you have joined the Zoom
11 under a name that is different from
12 the one you used when you signed up to
13 speak or if you did not sign up to
14 speak but would like to speak, please
15 identify yourself in the Q&A function.
16 You may also request to speak
17 anonymously. If this is your
18 preference, please indicate this in
19 the Q&A function and we will provide
20 you with further instructions.

21 Please note that comments on the
22 Central Business District Tolling
23 Program are not being received via the
24 Q&A function. And comments submitted
25 in that fashion will not be part of

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1 the hearing record.

2 When you are called on to speak,
3 there will be a brief transition on
4 your screen before you will be able to
5 unmute and enable your camera. Please
6 make sure that once your scene
7 updates, your camera and your
8 microphone are enabled before
9 beginning your remarks. If you do not
10 wish to use your camera, you do not
11 have to do so.

12 You will not be able to unmute
13 or enable your camera until it's your
14 turn to speak. Please remain patient
15 until then. In the event you miss
16 your name being called, we will call
17 you again after all other speakers in
18 attendance have been called a first
19 time.

20 As a reminder, this hearing is
21 being livestreamed and recorded and
22 will be available publicly on our
23 YouTube channel and on our project
24 website at mta.info/CBDTP.

25 Stenographers are present and

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1 will create a written record of this
2 hearing. By attending this virtual
3 hearing, you consent to be recorded.

4 MS. FLAX: We will now begin the
5 public comment portion of today's
6 hearing.

7 Our first speaker is Senator
8 Elijah Reichlin-Melnick, followed by
9 Assemblymember Robert Carroll.

10 SENATOR ELIJAH REICHLIN-MELNICK:
11 Good afternoon. Can you hear me?

12 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

13 SENATOR ELIJAH REICHLIN-MELNICK:
14 Thank you so much.

15 I joined today to say that
16 Rockland County, which I represent in
17 Albany, must be exempt from congestion
18 pricing. How could proponents of this
19 plan possibly justify forcing Rockland
20 residents to pay the same congestion
21 pricing tax as people who live east of
22 the Hudson where there are vastly
23 better public transit options into
24 Manhattan.

25 Westchester County has 43 train

1 stations, Rockland has five. Until
2 Rockland has a vastly improved transit
3 access to Manhattan congestion pricing
4 will be an unfair tax to subsidize a
5 transit system that does not equitably
6 serve our community.

7 Charging our drivers thousands
8 more a year just to get to their jobs
9 in the city without quick and easy
10 transit alternatives would be worse
11 than useless for reducing congestion
12 from our part of the Metro-North
13 region.

14 Year after year, Rockland is
15 forced to subsidize transit for the
16 rest of our region as we contribute
17 tens of millions of dollars annually
18 more than the MTA ever invests into
19 our county. There has to be a better
20 more direct transportation option for
21 Rockland residents to get into New
22 York City.

23 The train over the Tappan Zee
24 Bridge would be the best option
25 followed by restored passenger service

1 on the West shore line. A freight
2 line that served Rockland commuters
3 for decades before service was ended
4 in the late '50s. Upgrading the
5 right-of-way to restore commuter train
6 service and building new stations
7 would be an appropriate use of the
8 taxes that we pay that we have handed
9 over to the MTA for decades.

10 The benefits for commuters and
11 much of Rockland would be immense,
12 with possible new stations in Tappan,
13 and Orangeburg, Blauvelt, West Nyack,
14 Valley Cottage, Congers, and
15 Haverstraw, providing a wealth of new
16 transit options for everyone living in
17 Eastern Rockland.

18 The complete disregard for the
19 needs of people who live west of the
20 Hudson is evident in every step of
21 this plan. Those who will pay the
22 biggest burden won't even get a seat
23 at the table. The Traffic Mobility
24 Review Board has representation from
25 Long Island, from Westchester, from

1 New York City, and when that board
2 considers the recommendations from the
3 MTA for the implementation of
4 congestion pricing, there will be no
5 voice at the table for west of the
6 Hudson.

7 Assemblyman Ken Zebrowski and I
8 are preparing legislation to amend the
9 congestion pricing law that was passed
10 in 2019. Our bill would exempt
11 Rockland and Orange Counties from
12 congestion pricing. Assemblyman
13 Zebrowski voted against the congestion
14 pricing plan when it was first
15 introduced, as would I if I had been
16 in office then.

17 A legislative solution is not
18 ideal, though. It would be much more
19 expedient for the Traffic Mobility
20 Review Board, and ultimately the MTA,
21 to agree to exempt Rockland and Orange
22 Counties from congestion pricing
23 unless and until we have a one-seat
24 ride to Manhattan.

25 As an environmentalist and as a

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1 former regional planner, I strongly
2 support investment in public transit.
3 But we cannot put the cart before the
4 horse and try to get people out of
5 their cars when there simply are not
6 good alternative options for Rockland
7 residents to get to New York City.

8 I strongly urge you to exempt
9 Rockland County drivers from
10 congestion pricing until we have the
11 transit that our region and our county
12 deserves.

13 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
14 remarks.

15 SENATOR ELIJAH REICHLIN-MELNICK:
16 Thank you.

17 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
18 Assemblymember Robert Carroll,
19 followed by Assemblyman Michael
20 Tannousis.

21 ASSEMBLYMEMBER ROBERT CARROLL:
22 Good afternoon. Thank you so much for
23 having me and giving me this
24 opportunity to speak.

25 Done correctly, congestion

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1 pricing will benefit our economy,
2 reduce pollution, help fund
3 improvements to public transportation,
4 and on the balance, make the city more
5 liveable.

6 In 2019, I was a vocal supporter
7 of congestion pricing. And with the
8 decrease in subway ridership and the
9 increase in use of private cars and
10 for-hire vehicles stemming from the
11 pandemic, it has only made the need
12 for congestion pricing more urgent.

13 I'm encouraged by the
14 projections in the MTA's Environmental
15 Assessment that congestion pricing can
16 reduce traffic in Manhattan by almost
17 20 percent. As stipulated in the law,
18 congestion pricing will also raise at
19 least one billion dollars in revenue
20 annually for the MTA, which could be
21 bonded out to 15 billion dollars.

22 Subway and bus improvements are
23 desperately needed, and this will help
24 re-attract riders back into the
25 system.

1 I believe the implementation of
2 congestion pricing should follow three
3 guidelines: Fairness, effectiveness,
4 and adaptability. Exemptions should
5 be limited. The fewer exemptions, the
6 less everyone will have to pay to meet
7 the one billion-dollar revenue
8 mandate. Consideration should be
9 given to the fact that yellow cabs
10 have already paid millions to the city
11 for medallions and their numbers are
12 capped. And therefore, they should
13 possibly receive some sort of
14 exemption in the congestion pricing
15 phase.

16 However, we should also be
17 careful to avoid or mitigate
18 unintended consequences, such as more
19 truck traffic in the Bronx and Staten
20 Island. This could be accomplished by
21 charging travel time fees for all
22 trucks within New York City, and
23 further by charging the Port Authority
24 with investigating the ability to
25 expand container shipping within

1 Brooklyn and Queens.

2 Effectiveness: Charges that
3 don't change people's behavior and are
4 not calibrated to actual road use
5 should be discouraged. Fees should be
6 set at levels that actually accomplish
7 the goals of reducing congestion and
8 pollution within the zone. This is
9 why I prefer time congestion charges
10 for taxis and for-hire vehicles.

11 Further, for-hire vehicles like
12 Uber and Lyft should pay to enter the
13 congestion zone whether they have a
14 passenger or not. This is a real
15 need for trans -- there are real needs
16 for transportation options outside of
17 Manhattan and we should disincentivize
18 for-hire vehicles who are coming into
19 Manhattan without a fare.

20 It's incumbent on the MTA to
21 very carefully publicize the benefits
22 of congestion pricing in terms of less
23 traffic, better air quality, and
24 improvements to transportation.

25 Finally, adaptability. Even the

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1 best modeling is imperfect. So there
2 will need to be continuous monitoring
3 and evaluation by the MTA of how the
4 program is working. The MTA will need
5 to be completely transparent about
6 what is --

7 MS. FLAX: Please complete your
8 remarks.

9 ASSEMBLYMEMBER ROBERT CARROLL:
10 -- working well and what is not, and
11 act in a timely manner to make
12 adjustments.

13 Thank you so much for this time.

14 MR. OLIVA: Thank you.

15 Our next speaker is Assemblyman
16 Michael Tannousis, followed by
17 Tiffany-Ann Taylor.

18 ASSEMBLYMAN MICHAEL TANNOUSIS:
19 Can you hear me?

20 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

21 ASSEMBLYMAN MICHAEL TANNOUSIS:
22 Thank you.

23 Thank you for this time today to
24 testify before you, but I'm not going
25 to mince words today. This program is

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1 a nightmare for my constituents in
2 Staten Island and Brooklyn. Not only
3 will this program make it far more
4 expensive for Staten Islanders and
5 Brooklyn-ites to commute to work in
6 Manhattan on a daily basis, but it
7 will lead to an increase in traffic
8 here at home.

9 This program is nothing more
10 than a financial assault on the
11 residents of the outer boroughs. It
12 is also a slap in the face to my
13 fellow Staten Islanders who do not
14 have adequate public transit options.
15 Mostly all of my fellow Staten
16 Islanders need to drive a car to both
17 get around the island and to commute
18 back and forth to whether they work in
19 Manhattan or other parts in the city.

20 I live in a community that is
21 already heavily taxed through the toll
22 program. As you all know, residents
23 on Staten Island are required to pay a
24 toll in order to drive off the island.
25 This program will lead to double

1 tolling.

2 London is continuously being
3 utilized as an example to the
4 effectiveness of this program. Yet,
5 anyone who looked at the London
6 congestion pricing program closely
7 will see that it has failed miserably.
8 It did not decrease the amount of
9 traffic on London streets, but rather,
10 it moved it to other parts of that
11 city.

12 This program is all about
13 revenue. And with all due respect to
14 the MTA, this is the same agency that
15 is continuously funded by our state
16 tax dollars and has received billions
17 of dollars in bailout money from the
18 federal government. Yet, enough is
19 never enough.

20 Both the MTA and our state
21 continue to tax our working-class
22 families into oblivion. There is
23 already a mass exodus of New Yorkers
24 moving out of our city and state on a
25 daily basis in record numbers. They

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1 are moving to other more affordable
2 states where they will be taxed less
3 and have a better quality of life.

4 And as the state continues to
5 implement revenue programs, such as
6 this one, it will continue to lead to
7 more of our fellow New Yorkers to
8 continue to flee our state. Soon
9 there will be very few people left to
10 foot the bill, and the blame here
11 starts at the top.

12 Thank you.

13 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

14 Our next speaker is Tiffany-Ann
15 Taylor, followed by Zoe Baldwin.

16 TIFFANY-ANN TAYLOR: Hello. My
17 name is Tiffany-Ann Taylor, and I'm
18 Brooklyn resident and the vice
19 president for Transportation at the
20 Regional Plan Association, a nearly
21 100-year-old civic organization
22 working toward better mobility,
23 economic opportunity, affordable
24 housing and a more resilient New York
25 City metropolitan region.

1 Our organization has been
2 advocating in support of congestion
3 pricing for many years and has
4 long-held the belief that limiting
5 exemptions will help to meet the goals
6 of the program by reducing the number
7 of vehicles entering the CBD and
8 raising critical revenue for the
9 agency's capital plan.

10 The MTA should limit exemption
11 categories to create a more equitable
12 pricing scenario for those who do need
13 to travel to the Manhattan CBD by car.
14 The current legislation exempts
15 several classes of users.
16 Unfortunately, even these mandated
17 exemptions are open to abuse and must
18 be rigorously enforced with
19 substantial penalties for violators.

20 Additionally, we hope the MTA
21 will identify the scenarios that limit
22 additional surcharges for taxis and
23 FHV's. Since 2019, customers using
24 taxis and FHV's have been paying a fee
25 for trips south of 96th Street in

1 Manhattan.

2 In our report released the same
3 year, we recommended that the MTA
4 study a small additional fee for trips
5 within the current tolling program
6 South of 60th Street. We still
7 believe that this may accomplish
8 traffic reduction and revenue
9 generation without as many unintended
10 consequences.

11 Congestion pricing will reduce
12 congestion, improve regional air
13 quality, and support critical capital
14 investments in our public
15 transportation infrastructure.

16 We urge the federal government
17 to approve the Environmental
18 Assessment so New York can move
19 forward with implementing this vital
20 program.

21 Thank you.

22 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

23 Our next speaker is Zoe Baldwin,
24 followed by Kate Slevin.

25 ZOE BALDWIN: Hello. My name is

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1 Zoe Baldwin. I'm the New Jersey
2 director for the Regional Plan
3 Association.

4 For decades, RP has supported
5 congestion pricing because we see it
6 as the centerpiece of the set of
7 policies that will lead to a greener
8 more equitable region. However, many
9 in New Jersey have expressed valid
10 concerns about how this will impact
11 drivers in communities on this side of
12 the Hudson.

13 And as a life-long New Jersey
14 resident, I fully understand those
15 concerns and I'm here today to
16 reiterate the congestion pricing
17 benefits New Jersey a great deal.
18 While New Jersey have always paid
19 tolls to enter Manhattan, many from
20 New York and Connecticut have avoided
21 this by crossing at free city-owned
22 bridges such as the Brooklyn Bridge.
23 But with toll credits in place at all
24 three New Jersey crossings, this new
25 policy will truly level the playing

1 field.

2 Additionally, four out of five
3 New Jerseyans already use transit to
4 cross the Hudson River and congestion
5 pricing will reduce traffic for that
6 small percentage that do need to drive
7 into the Central Business District.
8 Congestion pricing will also improve
9 the city's public transit system,
10 which is used by the vast majority of
11 New Jersey commuters once they cross
12 the river, further facilitating a
13 smooth trip for everyone traveling
14 from our state regardless of whether
15 they ride or drive.

16 We do, however, strongly support
17 the provision of toll credits for
18 drivers at all three Hudson River
19 crossings, including the George
20 Washington Bridge, which will
21 eliminate unwanted traffic shifts
22 caused by drivers shopping for the
23 cheapest tolls.

24 The bottom line is that the ES
25 shows that congestion pricing is a big

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1 win for the region. But again, we
2 strongly urge MTA to choose a scenario
3 that includes credits for all New
4 Jersey crossings.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Kate Slevin,
8 followed by Ross Carstens.

9 KATE SLEVIN: Hello. Can you
10 hear me?

11 MS. FLAX: Yes.

12 KATE SLEVIN: My name is Kate
13 Slevin and I'm executive vice
14 president for Regional Plan
15 Association. We work beyond the five
16 boroughs in New York City into
17 northern New Jersey, Connecticut, and
18 Long Island and the Hudson Valley.

19 I have supported congestion
20 pricing for over 20 years. I've
21 supported it as a transit rider, as a
22 driver, while at jobs both inside
23 government and outside, and while
24 living in New Jersey and in New York
25 City.

1 The Environmental Assessment
2 proves congestion pricing will achieve
3 its stated goals of traffic reduction
4 and increased transit investment. And
5 RPA supports approval of the finding
6 of no significant impact.

7 Congestion pricing will bring
8 lower traffic congestion and this will
9 support our regional economy. It's
10 absolutely vital that we address
11 traffic congestion it if we're going
12 to grow and prosper.

13 It will bring 15 billion dollars
14 for public transit investment, and
15 this includes investments in hundreds
16 of vital projects, such as signal
17 upgrades on subways, accessibility
18 improvements at stations, electric bus
19 purchases, new train cars, transit
20 expansion -- and many, many more.

21 Congestion pricing will make the
22 transportation system more equitable,
23 the majority of households in New York
24 City do not own cars and rely on
25 transit. And on average across the

1 region, households with cars have an
2 income that is about double as those
3 without.

4 Congestion pricing will bring
5 benefit to the entire region,
6 including New Jersey, Long Island and
7 Hudson Valley. The mass majority of
8 Hudson-bound commuters use public
9 transit to get around New York City
10 and will benefit with transit
11 improvements congestion pricing will
12 bring.

13 For those who drive, congestion
14 pricing will speed trips. Congestion
15 pricing will improve regional air
16 quality and set us on a path to
17 address the challenges of climate
18 change ahead.

19 There's still many specifics to
20 work out, such as toll credits, and
21 how to best reduce so-called toll
22 shopping, taxi and for-hire vehicle
23 policy, and mitigating localized air
24 quality and traffic impacts.

25 We urge the governor, the MTA,

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1 and the city leaders to develop a
2 comprehensive approach to address some
3 of the specific highway impacts,
4 especially on the Cross Bronx, in a
5 way that prioritizes the health of
6 vulnerable communities. But we feel
7 that these issues can be addressed and
8 we urge the approval of the
9 Environmental Assessment.

10 Thank you very much.

11 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

12 The next speaker is Ross
13 Carstens, followed by our tenth
14 speaker on the list, Alex Jaffe.

15 Our next speaker is Alex Jaffe,
16 followed by Allison Stone.

17 Alex, you may unmute yourself
18 and begin your remarks.

19 ALEX JAFFE: Hello, can you hear
20 me?

21 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

22 ALEX JAFFE: All right. Hi.
23 I'm Alex Jaffe, resident of
24 Manhattan's Upper East Side. I'm here
25 to talk today in support of

1 implementing the Central Business
2 District Tolling Program for Manhattan
3 residents. From the perspective of
4 the long-term good of the city, this
5 should be an easy choice for our
6 city's ongoing health.

7 Congestion pricing will easily
8 raise revenue for New York, make our
9 city more walkable, and control
10 pollution as people turn away from
11 unnecessary car travel. I understand
12 that not everyone will be excited
13 about this in the short-term, but we
14 just can't continue to operate in this
15 increasingly congested environment.
16 Implementing congestion pricing is the
17 simplest way and maybe the only way to
18 get New Yorkers to make a lifestyle
19 change which will ultimately benefit
20 us all.

21 As alluded to by previous
22 speakers, programs to this effect have
23 been implemented in London, Oslo,
24 Stockholm and many other major
25 European cities. There, as with any

1 tolling program, reception was
2 initially low. But support has grown
3 in every major city which has accepted
4 it over time when they seen the
5 long-term effects it's had on city
6 life.

7 And while I understand this may
8 result in some diverted congestion
9 elsewhere, the studies and evidence
10 we've seen shows that the goal of
11 overall traffic reduction will be
12 achieved. The sooner we implement
13 this, the sooner we'll get to the
14 point where we're all grateful for a
15 system which will enrich the city and
16 improve our lives.

17 Thank you.

18 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

19 Our next speaker is Allison
20 Stone, followed by Rachael Fauss.

21 Our next speaker is Rachael
22 Fauss, followed by Emilio Ron.

23 RACHAEL FAUSS: Hello. My name
24 is Rachael Fauss for Reinvent Albany.
25 We advocate for more transparent

1 authorities like the MTA. Reinvent
2 Albany because it is the law and has
3 been shown globally to reject
4 pollution and travel time for public
5 transit.

6 The MTA (technical difficulties)
7 15 to 20 percent reduction of more
8 districts which will reduce delays to
9 emergency bus riders whose trips are
10 the slowest in the nation. Congestion
11 pricing is not a discretionary act at
12 the MTA -- our elected representatives
13 in the state legislature with the
14 support of the city council business
15 community.

16 Furthermore, congestion pricing
17 will provide environmentally
18 beneficial source of revenue that the
19 subways, buses and commuter rails.
20 This is -- operating budget crisis and
21 to resources to fund its capital
22 program. By law 15 billion for the
23 2020 capital plan -- 10 percent each
24 to Long Island.

25 The law allows certainty

1 vehicles and qualified vehicles
2 transporting -- personally a separate
3 tax credit was created for residents
4 and annually.

5 The Traffic Mobility Review
6 Board -- not expand upon these
7 exemptions. Toll exemptions and
8 transparent because granting any
9 exemptions breeds cynicism and
10 undermines public support for the MTA.

11 The MTA's four exemptions are
12 provided the higher the toll --
13 defeats the purpose of ensuring
14 fairness tolls -- concern that
15 congestion pricing will make it harder
16 to shift these agencies troops in the
17 same way they already provide
18 overnight and weekend. They should
19 not absorb other city or state worker
20 retention and recruitment.

21 Finally, congestion pricing is
22 the main source of the capitol
23 program. As noted in our -- the MTA
24 Capital Program -- more money 4.8
25 billion has been received of the 50.

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1 The MTA has already amended its
2 plan -- one increased costs of
3 inflation and to COVID-19 due to the
4 lack of funds will make it even
5 more -- repairs.

6 Thank you for your
7 consideration.

8 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

9 Our next speaker is Emilio Ron,
10 followed by Wendy Nodiff.

11 Our next speaker is Wendy
12 Nodiff, followed by Joshua Bienstock.

13 Our next speaker is Joshua
14 Bienstock, followed by Michael Murray.

15 Our next speaker is Joshua
16 Bienstock.

17 Our next speaker is Michael
18 Murray, followed by Bruce Lander.

19 Our next speaker is Bruce
20 Lander, followed by Krishna Pendyala.

21 Our next speaker is Krishna
22 Pendyala, followed by Anne Luek.

23 Our next speaker is Anne Luek,
24 followed by John Law.

25 Our next speaker is John Law,

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1 followed by Elba Salamanca.

2 Our next speaker is Elba
3 Salamanca, followed by our 22nd
4 speaker to sign up, Adrienne Meisels.

5 Our next speaker is Adrienne
6 Meisels, followed by Joanna Smith.

7 Our next speaker is Joanna
8 Smith, followed by Fakhrul Islam.

9 Our next speaker is Fakhrul
10 Islam, followed by Rosannex Alberts.

11 Our next speaker is Rosannex
12 Alberts, followed by Charles Bergman.

13 Our next speaker is Charles
14 Bergman, followed by Josue Martinez.

15 Charles Bergman.

16 Our next speaker is Josue
17 Martinez, followed by Elba Salamanca.

18 Our next speaker is Elba
19 Salamanca, followed by Nathan
20 Giannini.

21 Elba, you may unmute yourself
22 and begin your remarks.

23 ELBA SALAMANCA: Good afternoon.

24 I am a person that rides vehicle --
25 motorcycle vehicle into Manhattan to

1 go to work and I need to be able to --
2 congestion pricing affects me in a way
3 that going over the bridge would be
4 too expensive for me to do every
5 single day.

6 Trains are not accommodating and
7 elevators in every station and it's
8 quite difficult to travel through
9 trains. I must -- I need a motor
10 vehicle that gets me in and out, and
11 gives me my freedom and independence
12 to be able to financially take care of
13 myself without having to depend on
14 anybody else.

15 So I -- please consider this
16 situation where they -- we would be
17 exempt, motorcycles.

18 Thank you.

19 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Nathan
21 Giannini, followed by MacKenzie
22 Fallow.

23 Our next speaker is MacKenzie
24 Fallow, followed by Emmanuel Agostini.

25 MACKENZIE FALLOW: Hello?

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1 MS. FLAX: We can hear you.

2 MACKENZIE FILLow: Good
3 afternoon. My name is MacKenzie
4 Fallow. I live in Brooklyn, right by
5 the entrance to the Brooklyn Bridge.

6 I understand there are a number
7 of options set out in the
8 environmental study that would have
9 greater or lesser impact on
10 congestion. I urge the MTA to choose
11 the option that will get the most cars
12 off the road and not to allow any
13 exemptions than what is required by
14 state law.

15 Cars are ruining this city.
16 Drivers kill and maim thousands of New
17 Yorkers every year and everybody just
18 shrugs. Drivers also warm the planet,
19 and pollute the air, and slow down
20 buses and ambulances.

21 And even if you put all that
22 aside, which you totally shouldn't,
23 cars are so noisy; the engine revving,
24 the beeping, the loud music, and just
25 the sound of the wheels against the

1 pavement. The minority of drivers
2 should not be allowed to disturb the
3 peace of the majority. This program
4 cannot come fast enough.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Emmanuel
8 Agostini, followed by Matthew Joseph.

9 Our next speaker is Matthew
10 Joseph, followed by Bert Hirsch.

11 Our next speaker is Bert Hirsch,
12 followed by Jonathan Sobel.

13 Our next speaker is Jonathan
14 Sobel, followed by Claudeth Forbin.

15 Our next speaker is Claudeth
16 Forbin, followed by our 35th speaker
17 to sign up, Patrick Condren.

18 CLAUDETH FORBIN: Hi. Good
19 afternoon. My name is Claudeth
20 Forbin. As a born and raised New York
21 City girl, and I mean I've been riding
22 the MTA since the MTA seats were
23 actually made out of cane and there
24 were leather straphangers.

25 So I absolutely denounce this

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1 congestion pricing because I see it as
2 no more than a form of grabbing
3 revenue. You're asking the New
4 Yorkers who live on the outlying
5 boroughs -- I'm a Bronx girl -- to
6 trust that the MTA will put in the
7 much -- often ADA accessibility, which
8 we've heard this many, many times
9 before and it still hasn't happened.

10 I live in the Bronx on 219th
11 Street. Even though the subway was
12 redone, we still don't have elevators
13 or escalators. You're asking us to
14 trust that -- the question I hope
15 you'll answer is, why overnight for
16 congestion pricing? There is no
17 congestion during the overnight hours.

18 You're saying that this is going
19 to bring a ten percent improvement,
20 that leaves a 90 percent
21 non-improvement. For what you're
22 impacting, ten percent seems to be
23 very de minimis.

24 Further, what about people who
25 live in the CBD neighborhood, I have

1 friends that live within this, are you
2 saying that they're going to be
3 charged to come in and out of their
4 house when they choose to drive? Are
5 you saying that I have to pay to go
6 and see them.

7 You're asking us to trust -- I'm
8 sorry. I'm reading through my
9 questions to make sure I can stay on
10 time -- that the public will trust the
11 MTA to do what it has always said, to
12 mitigate impact and make these
13 improvements. Historically, that has
14 not been the case. What we've seen is
15 that certain of these improvements
16 have been made the -- what money has
17 always gone into the pockets of those
18 in charge of the MTA and not
19 necessarily to the promises that they
20 made to the general public.

21 You're talking about the impact,
22 but you haven't talked about the
23 entertainment impact. For those of us
24 in the outlying boroughs, if we decide
25 to drive into Manhattan for a night

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1 out, you're now telling us we have to
2 pay an extra cost or take the subway
3 and bus.

4 If I were to go out for a night
5 out, you're basically saying that I
6 should get on a subway at 9:00, 10
7 o'clock at night, it's not safe, ride
8 to the end of the bus line, if I'm
9 five stops from the end of the two
10 line, and then walk home. That is not
11 a safe scenario for myself or other
12 people.

13 I feel that if it was truly
14 about congestion pricing, that there
15 are other ways to mitigate this by
16 either moving some -- or offering tax
17 incentives to move businesses into the
18 outlying boroughs, which would also
19 reduce congestion. Rather, I see this
20 as just simply another form of taxation
21 and a discriminatory impact on those who
22 do not live in Manhattan.

23 I thank you for your time, and I
24 hope you change your minds on this
25 program. Thank you.

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1 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

2 Our next speaker is Patrick
3 Condren, followed by Jesus Urena.

4 Patrick, you may unmute
5 yourself.

6 PATRICK CONDREN: Good
7 afternoon. My name is Patrick
8 Condren. I'm with the BUS4NYC
9 Coalition, a group of regional
10 privately-owned bus operators here in
11 New York City founded just before the
12 pandemic in 2019. BUS4NYC members
13 provide the riding public with
14 commuter, intercity, contract,
15 charter, sightseeing, shuttle, tour,
16 travel, motor coach services.

17 BUS4NYC supports congestion
18 mitigation efforts. BUS4NYC has
19 presented these positions to New York
20 City and New York State transportation
21 representatives noting that all buses
22 are part of the solution to
23 congestion, not part of the problem.

24 Good examples of New York City
25 are the use of dedicated bus lines for

1 all buses. Started in 2020,
2 Manhattan's 14th Street busway has
3 been very successful. Designed to
4 prioritize moving the most people
5 safely and reliably.

6 We also note the significant
7 members of environmental justice
8 communities utilize all bus services.
9 Just one 55-passenger bus may displace
10 55 automobiles on any roadway at any
11 time. Buses are environmentally clean
12 and the New York City riding public is
13 served daily by public and
14 privately-owned buses and should
15 maintain parity relevant to tolls
16 consistent with the FAST Act,
17 federally passed in 2015.

18 Many cities, including
19 Stockholm, London, Singapore, who have
20 congestion pricing treat all buses
21 with parity and exempt all buses from
22 congestion pricing tolls. We note
23 that the current MTA CBDTP tolling
24 scenarios includes this option to
25 provide exemption for all buses and we

1 support this choice.

2 BUS4NYC has also submitted
3 statement and comments to the CBDTP,
4 including street equity charts
5 prepared by industry experts
6 demonstrating the efficiency and
7 positive impacts of using a bus.

8 I promised to be brief. Our
9 website is www.BUS4NYC.org.

10 Thank you and have a nice day.

11 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker is Jesus Urena,
13 followed by Josephine Peterson.

14 Our next speaker is Josephine
15 Peterson, followed by Nicolaos
16 Petrakakos.

17 Our next speaker is Nicolaos
18 Petrakakos, followed by Dimitris
19 Koutoumbas.

20 Our next speaker is Dimitris
21 Koutoumbas, followed by Gerald Adames.

22 Our next speaker is Gerald
23 Adames, followed by Balde Abdoul.

24 Our next speaker is Balde
25 Abdoul, followed by Galen Criscione.

1 Our next speaker is Galen
2 Criscione, followed by Philip De
3 Guzman.

4 Our next speaker is Philip De
5 Guzman, followed by Todd Maisel.

6 Our next speaker is Todd Maisel,
7 followed by our 45th speaker on the
8 list, Lawrence Scheyer.

9 Our next speaker is Lawrence
10 Scheyer, followed by Michelle Roth.

11 LAWRENCE SCHEYER: Hello. My
12 name is Lawrence Scheyer, and I live
13 and work in the affected Central
14 Business District congestion zone.

15 Tolling drivers is not adverse
16 to be admired. The bottom line is the
17 bottom line. And freedom to drive
18 wherever you want, whenever you want
19 in America isn't free. Nor should we
20 encourage freeloaders on this new
21 legally mandated system.

22 And drivers below 60th Street
23 are Manhattan's congestion problem
24 imposing a cost to health and injury
25 to commerce that needs to be paid for

1 by those causing it.

2 It is not mandatory to pay to
3 drive. It is not mandatory to drive.
4 But those who choose to drive, choose
5 to pay to mitigate traffic, they'll
6 get less traffic in return. And those
7 traveling to and from the congestion
8 zone will have enhanced alternative
9 travel options, which this program
10 will pay for, which will make their
11 trip even speedier.

12 Now, not to mention that there's
13 so much environmental harm that motor
14 vehicles cause that are affecting us
15 below 60th Street. I mean, I really
16 should mention that because that's
17 what this is all about.

18 It seems from these hearings
19 that an awful lot of people think
20 they're special and they should be
21 granted a personal privilege that
22 unfortunately will burden other less
23 worthy people and those less worthy
24 people will be forced to pick up their
25 selfish tab.

1 This plan can be made better,
2 and that would be through the adoption
3 of a dynamic yield pricing system
4 charging an adjustable fee.
5 Demand-based pricing works to balance
6 out the load for a variety of
7 transportation network companies.
8 That includes airlines, intercity
9 trains, and even Uber and Lyft, think
10 surge pricing.

11 I serve on Manhattan's Community
12 Board 6 and NYC -- transportation
13 committees and have worked in the past
14 for the Port Authority in their law
15 department. But these comments that
16 I've given you are my own personal
17 observations and advice.

18 I thank you for listening.

19 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Michelle
21 Roth, followed by Jessica Walker.

22 Michelle, you may unmute
23 yourself and begin your remarks.

24 MICHELLE ROTH: Hi. Sorry for
25 the delay. Thank you very much for

1 the opportunity to speak to this topic
2 today. And it's reassuring to see so
3 many of my fellow New Yorkers as well
4 as speakers from New Jersey who have
5 eloquently pointed out the very many
6 shortcomings to this plan.

7 I understand you have to start
8 somewhere, it's still falling far
9 short, in my opinion, of where it
10 needs to be. The map that you showed
11 earlier, showed cars outside of the
12 CBD and where they were coming from.
13 But there was no -- unless I missed
14 it, there was no statistics that
15 addressed the cars that are in the CBD
16 for people who reside in the CBD.

17 Which, interestingly, everybody
18 points to London and the London CBD --
19 I know London is a smaller city than
20 New York, but it is a smaller
21 component of greater London and we're
22 doing half of Manhattan Island.

23 So you've got a great number of
24 residents who are being adversely
25 impacted, and my point and question

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1 that I want seriously considered is
2 when locking at London, they offered a
3 90 percent discount to anyone who was
4 living within the CBD and who had one
5 car. You couldn't register more than
6 one car, which I also feel is quite
7 fair.

8 If we look at the recent budget
9 and Governor Hochul's comments
10 regarding residents of Staten Island
11 who currently enjoy a 68 percent
12 discount, as they should, for bridges
13 exiting Staten Island because it's an
14 island and unless they take the Staten
15 Island ferry, which is not feasible
16 for the entire population, how are
17 they going to get off the island; so
18 of course they are entitled to that
19 discount.

20 I am seeing no sort of
21 accommodation for anyone who lives
22 within the CBD. And if you happen to
23 live on 61st Street or park a car on
24 62nd Street, you're not impacted. But
25 below 60th, you're screwed.

1 So I just don't feel that this
2 is equitable. I don't feel it's been
3 given the proper amount of
4 consideration. I think that, to quote
5 an earlier speaker, that it is a money
6 grab, that you keep running for ways
7 to fund programs and capital expenses.
8 And how do we know that a hundred
9 percent of these tolls are going to
10 CapEx; likely not, it's going to get
11 diverted.

12 So thank you for your time, and
13 I hope you take my comments into
14 consideration.

15 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

16 Our next speaker is Jessica
17 Walker, followed by Ted Schell.

18 JESSICA WALKER: Good afternoon.
19 I am Jessica Walker. I'm the
20 president and CEO of the Manhattan
21 Chamber of Commerce, and we are the
22 convenor, voice, and advocate for the
23 100,000-plus businesses across the
24 borough of Manhattan, which of course
25 is the city's economic center.

1 We're -- our organization was
2 actually a staunch supporter of
3 congestion pricing before the COVID
4 pandemic began. Obviously we believe
5 that it's a policy that can help
6 reduce traffic gridlock and fund
7 transit improvements, which are
8 extremely important; good for
9 businesses, and the economy, and
10 residents. And we continue to support
11 this policy in principle.

12 But we now have serious concerns
13 about the timing in the wake of the
14 COVID pandemic that we just had been
15 through. New York City continues to
16 face significant headwinds to getting
17 back to where we were before the
18 pandemic began. As you may know, in
19 July, the U.S. -- the good news is the
20 U.S. finally regained all of the jobs
21 it lost during the COVID pandemic.

22 But the increase in employment
23 in New York City was more modest.
24 According to the New York State labor
25 department, New York City has regained

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1 only 82 percent of the jobs lost in
2 the pandemic. So that means we're
3 almost 200,000 jobs below where we
4 were before the pandemic. We are not
5 out of the woods yet, we are still in
6 an economic recovery.

7 Small businesses continue to
8 suffer because they have taken on
9 significant debt, and they need to get
10 their revenue back in order to
11 continue to prosper and get back to
12 stability.

13 Our Central Business District in
14 Manhattan in particular was hit hard
15 during the pandemic. Obviously the
16 tourists and the office workers at
17 those businesses rely upon for their
18 foot traffic and their customers and
19 the vibrancy in the neighborhood
20 continues to be lower than where we
21 were before the pandemic. Office
22 occupancy is still very low. I think
23 we're at 40 percent during these peak
24 summer months, so we're really, really
25 falling short now.

1 Congestion pricing is now on
2 track to begin next year, but there
3 are many economists who don't think
4 that New York City will be back to
5 where we were before the pandemic
6 until 2025. So what do we do?

7 I think our position is that we
8 need to slow things down. The stakes
9 are just too high right now to
10 implement something, we're still in an
11 economic recovery. We think that in
12 addition to the Environmental
13 Assessment we saw today, we need a
14 major economic impact statement that
15 looks at the impact on commercial
16 deliveries, business closures,
17 employment, the movement to remote
18 work, and other critical data points.

19 Again, our chamber was a major
20 supporter of congestion pricing, but
21 we do think at this juncture that we
22 need to slow the process down to make
23 sure we're not going to harm the
24 city's economic recovery.

25 Thank you.

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1 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

2 Our next speaker is Ted Schell,
3 followed by Michael Marel.

4 Ted, you may begin your remarks.

5 TED SCHELL: Yes. I want to add
6 to the comments. Hi. My name is Ted
7 Schell, and I'm a resident of the
8 Central Business District.

9 And what seems to be overlooked
10 in all of the analyses that are done
11 is the economic impact of what is
12 really inherently a tax on every
13 single individual living in the
14 Central Business District. There are
15 500,000 of us by the last census,
16 perhaps more.

17 Every single thing we buy,
18 services that we need for repairs, or
19 deliveries, things we buy in the
20 stores will all have a price increase
21 that will be reflective of this tax.
22 And yet, there seems to be no
23 understanding of it, no
24 acknowledgement of it, and no
25 willingness to do anything about it,

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1 even in the small -- you know, taking
2 the small step of exempting people who
3 live in the Central Business District
4 from paying the congestion pricing
5 fee.

6 What happens is that it all
7 winds up not being paid in the end by
8 the delivery people, the service
9 people, and the sellers of goods and
10 services to us, but it winds up being
11 paid by the 500,000 people who live in
12 that district.

13 Why this thing was set at 60th
14 Street, seems to me to have been
15 derivative from a political back and
16 forth as opposed to setting it up at
17 96th Street. And had it been done,
18 then the economic impact would have
19 been spread over others. And, you
20 know, if I moved four blocks north, I
21 would have none of these costs.

22 But the central point I'm making
23 is this is nothing other than a hidden
24 tax on the residents of the Central
25 Business District, all of whom are

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1 paying an exorbitant amount of money
2 to live here. And I and many others,
3 where this is the straw that breaks
4 the camel's back, are considering
5 moving. And that out migration from
6 the Central Business District will
7 create more problems for New York
8 City.

9 That's basically my comment, and
10 I thank you for listening.

11 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker is Michael
13 Marel, followed by Som Ramrup.

14 Our next speaker, and 50th on
15 the list, is Som Ramrup, followed by
16 Richard Robbins.

17 Our next speaker is Richard
18 Robbins, followed by Jonathan Martin.

19 Our next speaker is Jonathan
20 Martin, followed by Assemblymember
21 Emily Gallagher.

22 Our next speaker is
23 Assemblymember Emily Gallagher,
24 followed by Jonathan Martin.

25 Assemblymember, we cannot hear

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1 you. You're not muted, but we can't
2 hear you.

3 ASSEMBLYMEMBER EMILY GALLAGHER:

4 Thank you very much for having this
5 hearing. I am Assemblymember Emily
6 Gallagher representing the 50th
7 District of Brooklyn. So Williamsburg
8 and Greenpoint. We're right along the
9 Williamsburg Bridge, which suffers
10 from a lot of air pollution from
11 congestion that is passing through.

12 And I and many of my
13 constituents are proponents for
14 congestion pricing. A majority of my
15 constituents use public transportation
16 and my district is served largely by
17 the bus. And we know that removing a
18 lot of the cars from the road will
19 help speed up that transit.

20 And the 14th Street busway is a
21 great example of how successful
22 improving public transit is by
23 removing some private car use. We
24 desperately need the MTA to have the
25 capital to do their capital projects

1 and this is the way that makes the
2 most sense.

3 There are very few cities in the
4 United States that have a robust
5 public transit and are walkable,
6 bikeable or rideable, and this is one
7 of those cities. So it is absolutely
8 vital that we prioritize the assets
9 that we do have so that we can make
10 cleaner environmental choices and we
11 can actually move people at a faster
12 speed and in a more efficient manner.

13 I walk, take transit, and drive
14 a car, so I know the mindset of a
15 driver. And I know that if we keep
16 the exemptions limited but have lower
17 tolls, people will be able to make the
18 choices that will best serve them
19 without losing too much of their
20 mobility or serving their own needs.

21 So I really believe that traffic
22 must be addressed. It is a shame that
23 we waited until after the COVID
24 epidemic began to do this, because car
25 ridership has skyrocketed so now we

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1 have an even bigger problem than when
2 I first started advocating for this
3 five or six years ago.

4 I'm very much a proponent of
5 this. I think the exemptions that you
6 have for some car services and for
7 some other folks, like those who are
8 making less than \$60,000 a year, are
9 really important. But I think that we
10 should keep the exemptions limited
11 because I think this will be an
12 effective program.

13 It will have growing pains
14 getting into it, but I do really think
15 that this is absolutely necessary for
16 the city, and it's vital that we take
17 action now.

18 Thank you very much.

19 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Jonathan
21 Martin, followed by Charles Warburton.

22 Our next speaker is Charles
23 Warburton, followed by Umair Zaeem.

24 Our next speaker is Umair Zaeem,
25 followed by Paul Rizzo.

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1 Our next speaker is Paul Rizzo,
2 followed by Derek Evers.

3 PAUL RIZZO: Good afternoon. My
4 name is Paul Rizzo and I own a live
5 music venue called The Bitter End down
6 on Bleecker Street.

7 Let me start by saying that I'm
8 a 20-year commuter with a late-night
9 business so I can't really take mass
10 transit. The general cost will
11 increase incurred by me and my
12 employees that commute in from
13 Westchester or New Jersey for the same
14 late night reasons and pretty much
15 everyone else in our industry within
16 the CBD.

17 The increased cost of goods
18 delivered to the CBD will be insane.
19 All the vendors that have to come into
20 the zone will pass the cost on to us,
21 and in turn, we'll have to raise
22 prices. This will not only happen in
23 my establishment, I've spoken to a lot
24 of other business owners. And most
25 products come in from outside the CBD,

1 so all will have to raise prices to
2 stay in business. The local food
3 prices and other essentials will go up
4 for all local residents.

5 They throw around the term
6 equity a lot these days. But please
7 bear in mind that the Village and
8 Alphabet City have a lot of
9 fixed-income people living in
10 rent-controlled and stabilized spaces
11 that will be very affected by the
12 increases in basic costs like food,
13 and other necessities that are part of
14 daily life in this city.

15 This also puts my business at a
16 competitive disadvantage from out of
17 zone bookings of bands. Any band out
18 of the area that will have to bring
19 equipment that they can't take on the
20 trains, will have to pay this tax.

21 Parents and grandparent are not
22 going to train in from Upstate or Long
23 Island or Jersey, so I will lose a lot
24 of school recitals, School of Rock
25 shows, to clubs out of the area.

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1 We've already lost people because they
2 have to pay for parking with all of
3 the sheds that are around, and I feel
4 that a tax will hurt that.

5 So why should a band play with
6 me when they have so many other
7 options around the city that are not
8 in the Central Business District? Why
9 is it an all-day and all-night tax?
10 There are no issues at night, even
11 downtown.

12 We have so many closed
13 storefronts in this area, this will
14 not promote growth, I feel it will
15 only hurt it. It will also hurt the
16 spontaneous dropping in of people
17 driving on the West Side Highway or
18 the FDR into the Lower East Side or
19 the Village to get a quick drink or a
20 bite to eat.

21 So many places are now offering
22 what we do in the Central Business
23 District and in other parts of the
24 city, so it doesn't really make the
25 Central Business District so special.

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1 Thank you for your time, and
2 have a nice day.

3 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

4 Our next speaker is Derek Evers,
5 followed by Joshua Goodman.

6 Our next speaker is Joshua
7 Goodman, followed by Anuranjan Pegu.

8 JOSHUA GOODMAN: Hello. Good
9 afternoon. My name is Josh Goodman.
10 I'm a resident of Washington Heights,
11 and I would like to urge that
12 congestion pricing be implemented as
13 quickly as possible without any
14 further exemptions beyond what has
15 been mandated.

16 For far too long, we as a city
17 have heavily subsidized the ownership
18 of private vehicles while under
19 investing in a mass transit system
20 that benefits everyone. While New
21 York City real estate, especially in
22 Lower Manhattan, is one of the most
23 coveted and valuable on Earth, we
24 devote acres and acres of prime space
25 to car eccentric streets and free

1 on-street parking.

2 These subsidies of private
3 cars -- down to the benefit of the
4 wealthiest people, as car ownership
5 rates in Manhattan are strongly
6 correlated with income. The quarter
7 of Manhattan as to own cars, make an
8 average of almost twice as much money
9 as the 75 percent who don't.

10 Meanwhile, subways are
11 constantly delayed due to antiquated
12 systems breaking down, and
13 three-quarters of stations remain
14 inaccessible to wheelchair users. I
15 recently waited 16 minutes for an A
16 train in Midtown at 4 p.m. on a
17 weekday, that kind of service is
18 unacceptable. And the current state
19 of our transit system is frankly an
20 embarrassment.

21 It's long past time for us to
22 price the real cost of people driving
23 private vehicles in one of the most
24 transit-dense regions in the world,
25 and use the proceeds to more equitably

1 fund trains.

2 Cars also pose a constant threat
3 to people simply trying to go about
4 their days. This July, 38 people were
5 killed in New York City in crashes,
6 including 11 pedestrians and four
7 cyclists -- instituted in 2014. And
8 even when cars aren't directly killing
9 people, they're manifold of
10 externalities impact us all. Their
11 emissions lead to asthma in children
12 and COPD exasperations in the elderly.

13 And the energy requirements and
14 carbon emissions associated with
15 private vehicle use are far greater
16 than those of mass transit; worsening
17 climate change, raising the chances of
18 cataclysmic environmental disasters,
19 like another Superstorm Sandy.

20 Finally enacting congestion
21 pricing after decades of failed
22 attempts will help to create a
23 greener, more liveable, more
24 equitable, and more prosperous city
25 for all. Opening the door to

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1 redemptions will inevitably lead to
2 different interest groups clamoring
3 for carve-outs until the plan barely
4 does anything to decrease car trips or
5 raise revenue for the MTA, which means
6 that no exemptions are the way to go.

7 We waited long enough, now is
8 the time to act.

9 Thank you for your time.

10 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

11 Our next speaker is Anuranjan
12 Pegu, followed by Gavilan Longino.

13 You may begin your remarks.

14 ANURANJAN PEGU: Good afternoon.
15 My name is Anuranjan Pegu. I live in
16 South Brooklyn, and I work at an
17 environmental non-profit in Manhattan.

18 I've been involved with
19 environment and social justice issues
20 for many years. I have always
21 supported congestion pricing in New
22 York City, but I have experienced its
23 benefits personally. However, I feel
24 like this specific program is not
25 sincere when it comes to environment

1 or social equity.

2 You guys proclaim inspiration
3 from existing congestion pricing plans
4 like those in London and Stockholm,
5 but do not follow everything that
6 actually made those plans successful.

7 I'm only going to touch on one,
8 which is the hundred percent exemption
9 for motorcycles in every single city
10 with a congestion plan; from London,
11 Stockholm, Gatlinburg, Milan, Rome,
12 Genoa, Florence, Oslo, Madrid, every
13 city.

14 So why do these cities exempt
15 motorcycles? The reasons are obvious,
16 motorcycles are not cars. They have
17 lower carcinogens, they use less gas,
18 they cause less wear and tear on the
19 road, six of them can park in the
20 space of one SUV, and of course they
21 actually reduce congestion.

22 Studies, including one by
23 Gridlock Sam have shown that if people
24 switch from cars to motorcycles, there
25 will be a massive reduction in

1 congestion and pollution. That's
2 serious side effect, logical and
3 proven, contributing the success of
4 congestion plans everywhere.

5 But the other big reason why
6 motorcycles get these exemptions is to
7 bridge income equality. Motorcycles
8 in UK, EU or here in the U.S. are
9 cheaper affordable means of
10 transportation for a lot of people,
11 especially those who cannot afford to
12 live in downtown areas or own cars are
13 for whom public transit does not work
14 or is not accessible.

15 On a motorcycle, I was able to
16 cut down my 60-minute commute on a
17 train by half, while I pay only 60
18 bucks a month for gas, insurance and
19 maintenance combined. Which is half
20 of what a MetroCard costs. That's
21 like a 700-plus-dollar savings for me
22 every year. For some of us, that's a
23 lot of money.

24 I've noticed in these hearings,
25 a lot of bicycle advocates tend to be

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1 white folks who live in Manhattan or
2 in upscale neighborhoods close to
3 Manhattan. They can walk or bike to
4 work and home. POCs like me cannot,
5 we cannot afford to live in those
6 areas even if we get more than 60,000
7 a year. To tell us to bike more than
8 ten miles to get to work weary and
9 tired is just arrogant, it's ignorant,
10 it's cruel, it's racist and classless.

11 There's also a bias against
12 motorcycles in the city because it is
13 considered low class because often
14 they're owned by lower-income and
15 minority populations. That is why
16 the -- from Upper West Side are
17 complaining here about noisy
18 motorcycles and why MTA researches
19 forget about motorcycles in their
20 research.

21 In this city, it feels like we
22 are continually getting punished for
23 being poor and for the color of our
24 skin, and this is no different.

25 To sum up, successful congestion

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1 pricing plans everywhere in the
2 western world give 100 percent
3 exemption to motorcycles, and so
4 should New York. It's the smallest
5 way for MTA to show that it actually
6 wants to reduce congestion and
7 pollution while helping EJ
8 communities, because motorcycles are
9 part of the solution.

10 Thank you.

11 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker is Gavilan
13 Longino, followed by Cindy Morris.

14 Our next speaker is Gavilan
15 Longino.

16 GAVILAN LONGINO: Can you hear
17 me?

18 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

19 GAVILAN LONGINO: Thank you. So
20 as stated, my name is Gavilan Longino.
21 And my apologies for any -- if these
22 questions have already been answered.
23 Is it true that the decision will be
24 made by -- in January of 2023?

25 Can someone answer that?

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1 Can you hear me?

2 MR. OLIVA: I just want to
3 remind --

4 GAVILAN LONGINO: Yes, I know.
5 I'm trying to get -- I'm going to be
6 done quickly. I only have a couple of
7 questions.

8 MR. OLIVA: Responses will not
9 be provided during today's hearing.

10 GAVILAN LONGINO: Okay.

11 MR. OLIVA: You're comments are
12 being recorded in depth and responded
13 to as part of the Environmental
14 Assessment process.

15 GAVILAN LONGINO: Okay. I will
16 move on then. Thank you. I'm going
17 to move on to the fact that -- all
18 right. A little background on me.

19 I'm an UXR experienced
20 researcher, and for anyone who is
21 unfamiliar with UXR or what they do, I
22 conduct research and ensure that
23 products and services and procedures
24 function as users intend and end users
25 expect. So you as the panel are the

1 users, the end users are us -- the
2 community who has to potentially pay
3 for these tolls.

4 I've reviewed almost a dozen
5 studies and reports and there has been
6 some success in London, but that's the
7 only city that I found that is
8 comparable to ours. Other cities have
9 different culture, like they can
10 completely control their citizens, for
11 the most part at least. And others
12 also have considerable space to have a
13 more complex system.

14 Some of my solutions include
15 favoring high-occupancy vehicles,
16 exempting delivery trucks, and I'll
17 get to why in a reason, although
18 that's already been addressed, but not
19 exempting taxis, charge vehicles that
20 insist on entering that are not
21 high-end occupancy, prohibit street
22 parking, and a few other ideas I have
23 that will create an environment that
24 discourages traffic.

25 So about the trucks, the

1 delivery trucks, as been mentioned
2 already, it's a double taxation, so
3 those people are -- the trucks are
4 coming in, they've got to pay it.
5 They are just going to forward that to
6 us, the people who have to buy their
7 products and serve us. So we're going
8 to pay to go in and then pay
9 additionally for that charge because
10 they have to pass that on.

11 I have other ideas that I'd like
12 to share with the committee. If
13 you're willing, I'd like to share my
14 information so we can tackle this and
15 any other issues.

16 MS. FLAX: Conclude your
17 remarks.

18 GAVILAN LONGINO: Let me know if
19 there's a way I could supply that
20 information.

21 Thank you.

22 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
23 Cindy Morris, followed by our 61st
24 speaker on the list, Irine
25 Tkeshelashvili.

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1 Our next speaker is Irine
2 Tkeshelashvili, followed by Ella
3 Pultinas.

4 Our next speaker is Ella
5 Pultinas, followed by Teara Wilson.

6 Our next speaker is Teara
7 Wilson, followed by Andrew Lynch.

8 Our next speaker is Andrew
9 Lynch, followed by Terry Li.

10 ANDREW LYNCH: Good afternoon.
11 I'm a private bus operator from Long
12 Island. Private bus service in and
13 out of the CBD is hands down the most
14 energy efficient and environmentally
15 friendly form of mass transportation
16 that exists today.

17 A single motorcoach traveling
18 into the CBD removes up to 55 cars
19 from doing the same. And the
20 reduction in potential traffic simply
21 cannot be argued. All buses,
22 including private buses, need to be
23 exempted from congestion pricing so
24 that additional cost increases do not
25 deter the riding public from using

1 this incredibly beneficial form of
2 transportation.

3 Let's remember, while a typical
4 car may get around 30 passenger miles
5 per gallon, a typical private bus gets
6 over 280 passenger miles per gallon
7 because they can carry so many more
8 people. Not only are buses more fuel
9 efficient, but studies prove that
10 buses use the least amount of energy
11 and produce the lowest carbon dioxide
12 emissions per passenger than any form
13 of transportation. Better than
14 trains, subways, transit buses, ride
15 hails, or pooled rides, private buses
16 beet them all.

17 Buses today are required to be
18 equipped with new technology, such as
19 diesel particulate filters and diesel
20 emission fluid systems that together,
21 reduce particulate emissions and
22 nitrogen oxides by over 90 percent.
23 These are not your parent's buses of
24 the past.

25 Generalizing private buses will

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1 mean more cars using more energy and
2 producing more carbon, which will
3 worsen air quality in minority and
4 environmental justice populations near
5 the CBD. It is also important to note
6 that in the current COVID environment,
7 an analysis of people entering the
8 CBD, by Clarion Research, predicts
9 that bus transportation will
10 experience the smallest drop in
11 ridership post-COVID compared to
12 subway and rail, demonstrating the
13 importance and resiliency of buses and
14 why private bus carriers shouldn't be
15 penalized for being the mode of
16 transportation that the riding public
17 is depending on.

18 Additionally, many of the
19 private bus companies that come into
20 the CBD contribute to the national
21 transit database, some of them even
22 voluntarily. And their miles are used
23 to generate federal funds for the MTA.
24 Making it more expensive for buses to
25 enter the CBD will reduce NTD miles in

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1 our region and therefore, reduce
2 federal funds that come back to the
3 MTA, which is counterintuitive.

4 In closing, private bus
5 operators by their very nature are
6 actively reducing congestion right
7 now. You cannot and should not
8 penalize a form of mass transit that
9 is already part of the solution.

10 Thank you for listening.

11 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker is Terry Li,
13 followed by Alexander Ross.

14 TERRY LI: Hello. This is
15 Terry. Hi. This is Terry. I live in
16 Northeastern Queens in Bayside, and I
17 commute to Manhattan for work.

18 While I support there should be
19 mechanism to improve the public
20 transportation in New York City, I do
21 take the subway, I take the bus, I
22 also ride bike in the city, I do
23 believe the current proposed tolling
24 programs are quite unfair.

25 Because I know who drive in the

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1 city knows during rush hour in Midtown
2 Manhattan knows most of the cars on
3 the streets are trucks and TLC cars,
4 Ubers, Lyfts, and these cars are not
5 going to avoid Midtown Manhattan
6 because there's a tolling program,
7 they are going to be in the city
8 anyways. So there is very limited
9 facts on the volume of traffic in
10 Midtown, in Central -- in the CBD
11 area.

12 And also because of the limited
13 effect on the volume, the safety of
14 pedestrians and cyclists would not
15 really be guaranteed. So as long the
16 city doesn't stop the double parking
17 and the truck loading issue in CBD,
18 the traffic problem would not be
19 solved.

20 And also, there's very limited
21 amount of -- not very limited amount.
22 There's limited amount of traffic in
23 weekends -- on weekends, at nighttime
24 in Manhattan. So I'm wondering if
25 it's trying to solve traffic jam

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1 problems, now why you are charging a
2 toll in low traffic times.

3 And also, because I live in
4 Northeastern Queens, for me to take a
5 subway, the closest subway station is
6 Flushing Main Street, plus there is a
7 very limited amount of Park & Ride
8 facilities in Flushing or near
9 Flushing. The closest one is the one
10 in Citi Field, but it's always closed
11 when there is a game in Citi Field.
12 So I'm wondering if part of the money
13 could be used to establish affordable
14 Park & Ride facility? I'm more than
15 glad to use them.

16 And also, many of the other
17 programs, I think other people
18 mentioned that, refer to London, Oslo,
19 Stockholm and Singapore as examples.
20 But all of those are very reliable and
21 very safe public transportation system
22 in place. But New York doesn't. And
23 also, New York is special because New
24 York is an island. For me to get into
25 New Jersey, especially Hoboken, Jersey

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1 City or Newark Airport, I have to
2 drive through Manhattan. It's
3 different from Singapore and London,
4 you can avoid the central business
5 district in their cities.

6 So I'm wondering, for people who
7 are entering Manhattan and leaving
8 Manhattan with very short amount of
9 time, from Williamsburg Bridge to the
10 Holland Tunnel, would there be any
11 sort of incentive for these kind of
12 drivers?

13 Those are my comments. Thank
14 you.

15 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

16 Our next speaker is Alexander
17 Ross, followed by Andrew Lester.

18 Alexander, you may begin your
19 remarks.

20 ALEXANDER ROSS: Hi. I live on
21 66nd Street just north of the CBD
22 border and I've not been able to find
23 any discussion about the affects of
24 this program on those who live right
25 there on the edge.

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1 Within that context, I'd like to
2 bring up three concerns. First, there
3 is a lack of clarity about what would
4 have to a driver traveling from Upper
5 Manhattan to the 59th Street Bridge,
6 will that driver would be tolled for
7 the 15 feet that have to travel that
8 is technically below 60th Street in
9 order to get onto the 59th Street
10 Bridge going towards Queens? Please
11 make that clear and explicit on the
12 project's website and in the
13 documentation as this moves forward.

14 Second, if tolling is
15 implemented, there should be a
16 reasonable grace period to allow
17 someone who enters the CBD to leave
18 without being tolled. I -- as someone
19 who lives right on the border, I am
20 frequently forced to go south when I
21 want to go north, on York Avenue for
22 example, by traffic police and/or by
23 ambulances. What would be the remedy
24 that I have if I'm forced into the CBD
25 in one of those situations?

1 Finally, if tolling is
2 implemented there should be policies
3 put in place to prevent the garages
4 just outside the zone borders from
5 price gouging. The demand for those
6 garage spaces will go up considerably.
7 What will be done to protect the
8 people who are living in that area?

9 Please consider the effects of
10 this program on the people who are
11 living right on the border of the
12 congestion zone.

13 Thank you for your time.

14 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

15 Our next speaker is Andrew
16 Lester, followed by Rob Littell.

17 Our next speaker is Rob Littell,
18 followed by Buzz Roddy.

19 Our next speaker is Buzz Roddy,
20 followed by Stefanie Sykes.

21 Our next speaker is Stefanie
22 Sykes, followed by 1420 GC.

23 Our next speaker is 1420 GC,
24 followed by Jessica Jean-Baptiste.

25 Our next speaker is Jessica

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1 Jean-Baptiste, followed by Eric
2 Lipscomb.

3 Our next speaker is Eric
4 Lipscomb, followed by Madelene Agcaol.

5 Our next speaker is Madelene
6 Agcaol, followed by Ruvym Gilman.

7 Our next speaker is Ruvym
8 Gilman, followed by Mark Williams.

9 RUVYM GILMAN: Hi. My name is
10 Ruvym Gilman. I'm a resident of the
11 Upper East Side. Thank you for
12 everybody who has put in the time and
13 effort to be here and putting together
14 the congestion pricing plan.

15 I believe in the goals of
16 congestion pricing, I think the idea
17 of reducing traffic, increasing the
18 use of public transportation, those
19 are important goals for the city. But
20 I think that as it currently exists,
21 the program is more slated towards, as
22 some people have noted, increasing MTA
23 revenue rather than actually reducing
24 traffic and drawing people towards
25 public transportation.

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1 As I think Terry stated earlier,
2 anyone ho has driven into the CBD at
3 any point, I think few do it because
4 they want to. Very often it is
5 because people need to. Someone who
6 is, as was stated just now shortly,
7 people need to pass through to get to
8 the airport, people need to go
9 sometimes to cross the 59th Street
10 Bridge to go to Queens, to go to Long
11 Island, people who are in trucks
12 delivering to businesses.

13 I don't drive in the city, but I
14 know people who do, and people who do
15 it for those reasons. Not as they
16 are, as other people stated, rich
17 white people who simply want to drive
18 in because they have a lot of money,
19 own Teslas and just want to, you
20 know -- excuse me, not Teslas, but,
21 you know, have gas-guzzling cars and
22 just want to have emissions added to
23 the mix in New York City. I don't
24 think that's the reality of who is
25 driving to the CBD.

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1 New York City residents already
2 pay more taxes than almost anyone else
3 in the country. I believe we're in
4 the top 30 in terms of taxes; federal,
5 state, city, all combined, plus sales.
6 This is, in effect, another tax on
7 living in the city. And it comes at a
8 time when there's been a dropoff in
9 terms of city residency, less revenue
10 for the city in general.

11 And the question is, is the goal
12 to drive more people out of the city?
13 Is the goal to have people become
14 residents of outer boroughs and become
15 remote workers? I think this is the
16 opposite of what Mayor Adams said he's
17 interested in, this is the opposite of
18 what President Biden has said he's
19 interested in seeing. They want
20 people in offices, we want people to
21 feel comfortable to move around the
22 city. And this, if anything, drives
23 people away from having another
24 opportunity to arrive at the office,
25 by saying you can only do it this way,

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1 otherwise you'll be charged and taxed.

2 Also, if we want to increase the
3 amount of people taking the subway,
4 taking public transportation, make it
5 more appetizing, more palpable for
6 them. As also stated, there's been an
7 uptick in subway crime. The subway
8 has not seen -- the buses are not seen
9 as an appealing form of transportation
10 as opposed to forcing people onto
11 public transportation by making it --
12 by punishing them. Especially New
13 Yorkers, punishing New Yorkers who
14 already pay high taxes to take a
15 system that they don't feel
16 comfortable with.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

19 Our next speaker is Mark
20 Williams, followed by Thomas Proctor.

21 Our next speaker is Thomas
22 Proctor, followed by Ride Anthony.

23 Our next speaker is Ride
24 Anthony, followed by Joe Bach.

25 Our next speaker is Joe Bach,

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1 followed by Nathan Werksman.

2 JOE BACH: Hi there. Can you
3 hear me?

4 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

5 JOE BACH: All right. Thanks
6 for having me. Thanks for the great
7 presentation. I am a resident of
8 Hell's Kitchen in the CBD district,
9 and I overwhelmingly support the
10 congestion pricing.

11 It would reduce noise pollution,
12 it would reduce air pollution.
13 Unfortunately, New Yorkers are dying
14 on our streets from vehicular
15 accidents every week. Not necessarily
16 always in the CBD, but certainly car
17 usage and the usage particularly of
18 how people are using the cars, it's
19 come to be problematic. And I would
20 just overwhelmingly advocate for a
21 higher quality of life for people who
22 live in the CBD that cars really do
23 have a massive negative impact on.

24 Also, certainly I am empathetic
25 to especially the environmental

1 justice communities that were
2 mentioned earlier in the presentation.
3 I wonder if it would be possible to
4 provide -- but first, we require all
5 trucks entering New York City to be
6 electric. So that could be something
7 that moderates, modifies the impact.

8 But also, obviously there is a
9 cost for all those business owners to
10 switch to electric trucks, that I
11 think might be eligible for a state or
12 federal tax credit to make that
13 transition a little bit easier.

14 And then lastly, I think also --
15 maybe second to lastly, the ADA
16 accessibility issues of some stations,
17 that's a real issue. I don't think --
18 these are not two separate issues. I
19 think they both should be addressed.
20 Certainly every public transit station
21 should be ADA accessible, but that
22 shouldn't get in the way of congestion
23 pricing. Those two things should
24 happen concurrently.

25 Then the woman who lives in the

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1 Bronx mentioned that, you know, she
2 doesn't really feel safe taking the
3 bus to -- I forget which train she
4 mentioned, down when she wants to go
5 into Manhattan at night, and I also
6 think that's a reasonable concern.
7 But again, same as the ADA issue,
8 should be addressed separately and
9 concurrently, it should not stand in
10 the way of congestion pricing.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

13 Our next speaker is the 80th
14 person to sign up, Nathan Werksman, to
15 be followed by Linda Lubinbrookoff.

16 Our next speaker is Linda
17 Lubinbrookoff, followed by Patrick
18 McClellan.

19 Our next speaker is Patrick
20 McClellan, followed by Lauren
21 Phillips.

22 PATRICK MCCLELLAN: Hi. Can you
23 hear me?

24 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

25 PATRICK MCCLELLAN: Great.

1 Thank you for the opportunity to
2 comment today. My name is Patrick
3 McClellan, and I'm the policy director
4 for the New York League of
5 Conservation Voters, we're a
6 state-wide environmental advocacy
7 organization.

8 We're longstanding supporters of
9 congestion pricing and we're pleased
10 that the Environmental Assessment has
11 finally been released. We urge USDOT
12 to swiftly approve the Central
13 Business District Tolling Program when
14 the public comment period closes and
15 for the MTA and the state and city
16 governments to then implement this
17 program as soon as possible.

18 In order to meet its statutory
19 obligations under the Climate
20 Leadership and Community Protection
21 Act of cutting economy-wide greenhouse
22 gas emissions at least 85 percent by
23 2050, New York State must take steps
24 to significantly reduce unnecessary
25 driving and increase the use of mass

1 transit.

2 Congestion pricing, as it's
3 supports have argued for many years
4 and the Environmental Assessment backs
5 up, would support both of these goals
6 by just incentivizing unnecessary car
7 and truck trips into Manhattan and
8 raising funds to improve the speed and
9 reliability of the MTA's mass transit
10 system; including not just the subways
11 and buses, but also the Metro-North
12 and Long Island Rail Roads.

13 NYLCB is still reviewing the
14 Environmental Assessment and will not
15 be weighing in on the specific
16 scenarios at this time, though we may
17 do so in our written comments that
18 we'll submit later. However, I wish
19 to highlight two general points that
20 apply to nearly all of the tolling
21 scenarios identified in the EA.

22 First, in order for congestion
23 pricing to be maximally fair and
24 effective, exemptions should be
25 limited to only those that are

1 absolutely necessarily. Such as an
2 exemption accounting for the fact that
3 TLC licensed vehicles already pay a
4 congestion pricing surcharge on every
5 trip below 96th Street or exemptions
6 that may be necessary to eliminate
7 toll shopping on the river crossings.

8 Second, the state and city
9 should comprehensively mitigate any
10 environmental justice issues caused by
11 changes to traffic patterns from
12 congestion pricing.

13 Again, we're still reviewing the
14 Environmental Assessment, and I expect
15 to have more comprehensive comments on
16 neighborhood-specific mitigation in
17 our written comments. But at this
18 point, we're calling on New York State
19 to commit to capping the Cross Bronx
20 Expressway and prioritizing clean
21 truck leads in spending federal money
22 from the Infrastructure Investment and
23 Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction
24 Act.

25 Thank you again for the

1 opportunity to comment today, and we
2 look forward to submitting more
3 detailed written comments before the
4 deadline of September 9th. Thank you
5 very much.

6 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Lauren
8 Phillips, followed by Megan Martin.

9 LAUREN PHILLIPS: Good
10 afternoon. My name is Lauren
11 Phillips, and I live in Flatbush,
12 Brooklyn.

13 In theory, I am the stereotype
14 of you might expect to oppose
15 congestion pricing. I'm a car-owning
16 outer borough resident, and I work
17 paces in Manhattan. But I'm here to
18 voice my strong support for the most
19 aggressive limited exemption
20 congestion pricing plan possible.

21 I grew up in an apartment in the
22 Bronx overlooking the entrance to the
23 Henry Hudson Bridge. Thousands of
24 cars take that bridge from the Bronx
25 into Manhattan down the West Side

1 Highway every day. And thanks to all
2 that traffic, our windows were
3 constantly covered with a dirty black
4 film. Whenever we washed our windows,
5 which we had to do pretty often if we
6 wanted to see them, the washing water
7 would turn black.

8 Unsurprisingly, like so many
9 children, largely black and brown
10 children who grew up near major
11 roadways in the city, my brother and I
12 both developed asthma as toddlers.
13 Growing up next to too many cars and
14 the destructive particulate pollution
15 that they spew, sentenced us both to a
16 childhood full of asthma inhalers and
17 special attention from the school
18 nurse.

19 And today, that same congestion
20 that left me asthmatic is even worse.
21 Now when I push my baby's stroller
22 along Flatbush Avenue, another
23 car-choked artery leading into
24 Manhattan, I worry that soon it will
25 be his turn to start to cough and

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1 wheeze. Congestion pricing is decades
2 overdue. For generations, we have
3 sacrificed clean air, our lungs, our
4 pedestrians, our bus feeds, and so
5 much more in favor of making it easier
6 to drive around the city.

7 But of course this panel already
8 knows that, and you know that there
9 are so many reasons to change course
10 from reducing congestion to raising
11 badly-needed funds for subways and
12 buses, to fighting climate change
13 causing pollution.

14 So I'm here with one small
15 reason to ask you to move forward with
16 this plan: This is my son, his name
17 is Arthur, he is four months old.
18 Please move forward for the sake of my
19 infant son and all the kids who will
20 grow up in this city in the years to
21 come.

22 Car centered policy has taken
23 freedom away from the city's
24 residents, especially its kids. I
25 want true freedom for my son. I want

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1 my son the experience freedom from
2 asthma, the freedom to get on a bike
3 without the fear of being run over,
4 the freedom from sitting on a bus
5 stuck in traffic, the freedom to get
6 on a subway and go to school without
7 delays.

8 This congestion pricing plan
9 alone will not give the kids of this
10 city the freedom that they deserve,
11 but the path to that free and healthy
12 future starts with congestion pricing.

13 Thank you very much.

14 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

15 Our next speaker is Megan
16 Martin, followed by Karen Beluso.

17 Our next speaker is Karen
18 Beluso, followed by Sara Lind.

19 Our next speaker is Sara Kind,
20 followed by Anne Nacinovich.

21 SARA LIND: Hi. Can you hear
22 me?

23 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

24 SARA LIND: My name is Sara Lind
25 and I'm the director of policy at Open

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1 Plans, a non-profit working to make
2 New York City streets more liveable.

3 I live in Manhattan outside the
4 CBD and I work in the CBD. I take the
5 train or a bike to work. I'm here to
6 testify in strong support of
7 implementing congestion pricing as
8 quickly as possible with no new
9 exemptions.

10 While only 11 percent of
11 commutes into the CBD are made by car,
12 that's small minority of people who
13 choose to drive into Manhattan impact
14 everyone. They create congestion for
15 everyone else. They slow down buses.
16 New York City's buses are the slowest
17 in the nation. They make our streets
18 much more dangerous for pedestrians
19 and bikers. We're in the midst of a
20 traffic violence epidemic. They
21 contribute to the climate crisis.
22 They make our streets noisy and hot,
23 and full of unhealthy air pollution,
24 contributing to high rates of
25 childhood asthma, as we just so

1 eloquently heard.

2 Driving into the Central
3 Business District is an anti-social
4 choice. It creates negative
5 eternalities that drivers have been
6 able to get away with for free for far
7 too long. Congestion pricing forces
8 these actors to pay closer to the true
9 price of their choice.

10 Congestion pricing benefits
11 everyone. Congestion pricing will
12 lessen climate impact, make our air
13 cleaner, fund much-needed investments
14 into the subway, and reduce traffic
15 violence. Even people who must drive
16 into the CBD will benefit because
17 there will be fewer other cars on the
18 streets, allowing them to travel into
19 the CBD more easily.

20 Furthermore, the small
21 percentage of people who drive into
22 the CBD demonstrates that congestion
23 pricing will not affect our economic
24 recovery. In fact, making the CBD a
25 more pleasant place to be by reducing

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1 congestion will draw more people there
2 to shop, work, and spend money,
3 thereby contributing to our economic
4 recovery.

5 We must implement congestion
6 pricing now with no new exemptions.
7 The more exemptions we put in place,
8 the higher the tolls will be, hurting
9 those very people who do need to
10 drive. New exemptions could also lead
11 to increased traffic diversions,
12 including increases along the Cross
13 Bronx Expressway and the Staten Island
14 Expressway.

15 Rather than increasing impacts
16 on environmental justice communities,
17 the state must work to mitigate
18 impacts, including through electric
19 buses and truck rerouting. Bronx
20 should be prioritized for electric
21 buses, and the MTA city, state, and
22 federal partners all must work
23 together to reduce polluting trucks
24 through the Bronx and Staten Island.

25 For the sake of our collective

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1 future, we must implement congestion
2 pricing immediately.

3 Thank you.

4 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

5 Our next speaker is Anne
6 Nacinovich, followed by Michael Golz.

7 Our next speaker is Michael
8 Golz, followed by Jill Pilgrim.

9 Our next speaker is Jill
10 Pilgrim, followed by our 90th speaker
11 on the list, Milana Meytes.

12 Our next speaker is Milana
13 Meytes, followed by Ryan Beickert.

14 Our next speaker is Ryan
15 Beickert, followed by Kelvin Alvarez.

16 Our next speaker is Kelvin
17 Alvarez, followed by Chris Adair.

18 Our next speaker is Chris Adair,
19 followed by John Cimillo.

20 CHRIS ADAIR: Hi, there. My
21 name is Chris Adair. You can hear me?

22 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

23 CHRIS ADAIR: Great.

24 I live in Hoboken, New Jersey,
25 and I work Monday through Friday in

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1 Manhattan. I am calling today to ask
2 that congestion pricing be implemented
3 as quickly and as effectively as
4 possible. I also do not support
5 providing credits for New Jersey car
6 drivers. Exemptions like this will
7 strip out much of the benefits of
8 congestion pricing.

9 Congestion pricing will help us
10 reduce traffic in the city's center
11 and it will make more space for
12 people; pedestrians, cyclists and
13 public transit. It will also generate
14 much needed funds for public transit.

15 I take the bus to Port Authority
16 bus terminal every day. And of the
17 seven intersections that I walk
18 through down 9th Avenue, every single
19 crosswalk is clogged with cars. And
20 it forces thousands of pedestrians,
21 like myself, and bicyclists using the
22 bicycle lane to weave through angry
23 and smelly car traffic as they
24 navigate their commutes or delivery
25 jobs.

1 Congestion pricing will take
2 many of these cars off our streets.
3 In London, congestion pricing reduced
4 traffic by 15 percent by and reduced
5 congestion, which is the time that it
6 takes to make the trip, by 30 percent.
7 Traffic volumes in the charging zone
8 are 25 percent lower now than they
9 were a decade ago since congestion
10 pricing was put into place.

11 An additional benefit will be
12 less cars, and that will mean better
13 air quality. Where I live in Hoboken,
14 we're smack dab between the Lincoln
15 and the Holland Tunnels. When the car
16 traffic becomes clogged, we get a lot
17 of cut-through traffic, so we get lots
18 of emissions from those cars.

19 Hudson County, where I live,
20 along with approximately 700,000 other
21 people has an F rating for air quality
22 by the American Lung Association.
23 Another Hudson County fun fact is the
24 majority of people don't commute by
25 car, they commute via public transit.

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1 In fact, four out of five New Jersey
2 commuters are already using mass
3 transit to come to the New York City.

4 We need to fund our public
5 transit that brings New Jersey
6 employees into New York City. This
7 includes the PATH train and the New
8 Jersey transit. You shouldn't
9 overlook these vital and essential
10 services.

11 I would also encourage us to
12 look to providing a 24/7 exclusive bus
13 lane in the Lincoln Tunnel. Right
14 now, we only use that about 6.25
15 percent of the time. And lastly,
16 congestion pricing will make our
17 streets safer.

18 Thank you so much for allowing
19 me to speak today.

20 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

21 Our next speaker is John
22 Cimillo, followed by Maureen
23 McDonough.

24 Our next speaker is Maureen
25 McDonough, followed by Mohammad

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1 Hossain.

2 Our next speaker is Mohammad
3 Hossain, followed by Michael Lupo.

4 Our next speaker is Michael
5 Lupo, followed by Michael Dull.

6 Our next speaker is Michael
7 Dull, followed by Christopher Gomez.

8 Our next speaker is Christopher
9 Gomez, followed by Ryan Goldberg.

10 Our next speaker is Ryan
11 Goldberg, followed by Sheila Bidar.

12 Our next speaker is Sheila
13 Bidar, followed by Kathy Francis.

14 Our next speaker is Kathy
15 Francis, followed by our 103rd speaker
16 on the list, Samantha Cooperman.

17 Our next speaker is Samantha
18 Cooperman, followed by Warren Haring.

19 SAMANTHA COOPERMAN: Hi. My
20 name is Samantha Cooperman, and I have
21 lived in the Turtle Bay neighborhood
22 inside the Central Business District
23 off of 2nd Avenue since 2005.

24 I live in an environmentally
25 friendly small studio apartment in a

1 fully residential area and do not own
2 a car. While I understand the need to
3 raise additional funds, I find that
4 distinction of 60th Street to be
5 arbitrary and discriminatory and
6 written by those who are healthy and
7 able.

8 A lot of this analysis was done
9 prior to the effects and COVID and
10 recent inflationary pressures from
11 which Midtown Manhattan has not yet
12 recovered, as Jessica Walker recently
13 spoke to earlier today.

14 I want to give a couple of
15 specific examples that I think might
16 be missing from some of the analysis.
17 For example, my elderly retired
18 parents come in from Long Island for
19 medical care at Memorial Sloane
20 Kettering Hospital. My father is
21 currently immunosuppressed from
22 treatments, so public transportation
23 is not an option. If their
24 appointment is at one of the larger
25 hospital buildings above 60th Street,

1 they would not be charged the
2 congestion pricing fee. But if their
3 appointment was scheduled at the
4 outpatient building on 53rd and 3rd,
5 it would cost them substantially more.

6 This seems to be unfair.
7 Similarly, there has been significant
8 funds raised by Senator Schumer at all
9 levels to bring people back to
10 Broadway Theater and the arts overall.

11 For example, I have some other
12 elderly relatives in their late 80s
13 who just started to come back to
14 theater. They're registered as
15 handicapped by New York State but New
16 York City has its own process so I
17 don't believe that it's recognized
18 here. I hope that's looked into.

19 Public transportation is not an
20 option for them. If they drive in to
21 go into Lincoln Center they won't be
22 charged a congestion pricing fee. But
23 if they choose to go to Carnegie Hall
24 a couple blocks away or any of the
25 downtown theaters, it will cost them

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1 substantially more. Given that they
2 are retired, their disposable income
3 is fixed will would lead, for them, to
4 less attendance overall hurting the
5 industry over time.

6 As a single woman, I try to walk
7 as much as possible, but I often need
8 to take a taxi home from the Upper
9 West Side or Upper East Side late at
10 night for safety. There's no traffic
11 and tolling cost being considered are
12 higher than the cost of my cab, simply
13 because I live south of 60th Street
14 with the people I'm with happen to
15 live just slightly above that.

16 I don't understand why I would
17 be charged this where as if I took the
18 same distance at an off-peak time of
19 day from downtown, this would not
20 happen. Likewise, the fact that
21 someone could keep a car in Soho and
22 just back to 59th Street and back all
23 day long, doesn't seem to be touched
24 by the tolls.

25 This seems unequitable and I

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1 solutions that are more broadly
2 distributed throughout the entirety of
3 Manhattan versus penalizing only half
4 the borough, are more seriously
5 considered. Thank you for your time.

6 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Warren
8 Haring, followed by Constance Stellas.

9 Our next speaker is Constance
10 Stellas, followed by Steven
11 Kantorowitz.

12 Our next speaker is Steven
13 Kantorowitz, followed by K.C. Jones.

14 STEVEN KANTOROWITZ: Hello. Can
15 you hear me?

16 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

17 Okay, how are you. My name is
18 Steven Kantorowitz and I want to
19 commend and thank the Commission for
20 this wonderful plan. My upper-middle
21 class and wealthy friends are very
22 excited for this plan to be
23 implemented as soon as possible with
24 the highest pricing available. This
25 will allow them to drive into Midtown

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1 Manhattan for Broadway shows and
2 meetings without having to deal with
3 the traffic caused by the poor and the
4 working-class neighborhoods.

5 The commutes for shows will
6 probably cut in half for the wealthy
7 with this plan. In addition, we
8 appreciate you directing this traffic
9 to the Cross Bronx Expressway and
10 Staten Island Expressway. Robert
11 Moses must be smiling down now with
12 the thought that Cross Bronx
13 Expressway will be a parking lot full
14 of pollution in these lower income
15 neighborhoods.

16 This will benefit the people
17 currently walking on the expressway,
18 singing, selling mango slices and nuts
19 and will encourage more salespeople.
20 Maybe this will be the beginning of
21 salespeople on the entrance to the
22 Triborough Bridge.

23 You know I say this ironically.
24 This plan does not work. It brings in
25 a miniscule amount of money in London

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1 and it is a bad regressive tax. The
2 state has been wanting to toll the
3 free Queens bridges and Brooklyn
4 bridges for decades. This could not
5 be accomplished because and people
6 were against it and consistently voted
7 against it, which who they voted for
8 as their representatives.

9 This is the work around to
10 bypass their wishes. Inflation will
11 increase for food and goods in
12 Manhattan, all over Manhattan and in
13 the boroughs because of the increase
14 in tolls. People who sometimes take
15 an Uber at late hours for safety from
16 Manhattan to Brooklyn, the price will
17 increase tremendously.

18 Why don't you do the brave thing
19 and create a bridge over the Long
20 Island sound so Long Island is not
21 trapped during a natural disaster with
22 no way to get off. It is also
23 unpopular but practical, but will do
24 far more to prevent congestion in New
25 York and will raise a tremendous

1 amount of money for mass transit.
2 Also -- and I know this has been
3 talked about for maybe hundreds of
4 years in New York -- also a new
5 elevated bridge from the bridges in
6 Brooklyn to the tunnels in New Jersey
7 would also prevent congestion and
8 raise tremendous amounts for mass
9 transit, another Robert Moses idea
10 that maybe, you know, maybe could come
11 to fruition.

12 If you definitely need more
13 money for transit, get it through the
14 federal government or raise taxes on
15 the people who can afford it.

16 This congestion plan is
17 ridiculous. It's just a redistributed
18 congestion price. After hearing the
19 seminar, I find it worse than what I
20 previously thought. Also what
21 percentage is the toll infrastructure
22 companies keeping for themselves? How
23 much money is being made on the
24 infrastructure -- who provide the
25 infrastructure and how many people on

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1 this panel are using mass transit on a
2 daily basis?

3 Thank you.

4 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

5 Our next speaker is K.C. Jones,
6 followed by Melva Smith.

7 Our next speaker is Melva Smith,
8 followed by Ronni Libertson.

9 Our next speaker is Ronni
10 Libertson, followed by 110th speaker
11 on the list, Rick Versace.

12 Our next speaker is Rick
13 Versace, followed by Darwin Keung.

14 Our next speaker is Darwin
15 Keung, followed by Michael Stanton.

16 Our next speaker is Michael
17 Stanton, followed by Ruth McDaniels.

18 MICHAEL STANTON: Good
19 afternoon. My name is Mike Stanton.
20 I'm a resident of White Plains, New
21 York. I'm a regular MetroNorth and
22 subway rider and a member of the Metro
23 North Rail Road Commuter Counsel.

24 I'm here to speak in support of
25 congestion pricing. In fact,

1 MetroNorth riders have many reasons to
2 support congestion pricing, including
3 critical upgrades to our signals,
4 stations, tracks and overall
5 commuters. Altogether 15 billion
6 dollars will be raised for critical
7 capital projects across the MTA
8 system. And for commuters who
9 transfer from the railroad to the
10 subway like me, we know that
11 improvements need to be made and the
12 system needs to be protected from the
13 impacts of more severe storms.

14 The longer we wait to build
15 these critical resiliency investments,
16 the more expensive they will become
17 and we risk worsening extreme weather
18 and disasters year after year.

19 Congestion pricing will help us
20 maintain our vital transit network for
21 generations to come.

22 Riders across the system will
23 benefit from the improvements that the
24 funding will bring, including
25 accessibility projects in stations in

1 the Bronx and Westchester, security
2 upgrades, new train cars, repairs to
3 Grand Central's tracks and platforms,
4 signal upgrades from Croton-Harmon to
5 Poughkeepsie and better service on the
6 Port Jervis line, not to mention the
7 four new stations coming online in the
8 Bronx through Penn Access that will
9 make MetroNorth more equitable.

10 After decades without major
11 improvements to the region's transit
12 system, we've begun to get a taste of
13 what's possible. From the Hudson
14 Yards extension to the 2nd Avenue
15 Subway and the imminent opening of
16 Grand Central Madison.

17 The MTA deserves credit for
18 building the internal capacity to
19 deliver these projects and it has
20 credibility when it speaks to riders
21 about the future. If the MTA is
22 forced to scale back its capital
23 program in the absence of congestion
24 pricing and loses that knowledge, we
25 risk spending more and getting less in

1 the long run.

2 A variety of opinions have and
3 will be heard today, including many
4 pleas for exemptions. But these
5 hearings are about whether congestion
6 pricing will accomplish the goals of
7 reducing traffic and increasing
8 mobility around the Central Business
9 District and raising one billion
10 dollars annually for the MTA's capital
11 program with no significant impact on
12 the environment.

13 With 90 percent of people
14 entering the CBD using transit,
15 walking or biking, congestion pricing
16 will improve the commutes and lives of
17 millions of New Yorkers and others
18 around the region.

19 The answer is a resounding yes
20 and a finding of no significant impact
21 is warranted.

22 Thank you.

23 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

24 Our next speaker is Ruth
25 McDaniels, followed by Darwin Keung.

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1 Our next speaker is Darwin
2 Keung, followed by Jackson Chabot.

3 Darwin, you may unmute yourself
4 and begin your remarks.

5 DARWIN KEUNG: Hi. Thank you.
6 Can you hear me?

7 MS. FLAX: Yes.

8 DARWIN KEUNG: Good afternoon.
9 My name is Darwin Keung, and I'm a
10 resident of Rockland County and a
11 Climate and Health Policy Analyst at
12 the Regional Transit Advocacy
13 Organization Tri-State Transportation
14 Campaign. We represent mass transit
15 riders throughout the Tri-State area.

16 I've testified in support of
17 congestion pricing in the past and
18 will continue to support it as a rider
19 and a driver who has spent his life
20 growing up in and around New York
21 City. For too long have people put up
22 with Manhattan's dangerous congestion
23 and for too long have we tried to
24 force a car-centric lifestyle in our
25 region in the densest city of our

1 nation.

2 We must incentivize employees to
3 enter the city not via private car but
4 with mass transit. It's clear from
5 the Environmental Assessment that
6 congestion pricing will reduce traffic
7 congestion. It is clear that we must
8 continue to invest in mass transit
9 options into other city throughout the
10 region and it's clear that mass
11 transit is the best way to travel for
12 physical and environmental health by
13 emitting less pollution and fewer
14 carbon emissions. Therefore, are we
15 at Tri-State the state and the city to
16 support the program's implementation.
17 With that said after review of the
18 recent Environmental Assessment, we
19 call on the city and state to swiftly
20 act to mitigate any potential negative
21 impacts that congestion pricing may
22 have on environmental justice
23 communities located in New York City's
24 outer boroughs.

25 We urge the MTA to be judicious

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1 in consideration of any discounts or
2 exemptions, as each exemptions would
3 be a less effective reduction of
4 potential traffic. More exemptions
5 can lead to increased traffic
6 diversions in areas surrounding the
7 Central Business District, including
8 increases along Cross Bronx and the
9 Staten Island Expressway. We urge the
10 MTA to carefully consider how to
11 mitigate and monitor any adverse
12 effects from changes in the traffic
13 patterns as it creates and implements
14 the final program.

15 This is imminently possible and
16 should not become a reason to stop
17 congestion pricing. Overall, we at
18 Tri-state strongly support
19 implementing congestion pricing in
20 combination with the swift
21 prioritization, the mitigation
22 measures in any areas identified to
23 have any potential negative impacts.

24 We also urge the MTA to work
25 with the regional partners to

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1 prioritize improving our mass transit
2 options, especially those west of the
3 Hudson River and the outer regions of
4 our metro area to make ensure that
5 congestion pricing is an effective and
6 equitable policy no matter where we
7 live. Thank you for your time.

8 MS. FLAX: Thank you. Our next
9 speaker is Jackson Chabot, followed by
10 Thomas Matte.

11 JACKSON CHABOT: Good afternoon.
12 My name is Jackson Chabot and I'm a
13 Brooklyn resident who works in the
14 Central Business District. I'm the
15 Director of Public Space Advocacy of
16 Open Plans, an over 30-year-old
17 non-profit dedicated to livable
18 streets.

19 I'm in full support of
20 congestion pricing and implementation
21 as soon as possible. It's quite
22 simple, cars do not make for a livable
23 city. They're loud, exhaust-spewing
24 death machines. Drivers behind the
25 wheel make selfish choices like

1 parking in crosswalks, running red
2 lights and more. All of which
3 threaten people simply trying to go
4 about their lives. The worst part is
5 that our systems continue to enable
6 this behavior.

7 We need to get vehicles off the
8 road and raise vital funds for the
9 MTA. I would like to highlight two
10 points regarding exemptions and the
11 need for electric buses to mitigate
12 any particular increase in
13 environmental justice communities.

14 First, if more exemptions are
15 allowed, higher toll rates will still
16 lead to a greater degree of traffic
17 reduction in the Manhattan Central
18 Business District, but will also lead
19 to increased traffic diversions,
20 including increases along the Cross
21 Bronx Expressway and the Staten Island
22 Expressway. I am strongly opposed to
23 any further exemptions.

24 Second, later this year when
25 electric buses are received in the

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1 MTA's next major procurement of
2 battery-electric buses, the MTA should
3 prioritize the Kingsbridge Depot and
4 the Gun Hill Depot, both located in
5 and serving primarily Environmental
6 Justice communities in Upper Manhattan
7 and the Bronx.

8 Our systems have prioritized
9 driving for too long and that has led
10 to public health crisis levels of
11 traffic violence and air quality.
12 This year continues to be as dangerous
13 as our record-breaking year, last
14 year. And we need to use every tool
15 to make New York City a safe livable
16 city.

17 We need congestion pricing now
18 with limited exemptions. Thank you.

19 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Thomas
21 Matte, followed by Vincent Argenziano.

22 Our next speaker is Vincent
23 Argenziano, followed by Rodrick Ruddle
24 Daley.

25 VINCENT ARGENZIANO: Hello.

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1 Thank you everyone for your time. I'm
2 Vincent Argenziano. I'm a Staten
3 Islander and I use both public and
4 private transportation.

5 I appreciate the presentation
6 you guys gave and I think we all
7 understand the need for the positive
8 impacts on traffic, environmental
9 impacts and investing in public
10 infrastructure transit. And I think
11 everyone in the city sees that
12 necessity in modernizing our public
13 transit.

14 But we're not talking about
15 these positive impacts equitably. I
16 keep hearing that these are benefits
17 for all, but this instead is a
18 situation where certain people that
19 are given the least amount of services
20 in the city are going to be forced to
21 pay for more improvements in areas
22 that receive the most.

23 You're asking us to get behind
24 this but how is this, in any way,
25 beneficial to Staten Island. There's

1 no public transportation out here for
2 you to modernize with the increased
3 revenue you're talking about and
4 there's no viable alternatives for us
5 to use to avoid paying the increased
6 revenue.

7 The scenario I outlined to you
8 is not new to Staten Island. We've
9 been facing a lack of transportation
10 options and we've been burdened with
11 tolls and fines on our cars for
12 decades. But this is now doubling
13 down on that. If your goal is to take
14 cars off the roads, then you're
15 failing here on Staten Island in every
16 single manner because in your own
17 presentation, you list that while we
18 provide just two percent of the cars
19 going into the Central Business
20 District, you're going to be diverting
21 more cars to the Staten Island
22 Expressway. So for every positive
23 that you've listed, less traffic, less
24 pollution, these are all going to be
25 negatives for us because we're going

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1 to have more traffic and more
2 pollution out here.

3 Now, I've done enough of these
4 hearings on different proposals to
5 know that we're never going to see
6 positive effects from this plan. But,
7 you know, just by looking at your own
8 plan for prioritizing equity in bus
9 service, you mentioned Queens, you
10 mentioned the Bronx and of course
11 there's no mention of Staten Island.

12 So instead what I'm here to do
13 is to ask that you try and minimize
14 the adverse effects that we're going
15 to be facing.

16 And I'm going to tell you how
17 that would be simple without even
18 asking for a direct exemption and
19 while I sympathize with boroughs who
20 talk about the lack of transit options
21 that they have, we're in an even more
22 unique situation. We already pay for
23 the toll to get off Staten Island on
24 the Verrazzano Bridge as we head into
25 Manhattan. It's incredibly high and

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1 one that for decades has been putting
2 money towards improvements already in
3 other boroughs. You know, this should
4 be accounted for in any plan that you
5 have for us. This plan should allow
6 for, you know, a similar program to a
7 transfer. One trip, one toll. Once
8 we pay on the Verrazzano Bridge, we no
9 longer should owe money for congestion
10 pricing. We've already paid our part,
11 we've been paying our part for years
12 and for years while we've been used as
13 a cash generator for tolls while every
14 other bridge has stayed at zero, we
15 want to be recognized for the part
16 that we had played over the years and
17 taken into consideration when -- by
18 not charging us double for congestion
19 pricing. So, thank you guys for your
20 time.

21 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

22 Our next speaker is Rodrick
23 Ruddle Daley, followed by Michael
24 Lavario.

25 Our next speaker is Michael

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1 Lavario, followed by Lucia Deng.

2 Our next speaker is Lucia Deng,
3 followed by 120th speaker on the list,
4 Martin Landsman.

5 Our next speaker is Martin
6 Landsman, followed by Devan Sipher.

7 Our next speaker is Devan
8 Sipher, followed by Steven Santangelo.

9 Devan Sipher.

10 DEVAN SIPHER: Hi. I'm trying
11 to get on and I guess it's not going
12 to happen but we'll go with audio.

13 MS. FLAX: We can hear you. You
14 may begin your remarks.

15 Devan, you may begin your
16 remarks.

17 DEVAN SIPHER: Hi. I shouldn't
18 be here. I shouldn't be alive. On
19 July 3, 2015, I was run over by double
20 decker bus that plowed into me when I
21 crossed 6th Avenue in Greenwich
22 Village on a green light in a
23 crosswalk. I spent three months in
24 the ICU with double digit surgeries
25 over the course of two years. One of

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1 my legs remains partially paralyzed.
2 But I'm one of the lucky crash
3 victims. The problem with traffic
4 violence is it's an equal opportunity
5 destroyer. It doesn't matter race,
6 class, sex, religion.

7 As a member of Families for Safe
8 Streets, I provided testimony on
9 behalf of the many thousands who
10 weren't as lucky as me. This year the
11 number of New Yorkers killed or maimed
12 in traffic crashes. It's the highest
13 it's been since the start of Vision
14 Zero a decade ago. This is despite an
15 overwhelming number of office
16 buildings remaining largely empty.
17 Yet, the numbers of cars on the roads
18 in Manhattan is already 90 percent of
19 what it was in 2019.

20 We're on track to have record
21 level congestion when more remote
22 workers return to their offices. And
23 that affects everyone, whether in
24 favor or opposed to congestion
25 pricing. We need to reduce traffic

1 and increase the use of public
2 transit. Congestion pricing is one of
3 the few tools with a proven record for
4 doing so, as well as a proven record
5 for reducing noise pollution and air
6 pollution and saving lives.

7 Any proposal has room for
8 improvement. Nighttime fees seem
9 particularly questionable, but
10 congestion pricing will make New York
11 more livable and it will save the
12 lives of New Yorkers.

13 As someone who nearly perished
14 on the streets here, I ask is there
15 anything more central to the world of
16 government.

17 Thank you for listening.

18 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

19 Our next speaker is Stephen
20 Santangelo, followed by Anmolpreet
21 Kandola.

22 Our next speaker is Anmolpreet
23 Kandola, followed by Neeta Vallab.

24 ANMOLPREET KANDOLA: Hi. I want
25 to thank you for convening this forum

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1 today. My name is Anmolpreet Kandola
2 and I was born and raised in Queens.

3 I went to middle and high school
4 by taking the MTA to Far Rockaway and
5 Manhattan. I was a first generation
6 college student who went to school in
7 the city and I currently work and live
8 in the Central Business District. My
9 father, Munder Singh, is a yellow cab
10 driver since 1988 and an owner
11 operator since '94.

12 I'll start by saying that I'm
13 proudly in support of a theoretical
14 plan to decrease congestion and
15 improving the rates of emissions which
16 harm the environment but only if it's
17 well thought out with regard to what
18 kinds of exemptions will prevent this
19 from being a huge burden on TLC
20 commission drivers and other
21 low-income citizens of the city.

22 To start, the MTA is already
23 funded by taxes on NYC residents as
24 already mentioned. For taxi riders,
25 there already exists a congestion tax

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1 of \$2.75 per ride and then an
2 additional MTA surcharge of 50 cents
3 per ride, which all goes to the MTA.
4 The socioeconomic conditions and the
5 composition of cab drivers in the city
6 has largely remained the same over
7 time. So to add additional taxes and
8 tolls will discourage an insane number
9 of riders, a figure which is already
10 decreasing due to recent hikes in
11 fares and hasn't recovered since
12 COVID, leading to a strong adverse
13 effect on their livelihoods.

14 No one is asking for a handout,
15 but if there's a class of vehicles you
16 should want to protect, it should be
17 those commercial vehicles that pay for
18 the right to be protected by the city
19 and that the city has specifically
20 sanctioned to provide these services
21 for its residents.

22 Additionally, by 2011 over one
23 third of the yellow cab vehicles were
24 already hybrid and almost entirely are
25 now; so it's not as emission-heavy.

1 Things should not be promised
2 for the goal of reducing private cars
3 in the city, a goal that I think most
4 can get behind. I'll quickly provide
5 a scenario that I don't think any of
6 the exemption plans account for
7 currently. Even if you place the
8 burden of a toll on passengers outside
9 a single toll per day, per driver, if
10 a taxi driver drops someone off in the
11 CBD and then goes outside of it, they
12 can't come back into the area without
13 a passenger. Otherwise, they'll have
14 to pay a toll just to find a fare.

15 It's fairly well-known that in
16 the mornings drivers drive people
17 outside the CBD into it and in the
18 afternoon and evenings, they drive
19 passengers from inside the CBD to
20 outside of it, which is when this toll
21 would hurt them as they return to the
22 CBD to pick up more passengers.

23 Likewise, income-based credits
24 should consider those who commute into
25 the city too because honestly how many

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1 people making under \$60,000 a year can
2 actually afford to live in the CBD
3 right now.

4 Finally, I am grateful to the
5 MTA and in full support of a clean,
6 safe and fast MTA. You can see what
7 these look like in cities like London
8 and Stockholm, but the MTA has not
9 shown they can effectively use the
10 budget they're given to complete tasks
11 on time, often taking many additional
12 years on projects over the last three
13 decades.

14 I think it's worth evaluating
15 and presenting exactly how this money
16 will be used because otherwise it
17 instills no confidence that this will
18 be any better than taxes that have
19 been levied in the past. Otherwise,
20 the net affect of this tax is that it
21 makes the CBD and NYC only livable for
22 the extremely wealthy for whom a tax
23 like this has no discernible impact on
24 their financial situation.

25 Thank you.

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1 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

2 Our next speaker is Neeta
3 Vallob, followed by our 125th speaker
4 on the list, Herbert Feuerstein.

5 Our next speaker is Neeta
6 Vallab.

7 NEETA VALLOB: Hi. Thank you
8 all for your presentation. I'm a
9 resident of the CBD and you know, in
10 the presentation one thing that became
11 clear is that there was really no
12 evaluation of how the plan impacts
13 those people who live in the district
14 and who may have cars because anyone
15 who has a car is not using it to
16 commute to 59th Street. My husband is
17 a healthcare worker who uses it to get
18 out to Flushing, Queens and then we
19 use it to take our kids to athletic
20 fields that are not located within our
21 district. So it seems like that's a
22 blind spot.

23 In general, we favor this. Our
24 streets are clogged with tour buses
25 that idle in front of schools, parks

1 and neighborhoods and livery drivers
2 who have just clogged our streets and
3 made them unlivable.

4 So what I've learned from the
5 last couple of hours is that there are
6 many people lobbying for carve-outs
7 for their neighborhoods and for their
8 boroughs and I would say that the
9 people who live down here deserve
10 cleaner air; our children deserve
11 cleaner air and safe streets. And
12 it's those factors are nothing that
13 people outside of this area are going
14 to benefit from. And so I hope that
15 that will not be forgotten as you guys
16 continue to revise the plan.

17 And with that, thank you very
18 much.

19 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Herbert
21 Feuerstein, followed by Faith
22 Zuckerman.

23 Our next speaker is Faith
24 Zuckerman, followed by Adam Phillips.

25 Our next speaker is Adam

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1 Phillips, followed by Alida Camp.

2 ADAM PHILLIPS: Hello. Can you
3 hear me?

4 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

5 ADAM PHILLIPS: Okay. My name
6 is Adam Phillips. I'm a Brooklyn
7 resident and I'm speaking today to
8 express support for an exemption to
9 congestion pricing for motorcycles and
10 mopeds.

11 I did not see an exemption for
12 motorcycles in any of the congestion
13 programs in your presentation but it
14 is important to note that the cities
15 that speakers have been referencing,
16 like London and Stockholm, that have
17 implemented similar pricing programs,
18 all have exemptions for motorcycles
19 and mopeds. So it's should be taken
20 serious, an exemption.

21 These cities have exemptions for
22 motorcycles because unlike other
23 exemptions that have been discussed,
24 exempting motorcycles and mopeds
25 actually furthers the goal of

1 congestion pricing, rather than
2 diluting them.

3 Offering a viable alternative
4 for single passenger vehicles in a way
5 that actually results in taking an
6 additional car off the road,
7 incentivizes people to seek
8 alternatives rather than just forcing
9 people who lack other options to pay a
10 fee without actually changing behavior
11 or congestion.

12 As expressed by other speakers,
13 this is especially important for the
14 large number of communities currently
15 underserved or not served at all by
16 public transit, who do not have viable
17 alternatives. Single passenger
18 vehicles are the most significant and
19 reducible source of congestion and I
20 support the efforts to reduce the
21 congestion, pollution and danger they
22 cause to the city.

23 Motorcycles are a viable
24 alternative for single passenger
25 vehicles, but they take up

1 substantially less road space and
2 street parking. They are considerably
3 less polluting and pose demonstrably
4 less danger to pedestrians.

5 Anyone incentivized to replace a
6 single passenger vehicle with a
7 motorcycle or moped substantially
8 reduces congestion without
9 necessitating further expansion or
10 burdening of an already overstretched
11 public transit system.

12 As many speakers have noted,
13 many residents do not have a viable
14 alternative to a single passenger
15 vehicle. So if there is no viable
16 alternative offered, like everything
17 else in a city that is already
18 prohibitively expensive, this
19 congestion tax simply becomes an
20 incidental convenience fee for the
21 rich and a punishment that is
22 unavoidable for everybody else.

23 I would like you to take the
24 example of London and Stockholm and
25 include an exemption for motorcycles

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1 and mopeds. Thank you.

2 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

3 Our next speaker is Alida Camp,
4 followed by Tom Kaczorowski.

5 Alida, you may begin your
6 remarks.

7 ALIDA CAMP: Thank you. Thank
8 you for hearing my testimony. My name
9 is Alida Camp. I'm a Co-Chair of CVA
10 Congestion Pricing Task Force and
11 Small Business Committee, but I'm
12 speaking individually.

13 There is no Manhattan Island
14 resident on the TMRB nor are we
15 guaranteed compliance with the Open
16 Meetings Law or -- these need to
17 change.

18 This plan is revenue plan, an
19 additional tax on New Yorkers at a
20 time that the city is just beginning
21 to emerge from the pandemic. We don't
22 know what it will be like in a few
23 years. We only know that our
24 residents, small businesses, taxis and
25 cultural organizations must thrive to

1 enable New York to thrive.

2 There are serious ancillary
3 effects of this plan that have
4 irresponsibly not been addressed. The
5 community north of the zone will be
6 affected by increased traffic that
7 circles looking for parking, rather
8 than going into the zone.

9 When London began their plan,
10 they created over 8,000 parking
11 spaces. Can anyone really predict
12 what will happen to the plan? We know
13 that traffic on Broadway Bridge
14 increased when the Henry Hudson Bridge
15 was tolled. The Times reported that
16 more office buildings are being
17 constructed in Brooklyn. What effect
18 will that have? What are the plans
19 for additional mass transit? How high
20 will the fee go if drivers stop
21 driving and take public
22 transportation.

23 Small businesses and cultural
24 institutions will be affected. The
25 bids are concerned about impact on

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1 their business through both the loss
2 of customers who will not pay the
3 increased fee on taxis, and the high
4 fees imposed on the trucks they need
5 to run their businesses.

6 Trucks can't avoid making
7 deliveries or picking up supplies
8 within the zone if that's where their
9 businesses are. But the large fee may
10 be too high for small businesses
11 already having financial difficulties
12 often from rent that has gone up.

13 Tourists unfamiliar with New
14 York's mass transit may prefer to take
15 taxis, but not with an extra fee.
16 Cultural institutions want visitors.
17 What happens when a taxi fee is
18 unaffordable and the ticket sales to
19 our treasured museums and theaters
20 slow down?

21 New York is already suffering
22 from a loss of those businesses that
23 make the city unique, that drive New
24 Yorkers and visitors to shop in
25 different neighborhoods. Why impose a

1 plan that could have such a negative
2 effect on these businesses and
3 restaurants without a plan to mitigate
4 those effects.

5 The plan is not about
6 congestion. If congestion mattered,
7 the city would eliminate or at least
8 crack down on placards and rethink the
9 stipulated parking fine and commercial
10 abatement programs, which foster
11 congestion from double parking even
12 when curbside space is available.

13 The plan is not about the
14 environment. If the environment
15 mattered, the city would look more
16 closely at the emissions the super
17 toll and other new construction create
18 because as Governor Hochul stated,
19 most emissions come from buildings.

20 It is not about furthering
21 community. If it were, the TMRB would
22 have a Manhattan Island rep, these
23 hearings would not have been held in
24 August with short notice and community
25 input would have been sought more to

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1 develop a program the community fully
2 supports. Instead, we're being
3 collectively penalized by being
4 required to pay fees to go towards the
5 MTA, the entity --

6 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
7 remarks.

8 ALIDA CAMP: -- counting finance
9 for finances. Reinstate the commuter
10 tax, impose --

11 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker is Tom
13 Kaczorowski, followed by Marc
14 Kirschner.

15 TOM KACZOROWSKI: Hi. Can you
16 hear me?

17 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

18 TOM KACZOROWSKI: Okay. Great.
19 Thanks.

20 For the past 20 years, my wife
21 and I have lived in the CBD, in the
22 Hell's Kitchen neighborhood. All that
23 time we've owned a car and paid for a
24 monthly parking garage in our
25 neighborhood within the CBD.

1 We both strongly support
2 congestion pricing and feel it's
3 overdue. We recognize that having our
4 nine year-old, below-average priced
5 car in Manhattan is a luxury so we're
6 willing to pay a re-entry fee to the
7 CBD once per day when we use our car.

8 We are concerned about
9 additional charges for residents who
10 pay for a monthly garage. If I
11 understand correctly from the box on
12 Executive Summary page ES10, any
13 parked overnight in the CBD would also
14 be charged when it leaves the zone.

15 I think CBD residents should
16 only be charged when we enter or
17 return to the zone. This is because
18 the cost of parking is becoming
19 prohibitive. We have the Resident
20 Parking Tax exemption, which really
21 helps. Perhaps there could be a
22 similar exit fee exemption for
23 residents who park monthly.

24 Documentation notes a tax credit
25 for individuals with adjusted gross

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1 income of 60K. You please include in
2 the documentation the income limits
3 for households that are married filing
4 jointly.

5 Regarding taxis and the
6 overwhelming number of FHV's, in
7 addition to the plan outlined on
8 Executive Summary page ES14, I think
9 riders could pay a surcharge, perhaps
10 a dollar or two for any ride
11 originating within the zone. This
12 would mean more revenue for the MTA,
13 it might encourage the use public
14 transportation and it would help
15 drivers with a daily non-passenger
16 entrance charge. I also think yellow
17 cabs should be favorably considered
18 over FHV's.

19 We're wondering about the
20 expectation of congestion, increase on
21 the West Side Highway and the FDR and
22 what the response would be if these
23 roads become overwhelmed by drivers
24 trying to avoid fees, and lastly,
25 regarding motorcycles and quality of

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1 life and noise pollution.

2 Please set and enforce exhaust
3 decibel limits for all vehicles,
4 including motorcycles, cars and
5 trucks, which often run with loud
6 exhausts and open headers.

7 Thank you.

8 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

9 Our next speaker is Marc
10 Kirschner, followed by Alana Wilson.

11 The next speaker is Alana
12 Wilson, followed by Md Muzir Uddin.

13 The next speaker is Md Muzir
14 Uddin, followed by Roshnie Kewal.

15 Our next speaker is Roshnie
16 Kewal, followed by Marco Hemken.

17 The next speaker is Marco
18 Hemken, followed by Alex Weinberg.

19 MARCO HEMKEN: Hello. Can you
20 hear me?

21 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.
22 Please proceed.

23 MARCO HEMKEN: Thank you. My
24 name is Marco Hemkin.

25 Congestion pricing will be a

1 major win for the vast majority of NYC
2 residents who do not use a car.
3 Please do not buckle when the small
4 minority of car owners complain this
5 is unfair. The situation has been
6 unfair to all of us who don't own cars
7 since the 1920s.

8 Driving into the CBD is an
9 antisocial choice with many negative
10 externalities for those of us who
11 choose a different mode. With this in
12 mind, I'd like to share three opinions
13 with you:

14 Number one, there is a lot of
15 talk about exemptions but nothing
16 about charging the most antisocial
17 drivers a fee beyond the regular
18 congestion rate. Examples of such
19 vehicles are large, private,
20 low-occupancy vehicles, such as sports
21 utility vehicles and pick-up trucks.
22 These vehicles are more likely to kill
23 pedestrians and cyclists, they pollute
24 more and they take up more space.
25 Please consider adding a premium to

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1 these vehicles above and beyond the
2 regular congestion rates.

3 Number two: Exemptions should
4 be kept to a minimum. People who have
5 built their lives around motor
6 vehicles need to understand that their
7 choice affects everyone else. Their
8 convenience is everyone else's poor
9 air quality, poor noise conditions,
10 walking across poorly maintained
11 parking lots et cetera, et cetera.

12 Number three: Please take every
13 precaution to avoid pushing traffic to
14 communities that have had a historical
15 adverse impact of traffic plan. Part
16 of the reason we're in this mess in
17 the first place is due to the very
18 racist, very classless, car eccentric
19 projects of the Robert Moses era.

20 Thank very much for your time.

21 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

22 The next speaker is Alex
23 Weinberg, followed by Danny Sena.

24 Alex, if you unmute yourself you
25 can proceed with your comment.

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1 Alex, you're on mute.

2 Alex, we can't hear you if
3 you're speaking.

4 Our next speaker is Danny Sena,
5 followed by Michael Huarachi.

6 Our next speaker is Michael
7 Huarachi, followed by Jacqueline Cruz.

8 Michael, take yourself off mute
9 and you'll be able to proceed with
10 your comments.

11 MICHAEL HUARACHI: Hi. Thank
12 you for your time, I really appreciate
13 it. You know, I grew up as a kid in
14 New Jersey -- don't tell anybody --
15 thinking that this is the best country
16 in the world, blah, blah, blah, first
17 grade; only later to move into New
18 York City in my 20s, been here 18
19 years, and the Central Business
20 District for the full 18 years to
21 realize that we're actually living in
22 a third-world country.

23 Everything from healthcare to
24 education to transportation is third
25 rate. I've been fortunate enough to

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1 work for a transportation company that
2 permits me to travel and see other
3 places, destinations, parts of the
4 world.

5 There are plenty of wonderful
6 things about the city and our country.
7 Unfortunately, we have privatized the
8 heck out of almost every sector of our
9 country and it is time to take back
10 control.

11 The fossil fuel industry has
12 invested billions, if not trillions,
13 of dollars into decimating our
14 environment, our world and our health.
15 It is time to take back our public
16 space and take back our
17 transportation.

18 There's no reason that it should
19 take me over two hours to get from JFK
20 to City Center. Every other
21 industrialized country in Western
22 Europe, has top of the line
23 transportation from the airport to the
24 City Center for less than three euros.

25 I think that it would behoove us

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1 to look into expanding the congestion
2 pricing program. No exemptions, no
3 caps, no carve-outs. Make it as quick
4 as possible. I think these Community
5 Board Hearings do more damage than
6 good. I still intend on going to
7 plenty of my community board hearings.
8 I'm very involved in my community.

9 When it comes to this
10 progressive policy, the first in the
11 nation, I think it behooves everybody
12 on the panel, everybody in this room,
13 to understand that it is going to be
14 the first in the country and it's
15 great that we're doing it. But we
16 need to do it fast and we need to do
17 it wholesome.

18 No exemptions, no carve-outs, no
19 caps. The biggest thing that we lost
20 in the city was probably Andy Byford
21 and Dr. Oxiris Barbot the Department
22 of Health and Mental Hygiene. I think
23 we have to think about where
24 11 billion dollars is being spent and
25 stop criminalizing poverty --

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1 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
2 your remarks.

3 MICHAEL HUARACHI: --
4 quote-unquote, turnstile jumpers.
5 Thank you.

6 MR. WOJNAR: The next speaker is
7 Jacqueline Cruz, followed by Debra
8 Wevers.

9 JACQUELINE CRUZ: Hello.

10 MR. WOJNAR: Please proceed.

11 JACQUELINE CRUZ: Okay. So I'm
12 a native Manhattanite who lives uptown
13 and my parents live Downtown.

14 My mom cannot walk very far due
15 to falling on a New York City street
16 and shattering her kneecap many years
17 ago so I hope the plan does include
18 some kind of discount for people that
19 have to drive due to disabilities.

20 I'm not here today to talk about
21 whether this is a good plan or a good
22 idea or not; I personally don't think
23 it is. And all remarks made today
24 have some bit of validity to them so,
25 you know, that's a good thing. But

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1 from previous public hearings, I know
2 that this is just procedural and my or
3 our opinions will probably not change
4 any decisions that have been made.

5 So instead I want to address a
6 few concerns. I want to ask for
7 promises from all involved that this
8 project will not turn into a bigger
9 money grab than is being proposed
10 already. It seems like every time
11 either the MTA or the DOT, somebody
12 falls short, then they always turn to
13 us, the people that live in New York
14 or around New York for extra money and
15 that has to stop.

16 I'm really afraid that once this
17 goes into effect, within a year
18 someone will go back and say, "You
19 know, there's not enough revenue
20 coming in so we need to increase the
21 amount that's being charged".

22 It just seems like every time
23 there's a shortfall or projections and
24 a need for more money, the instinct is
25 to come to the Bank of the People --

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1 me -- and we cannot continue to be the
2 bailout plan any longer.

3 For me, I get one salary, I'll
4 be totally honest. This year we
5 weren't able to go away on vacation
6 because, again, I get one salary and
7 everything is more expensive. But I
8 can't go to my boss and say you need
9 to pay me more money and I think
10 somewhere along the line, there has to
11 be a guardrail so that it doesn't keep
12 coming to us that you need more money.

13 So as it is, the MTA, every time
14 they need more money, everything goes
15 up. As a matter of fact, we all have
16 to go into the office now because the
17 MTA needs more money. I had the
18 perfect work-life balance. I was home
19 when my kids got home from school, I
20 was able to cook, I was able to be a
21 part their everyday life. Now, we
22 have to go back into the office
23 because the mayor says the MTA needs
24 more money, I got to get you back into
25 the office and all of that.

1 So what I would like, what I
2 want in return for this plan you are
3 proposing is, I need a promise that
4 once this goes into effect, five to
5 seven years, no more capital
6 improvement programs. I need to see
7 something finished. I need the money
8 that goes into this to go into
9 projects that are started already so
10 that we, as New Yorkers, can finally
11 see something finished.

12 Also in my estimate, whatever
13 you think you're going to get, cut by
14 a third because less people are going
15 to be coming in. And please don't
16 estimate high because you're not going
17 get all that money and I don't want
18 you to come back to us and ask for
19 more. Thank you.

20 MR. WOJNAR: Next speaker is
21 Debra Wevers, followed by Ray Dries.

22 Our next speaker, the 140th to
23 sign up, is Ray Dries, followed by
24 Michelle Grossman.

25 The next speaker is Michelle

1 Grossman, followed by Harriet Black.

2 MICHELLE GROSSMAN: Hi. I live
3 in the CBD. I am for the environment
4 and reducing congestion. But I am
5 against the current congestion pricing
6 plans.

7 Today I will speak to concerns
8 around the impact to those who must
9 drive into or out of the CBD for work,
10 which by the way, is not me but this
11 is my care for those who work in the
12 community I am a resident of.

13 With congestion pricing being a
14 potential \$23 charge per day, that can
15 add up to over \$8,000 a year. Even if
16 someone drives to work say five days a
17 week for 46 weeks a year, that is
18 still over \$5,000 a year.

19 This is obviously life changing
20 for people. You know that. Your
21 report says it. Your report notes the
22 following options for these workers:

23 Option 1: Commute into the CBD
24 and incur the toll.

25 Option 2: Switch modes to a

1 non-vehicular option before entering
2 the CBD.

3 Option 3: Seek new employment
4 opportunities or a different location
5 with the same employer that would not
6 involve incurring the toll.

7 Option 4: Relocate your place
8 of residence in the Manhattan CBD.

9 Option 5: Telecommute.

10 How out of touch with reality
11 can those options be? Many of these
12 professions were talking about our
13 essential workers, like healthcare
14 workers, the very people we hailed as
15 heros and clapped and cheered for
16 every night during the early days in
17 the pandemic. We're now sticking them
18 with this cost burden of thousands of
19 dollars a year for the privilege of
20 coming to work.

21 I tried to speak to people who
22 work at NYU Langone Hospital last week
23 about their thoughts and they simply
24 don't have time to be focused on or
25 concerned about things like this.

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1 That's what elected officials are for,
2 to be focused on and concerned about
3 things like this and how it would
4 impact people, businesses and other
5 operations in their jurisdiction.

6 To an extent, that's what the
7 government agencies are for too, to
8 take care of the very people they
9 serve. I spoke to a doorman last week
10 who is distraught. He will need to
11 tack on two hours to his commute each
12 way and won't be able to drive with
13 equipment in that he uses for side
14 gigs, like window cleaning and
15 painting for residents. His extra
16 time commuting is time he will not be
17 spending with his wife or six year-old
18 daughter.

19 There are so many other
20 professional impacts, like MTA workers
21 and government officials who -- who --
22 it would be downright corrupt if they
23 get exemptions and no one else does.

24 I am so glad that Paul Rizzo,
25 club owner of The Bitter End, spoke

1 earlier to the impact to restaurant
2 and bar workers and the live music
3 scene in the CBD. Please take his
4 testimony seriously and truly
5 understand the impact this will have
6 to the actual people that make a
7 living in the CBD, as well as the
8 residents in the CBD, who won't have
9 any more services because no one can
10 afford to work or have a business.

11 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
12 your remarks.

13 MICHELLE GROSSMAN: Thank you.

14 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

15 Our next speaker is Harriet
16 Black, followed by Frank Turzio.

17 Our next speaker is Fran Turzio,
18 followed by Nickya Whittington.

19 Our next speaker is Nickya
20 Whittington, followed by Sarah
21 McHenry.

22 Our next speaker is Sarah
23 McHenry, followed by Eric Sanders.

24 Our next speaker is Eric
25 Sanders, followed by Md Hussain.

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1 Our next speaker is Md Hussain,
2 followed by Jack Drury.

3 Our next speaker is Jack Drury,
4 followed by Ryanne Milligan.

5 Our next speaker is Ryanne
6 Milligan, followed by Mark Friedman.

7 Our next speaker is Mark
8 Friedman, followed by Steve Flack.

9 Mark Friedman.

10 Our next speaker is Steve Flack,
11 followed by Reilly Owens.

12 Our next speaker is Reilly
13 Owens, followed by Lawrence Lipman.

14 Our next speaker is Lawrence
15 Lipman, followed by Lionel Morales.

16 Our next speaker is Lionel
17 Morales, followed by Alison Glestein.

18 Our next speaker, the 156th to
19 sign up, is Alison Glestein, followed
20 by Walter Iwachiw.

21 Alison, be sure to unmute
22 yourself then proceed with your
23 remarks.

24 Once you're off mute, you can
25 proceed.

1 Alison, we'll come back if
2 you're able to solve your audio
3 issues.

4 Our next speaker is Walter
5 Iwachiw, followed by Vincent Novak.

6 Our next speaker is Vincent
7 Novak, followed by Yvette Banks.

8 Vincent, be sure to unmute
9 yourself before you speak.

10 VINCENT NOVAK: Hello. Can you
11 hear me now?

12 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.
13 Please proceed.

14 Okay. Thank you. My name is
15 Vincent Novak. I moved to Soho. I'm
16 a life-long New Yorker. I'm a
17 widower, a retiree, a 9/11 responder
18 with cancer.

19 I have a car, and please don't
20 confuse residents such as myself with
21 commuters. My car means I can go surf
22 fishing, it means I can visit family
23 and friends Upstate and South Jersey
24 and out on Eastern Long Island where
25 mass transit or public transit would

1 take me half a day to get to and I
2 would have to book a night, which does
3 not work for me.

4 A car means my independence so
5 please don't make that more expensive
6 for me to keep as a retiree on a
7 pension. And what would work for me,
8 is what I haven't heard you guys talk
9 about is promoting EV cars or hybrids.
10 If you created municipal parking with
11 affordable EV charging and parking
12 prices, I would trade in my Nissan in
13 a minute for an EV. And if you had
14 resident-only parking on side streets,
15 that would help traffic too, if you're
16 concerned about traffic in Soho.

17 There's side effects to your
18 cure. Trucks will start delivering at
19 night. When they do that, especially
20 in the winter, diesel trucks have to
21 keep their engines running to keep the
22 fuel liquid otherwise, diesel fuel
23 will gel. So they would have to park
24 in the middle of the street because of
25 all the restaurant sheds, cabs will

1 get behind them and start honking
2 their horns at 3:00 in the morning.
3 It's already noisy enough in this
4 neighborhood, we don't need that.

5 People will pay the tolls
6 because they want their cars. They
7 still feel unsafe on the subways. And
8 as soon as there is another COVID
9 outbreak or flu outbreak or another
10 attack on somebody, they will stick to
11 their cars, still pay the tolls. You
12 guys will make money, but here's what
13 will happen. As businesses increase
14 their overhead because of the tolls,
15 even if it's only five percent, it's
16 passed along to the consumer as a ten
17 or 15 percent increase.

18 They use that as a -- so I
19 really want you to rethink this whole
20 thing. It's pretty convoluted and I'm
21 all for less congestion but not the
22 way you guys are doing it.

23 Thank you.

24 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

25 Our next speaker is Yvette

1 Banks, followed by Vittorio Bugatti.

2 Our next speaker, the 160th to
3 sign up, Vittorio Bugatti, followed by
4 Dario Gutierrez.

5 VITTORIO BUGATTI: Good
6 afternoon. I'm Vittorio Bugatti,
7 leader and founder of the Express Bus
8 Advocacy Group, which focuses on
9 improving express bus service in the
10 outer boroughs and subway deserts.

11 Congestion pricing, in theory,
12 is plausible in terms of improving air
13 quality and our environment. However,
14 this plan is terribly flawed,
15 particularly from the transportation
16 perspective, as it does not address
17 transit inequities such as --
18 especially in outer boroughs where we
19 have subway deserts that are two-fare
20 zones and offers very few transit
21 discounts aside from City Ticket from
22 Metro North and LIRR commute within
23 city borders.

24 There are zero discounts in this
25 plan for express bus commuters like

1 myself, and outer borough residents of
2 Riverdale. I currently pay \$13.50
3 round trip when traveling to and from
4 Manhattan with the express bus, a cost
5 that is almost triple that of a
6 round-trip subway ride. Where is our
7 transit discount in subway deserts on
8 Staten Island, Queens, Brooklyn and
9 the Bronx?

10 There are vague promises of
11 infrastructure improvement and no
12 specifics about what outer borough
13 residents can expect. Does that mean
14 subway expansion outside of Manhattan?
15 There has been none in the outer
16 boroughs in decades. This plan
17 provides fails to provide any
18 increases to the span of frequency of
19 transit service. In some cases
20 congestion pricing could be
21 implemented with cuts of bus service.
22 Every bus redesign that has been
23 released by the MTA has initially
24 proposed service cuts to express bus
25 service including the latest draft

1 plan for Queens and yet, congestion
2 pricing is supposed to incentivize
3 transit use -- an oxymoron to say the
4 least.

5 The MTA has struggled over the
6 last several years to provide
7 scheduled bus and train service on a
8 daily basis, despite receiving
9 billions in federal funding
10 specifically to keep said-service
11 running. A scathing report from the
12 Daily News noted that MTA managers
13 were ordered to leave dozens of bus
14 trips unfilled when bus operators
15 called out sick or go on vacation.

16 How can we trust the MTA to get
17 its fiscal house in order when it has
18 failed to address rampant fare-feeding
19 to the tune of over one billion
20 dollars in the last four years alone.
21 With everything I've noted, it's easy
22 to understand why many people are
23 skeptical of this plan.

24 Express bus commuters deserve
25 better from congestion pricing. I

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1 aggressively advocated to the City
2 Comptroller's office over several
3 months to have express bus service
4 citywide audited last year and I
5 implore all elected officials
6 listening to these hearings to ensure
7 that language is included that
8 requires accountability from the MTA
9 via quarterly audits of all service to
10 see exactly how this public authority
11 is performing.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

14 Our next speaker is Dario
15 Gutierrez, followed by Mark Friedman.

16 Our next speaker is Mark
17 Friedman, followed by Larry Zogby.

18 MARK FRIEDMAN: Hi. Thank you
19 for having me.

20 I did want to mention that one
21 area in environment impact that's been
22 avoided is the area of the Upper West
23 Side, which is exactly adjacent to the
24 area south of us. There is one
25 mention about parking and I'm glad to

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1 talk about that with you because it's
2 a good example of how the Upper West
3 Side has been airbrushed out of having
4 any environmental impacts. If you
5 take a look at the assessment document
6 itself, it talks about there is
7 potential that CBD would increase
8 parking demand immediately in the
9 neighborhood just north of the
10 Manhattan CBD boundary, the Upper West
11 Side, but then proceeds to airbrush it
12 away by saying that since there's
13 going to be a reduction in traffic
14 through there, through our
15 neighborhood, there's going to be a
16 reduction in parking requirements,
17 which that's an assumption that just
18 doesn't hold water.

19 There's going to be fewer cars
20 coming through it, but every one of
21 those cars is going to be tolled \$15
22 to \$23 or some amount of toll yet to
23 be determined. So they're going to be
24 desperate in response.

25 Using a rationale to avoid

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1 having to do any mitigation for the
2 Upper West Side, it isn't really fair
3 to us. If I were to say what would be
4 fairer would be a look into a
5 residential parking permit, which
6 would enable the people on the Upper
7 West Side to continue life
8 semi-normally and avoid even further
9 congestion because cars will just stop
10 coming through the Upper West Side to
11 get into the CBD looking for a parking
12 spot.

13 It's a little annoying that
14 there is -- in that statement,
15 Environment Assessment, that
16 whitewashes out the environmental
17 impact and does not include any
18 mitigation for the people who are
19 going to be affected most.

20 The focus seems to be on
21 Metro-North and Connecticut, I could
22 tell you you didn't need to study
23 that. You need to just study what's
24 going to happen on the other side of
25 the toll booth. You put a toll booth

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1 in, plenty happens right next to it.

2 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
3 your remarks.

4 MARK FRIEDMAN: So I would
5 appreciate if you took a look that and
6 included some mitigation. The
7 residential parking was always a
8 long-time --

9 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

10 Our next speaker is Larry Zogby,
11 followed by Gwen Davis.

12 LARRY ZOGBY: Good afternoon.
13 My name is Larry Zogby. I'm the
14 President of the New York State
15 Messenger and Courier Association.
16 We're a not-for-profit that works to
17 advance the interest of couriers with
18 advocacy, education and networking
19 since 1945.

20 During the pandemic, it's not an
21 exaggeration to say delivery workers
22 kept our city running. Every day
23 couriers are traveling in and out of
24 the CBD zone for stat and one-off
25 critical deliveries. These deliveries

1 include, but are not limited to,
2 medication, lab results, specimen,
3 medical supplies, needles, groceries,
4 critical parts and more.

5 On behalf of the New York State
6 Messenger Courier Association and on
7 behalf of my company, RDS Same-Day
8 Delivery, I oppose the congestion
9 pricing proposal for the following:

10 The impact of the tolling
11 program to the delivery workers in and
12 out of the CBD Zone will warn off
13 staff deliveries, has the
14 opportunities for whiplash unintended
15 consequences and more casualties, more
16 small business will shudder and we
17 will lose more jobs.

18 Delivery workers are the
19 backbone of our service industry and
20 our economy. We need more research
21 and development, data points,
22 analytics to be more thoughtful and
23 more deliberate on how we come to a
24 resolution for the in-and-out of the
25 zone for emergency deliveries that

1 happens seven days per week.

2 In conclusion, the toll program,
3 the CBD Toll Program, will prejudice
4 businesses at a time that is most
5 challenging and critical for them to
6 survive. For example, I, myself, have
7 a same day messenger service. For the
8 first six months of 2022, my company
9 has been in and out of that zone
10 13,000 times performing one-off
11 critical deliveries.

12 As I looked at the Executive
13 Summary on page ES 11, I see that they
14 could charge small vehicles, not
15 trucks, small vehicles, vans, \$12 to
16 \$65. I took an average number in the
17 middle, \$38.50, ran the numbers, six
18 months it would cost my company over
19 \$500,000 in tolls. Run the table for
20 one year, over \$1,000,000 in tolls.
21 And here's a very important factor,
22 you can't amortize that over other
23 customers because we're in and out;
24 medical scripts, everything that I
25 said before. We're in and out of that

1 zone for critical deliveries.

2 I believe it's our moral
3 responsibility as civic and business
4 leaders to avoid making choices that
5 compound the challenges for our local
6 businesses, especially those
7 businesses that enabled our city to
8 weather the most challenging days of
9 the pandemic.

10 I implore the decision makers to
11 put this program on hold until our
12 economy is in a more stable position
13 and other less punitive measures are
14 fully considered. Thank you very
15 much.

16 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

17 Our next speaker is Gwen Davis,
18 followed by Rhoda S.

19 Our next speaker is Rhoda S,
20 followed by our 165th speaker to sign
21 up, Donna Steele.

22 Our next speaker is Donna
23 Steele, followed by Ron Simoncini.

24 Our next speaker is Ron
25 Simoncini, followed by McIntyre

1 Aleusledain.

2 Our next speaker is McIntyre
3 Aleusledain, followed by Andrew S.

4 Our next speaker is Andrew S,
5 followed by Kathryn Sullivan.

6 Our next speaker is Kathryn
7 Sullivan, followed by Travis St.
8 Marthe.

9 Kathryn, you may proceed.

10 KATHRYN SULLIVAN: Hi. My name
11 is Kathryn Sullivan. I live in the
12 Central Business District, which is
13 actually a residential area.

14 Firstly, I think that the
15 Central Business District should be
16 actually somewhere Midtown and down
17 between the World Trade Center and
18 Wall Street down the Battery.

19 I think half of Manhattan is a
20 little odd considering how residential
21 my neighborhood is and the lack of
22 congestion on the Lower East Side; and
23 also the lack of MTA options over
24 here. There are not any trains for
25 most of this side of Manhattan.

1 I'm all for the environment. If
2 you look at what happened in London,
3 which a lot of people are mentioning,
4 it's a much smaller zone and there are
5 incentives for electric vehicles so at
6 this point all of the FedEx and UPS
7 trucks in that zone are actually
8 electric. And if your vehicle is
9 electric, you don't pay as much of the
10 toll. This, I think, would actually
11 benefit the environment as opposed to
12 just taxing every single vehicle no
13 matter what -- and encourage EV
14 purchases and upgrades with
15 incentives.

16 If you're going to do this, I
17 think you need to fix the transit
18 system first. It's so dangerous, it's
19 plagued with interruptions especially
20 on the weekends. Also, if you work in
21 any of the major hospitals, which are
22 all in Manhattan, a lot of those
23 nurses get off at 4:00, 5:00 in the
24 morning and the subway is just not an
25 option because of safety and also

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1 because you work a long shift, you
2 don't want to sit in a hot subway and
3 wait. Why shouldn't they be able to
4 drive in? There's no congestion at
5 that time.

6 A lot of people that work in
7 Manhattan need to bring goods into
8 Manhattan for their employment. I
9 think a lot of businesses, including
10 the business that I operate, are
11 already talking about moving out of
12 the city if this goes through. So if
13 you want to shoot a film or a video or
14 a commercial, why would you do it in
15 New York City if all of your workers
16 have to pay these tolls that are going
17 to get passed on to you?

18 Speaking of passing on, all of
19 these delivery trucks that pay these
20 tolls are going to charge more to the
21 grocer, who's going to charge more to
22 the New Yorker. So at the end of the
23 day, this is just not thought out as a
24 way to help people to live here and
25 the MTA, of all companies, has shown

1 that they're corrupt, they don't know
2 how to budget, they're already forcing
3 engineering consultants to take ten
4 percent reductions on fees and still
5 can't balance their budget. The
6 engineer and consulting industry is
7 barely profiting and because of Janno
8 Lieber's business practices, they
9 still are taxing motorists to pay
10 their unrealistic pensions. And in
11 fact, motorists already pay tolls and
12 these should go to roads and bridges
13 and the subway and train fare should
14 go to fixing your MTA subway.

15 I think if someone --

16 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
17 your remarks.

18 KATHRYN SULLIVAN: -- and God
19 bless the restaurants in Midtown that
20 are going to lose all their customers
21 because that's what going to happen.

22 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

23 The next speaker, 170th to sign
24 up, Travis St. Marthe, followed by
25 John Burns.

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1 TRAVIS ST. MARTHE: How you
2 doing? I'm Travis St. Marthe. I am
3 here. I'm from the Bronx, I'm a
4 driver, I walk around and everything
5 and it's a whole community problem.

6 I'm not for congestion pricing
7 under the current proposal because it
8 looks like a money grab. I understand
9 the need for less congestion but we
10 are doing nothing to mitigate the
11 problems of traffic and pedestrians we
12 already have.

13 I will agree to a different
14 proposal on congestion pricing if, and
15 only if, you address a few things,
16 which everyone in this city will
17 probably agree on. Instead of
18 pointing the fingers, I offer
19 solutions.

20 Construction projects, they are
21 taking too long. The interchange for
22 I-78 and the Jackie Robinson has been
23 going on for pretty much my entire
24 life and I've lived in the city for 37
25 years. It has been going on too long,

1 it's never-ending. We have to move
2 our guys -- more guys into these
3 bigger projects and have them done in
4 less time.

5 The roads are terrible. We pave
6 the roads every once in a while just
7 about every two years. Con Edison
8 comes in, they'll do their job and
9 then when they repave the roads, it's
10 terrible. They do a worse job than
11 when the city comes in and do it
12 themselves.

13 The flow of traffic lights, we
14 need to look at the flow of traffic
15 lights because if you're making a left
16 turn into an intersection, some of
17 these places don't have lights for
18 these left-turn cars to make
19 intersections and then, they're stuck
20 in the middle, which causes more
21 congestion.

22 Double parking, double parking
23 is a massive problem in the city and
24 it's going on way too long and ever
25 since the pandemic, you're seeing more

1 and more cars double parked around the
2 street. And some of these cars,
3 especially during high traffic hours,
4 they're throttling main arteries of
5 every single roadway.

6 I understand some people need to
7 pick up their grandparents or pick up
8 food or whatever, but you're doing
9 everybody else a disservice. I get
10 it, nobody want cars in the city, but
11 we need to address other problems
12 first before we start asking people
13 for more money.

14 The MTA had spent 30 million
15 dollars for tiles, colored tiles, in
16 eight Chelsea tunnels, six billion
17 dollars for three train stations on
18 the East Side, 11 billion for Grand
19 Central/Madison, and 14 billion
20 dollars for the Gateway Access
21 Project.

22 You guys have the money and yet
23 you're coming for our pockets. You
24 guys need to figure out what you're
25 doing and where you're spending this

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1 money and spend it wisely. Then, you
2 can ask for more money and maybe we'll
3 be like okay but if we know you guys
4 are going to waste it, there's no
5 reason in asking us for the money. Go
6 to the federal government. We've
7 already given them that money and you
8 can get it from there.

9 If you want -- I've given you
10 guys tips, look at those first. I
11 want to see double parking get rid of.
12 That will eliminate all of the
13 problems that we have. Thank you.

14 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

15 Our next speaker is John Burns,
16 followed by Jorge Urena.

17 Our next speaker is Jorge Urena,
18 followed by Christopher Davids.

19 Our next speaker is Christopher
20 Davids, followed by Patrick Johnson.

21 Our next speaker is Patrick
22 Johnson, followed by Zaheer Nota.

23 PATRICK JOHNSON: How you doing?
24 Can you hear me?

25 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

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1 PATRICK JOHNSON: Well, Central
2 Business District, we've heard from
3 the residents of these other
4 residential areas, Peter Cooper
5 Village, StuyTown and you got
6 residents in Chelsea, West Village,
7 East Village, all these people have
8 cars; and it's just ridiculous, this
9 whole thing.

10 I'm calling -- obviously, all my
11 comments these past few meetings are
12 for the Zero Action Alternative. This
13 is for the federal government so they
14 know -- Zero Action Alternative.

15 I don't know how -- the MTA's
16 presentation that in the beginning
17 they said there was -- they didn't
18 have any comprehensive plan. I mean,
19 if we got some talented people, we
20 could create a plan and work with what
21 we have.

22 I mean, we can't depend on New
23 York City DOT. Look what's going on,
24 I mean, come on, we can't depend on
25 them and the federal government. The

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1 federal government should not let this
2 plan go forward for what they're doing
3 to Staten Island. We have the longest
4 commutes in the country, we have no
5 choice. And some days -- because the
6 survey says, what, 20,000 people drive
7 into the CBD in Manhattan. Some of us
8 work in different places every day in
9 New York City. Sometimes I go to the
10 Bronx, sometimes I go to Brooklyn,
11 some days in Queens and some days in
12 Manhattan, it is what it is. And all
13 day, all night, it doesn't matter;
14 like the Postal Service, rain or shine
15 day and night.

16 I mean, I keep hearing the open
17 streets people in here, the
18 transportation alternatives, send your
19 messages in the comments. We know you
20 hate cars, we know you're scared of
21 them, but there's so many good car
22 drivers out there that it's -- you
23 give us zero respect, none. I'm tired
24 of it. I'm tired of hearing about it.
25 No respect for the millions of car

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1 drivers out there who do the right
2 thing. Because of the minority who
3 cause these crashes and deaths, we all
4 got to suffer. It's unbelievable.

5 The MTA finished the L Train in
6 one year or whatever. They said it
7 was going to take three years. How
8 did they do it before congestion
9 pricing? How did they do it? I just
10 drove down Wythe Avenue today and Kent
11 over there where they had the new
12 stations. It's beautifully done. The
13 situation's over.

14 Staten Island has one train.
15 It's like you're being on the Staten
16 Island Ferry when you go on. And I
17 encourage everybody to ride the Staten
18 Island train. Get on the ferry, if
19 you're in the federal government, get
20 on that ferry, get on the train, take
21 it from St. George to Tottenville.

22 Let us know how you did.

23 Enjoy your day.

24 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

25 Our next speaker is Zaheer Nota,

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1 followed by Daniel Yahraes.

2 Our next speaker is Daniel
3 Yahraes, followed by Josh Youner.

4 Our next speaker is Josh Youner
5 followed by Charles O'Neil.

6 Our next speaker is Charles
7 O'neil, followed by Nicole Chimienti.

8 Our next speaker is Nicole
9 Chimienti, followed by Oliver
10 Henderson.

11 Our next speaker, the 180th to
12 sign up, is Oliver Henderson, followed
13 by Anna Holness.

14 Our next speaker is Anna
15 Holness, followed by Kasey Klimes.

16 Our next speaker is Kasey
17 Klimes, followed by Li Lin.

18 KASEY KLIMES: Hello. Hi, my
19 name is Kasey Klimes, thank you. I
20 appreciate it.

21 My name is Kasey Klimes. I'm a
22 resident of Brooklyn. And I should
23 add that I am also among the minority
24 of New Yorkers that own a car.

25 I want to commend the MTA for

1 proposing congestion pricing and
2 express my enthusiastic support for
3 the plan. I think it's fair to agree
4 that we're in a moment of crisis,
5 climate crisis, street safety crisis
6 and a basic livability crisis.

7 We have to reduce pollution. We
8 need to shift trips out of cars, we
9 need to improve public transit
10 options. Fortunately, congestion
11 pricing does all three.

12 So far this year more than 160
13 people have been killed in crashes on
14 New York City streets. 2021 was the
15 deadliest year on New York City
16 streets since Vision Zero began. In
17 London crashes fell nearly 50 percent
18 in the congestion pricing zone, and
19 made a significant decrease in crashes
20 outside of the zone as well.

21 Lastly, I'd like to point out
22 that this is also kind of a matter of
23 basic economics. If the space that my
24 car takes up were in my apartment, it
25 would be priced at approximately a

1 thousand dollars a month and yet, I
2 can currently take my vehicle into
3 Manhattan, demanding precious space on
4 some of the most valuable land in the
5 United States, and yet pay nothing for
6 that space or for the negative
7 externalities that my vehicle creates
8 for others.

9 Now, this plan does not ban cars
10 from the Central Business District.
11 It merely asks them to pay their fair
12 share, myself included.

13 With the economic tragedy that
14 comes in mind, it's no wonder that
15 we're now in a moment of crisis in a
16 degraded public realm. Congestion
17 pricing must be implemented quickly
18 and efficiently as possible,
19 minimizing exemptions, as much as
20 possible as well.

21 Thank you for your time.

22 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

23 Our next speaker is Li Lin,
24 followed by Sha Bhuiyan.

25 Our next speaker is Sha Bhuiyan,

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1 followed by Christine Kramer.

2 Our next speaker is Christine
3 Kramer, followed by William Ritziu.

4 Our next speaker is William
5 Ritziu, followed by Johansen
6 Concepcion.

7 Our next speaker is Johansen
8 Concepcion, followed by Jean Hahn.

9 Our next speaker is Jean Hahn,
10 followed by Ricardo Pacheco.

11 Our next speaker is Ricardo
12 Pacheco, followed by Fran Nieman.

13 Our next speaker is Fran Nieman,
14 followed by Mamadou Diallo.

15 Our next speaker is Mamadou
16 Diallo, followed by Gordon Lee.

17 MAMADOU DIALLO: Hello there.
18 Can you guys hear me?

19 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

20 MAMADOU DIALLO: Thanks for
21 picking up my call, I really
22 appreciate it. Can you guys hear me
23 because I can't really hear?

24 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.
25 Please proceed.

1 MAMADOU DIALLO: Okay. Okay so
2 you guys talk about this is -- let me
3 go ahead and start this. If it's
4 about emissions, we have electric cars
5 coming up. Most cars (sic) agree to
6 buy -- I mean to build new cars so
7 this is nothing but a money grab.

8 You know, this is America, not a
9 communist country. So we should have
10 this on a ballot so citizen group go
11 ahead and vote for it. Once again,
12 this is nothing but a money grab.

13 Why don't we have a diverse
14 panel? Your panel is nothing but one
15 single-body unit -- this is nothing
16 but a money grab.

17 New York City should wake up, we
18 should wake up. We should have this
19 on a ballot. Let us vote for it.
20 Don't have this little sneaky -- this
21 is nothing but a -- service. Once
22 again, this is nothing but a money
23 grab. You guys should wake up, wake
24 up.

25 The majority of New York City

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1 residents does not make the money that
2 you guys make. If this goes through,
3 all of you guys on the panel,
4 especially those that work for the
5 MTA, your income would shoot up,
6 right, you guys are going to have
7 those little bonuses. Most people
8 don't qualify for bonus. We don't get
9 no bonus.

10 You know, so cab drivers should
11 not be paying for this. This is
12 ludicrous. This is nothing but a
13 money grab. You guys should wake up,
14 stop all this little lip service.
15 This panel that you guys have it's
16 just nothing but lip service. Once
17 again, this is nothing but a money
18 grab. Stop this illusion.

19 Most of these buildings pollute
20 more. You guys made it so conjected,
21 cut up all the street, cancel all the
22 parking spot because all these little
23 restaurant want to eat outside.
24 That's crazy. That's what's causing
25 all this traffic because everyone want

1 to eat outside. I'm fine with that,
2 but you have to understand it too. If
3 you have all this parking occupied by
4 restaurants yet, restaurant is already
5 paying rent to have indoor dining now
6 decide to go outdoor dining, that's
7 you guys fault. But once again, this
8 is nothing but a money grab. You guys
9 should wake up, please.

10 Let's be adults here, right.
11 Stop the trick. Put this on a ballot
12 so people could go and vote for it,
13 all right. People should vote for it,
14 not politicians spent millions of
15 dollars because of whatever issue
16 they're going through.

17 Once again, this is nothing but
18 a money grab. Stop it. Stop it now.
19 We're not in Europe, we're in America,
20 all right. This is an economy -- this
21 is a capitalist country.

22 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
23 your remarks.

24 MAMADOU DIALLO: Thank you.

25 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

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1 Our next speaker is Gordon Lee,
2 followed by Sherlly A.

3 Our next speaker is Sherlly A,
4 followed by Dawn Belotti.

5 Our next speaker is Dawn
6 Belotti, followed by Elie Chiha.

7 Our next speaker is Elie Chiha,
8 followed by Alex Gellert.

9 Our next speaker is Alex
10 Gellert, followed by Joseph Verebes.

11 Alex, you might be on mute.

12 ALEX GELLERT: There we go, hi.

13 I will keep this brief. Thank
14 you for the time. You know, I think
15 the issue for me has been brought up a
16 couple times already but I'll
17 reiterate it. I live in Manhattan. I
18 pay taxes to the New York City, New
19 York State and federal taxes. I am a
20 fairly high-taxed individual and I
21 live on 69th Street and if I need to,
22 want to, have to take my car below,
23 whether that's for a business purpose
24 or because I'm traveling out of town
25 through the zone, I am very, very

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1 unclear what the cost will be, what
2 the implications are to that.

3 So it's not so much a statement,
4 as a plea for clarity, you are a
5 Manhattan resident who is paying
6 taxes, are you going to be charged;
7 when are you going to be charged; what
8 are the specifics, what are possible
9 exemptions. I know, for example, we
10 get tax back when you park a car in
11 the garage in the city so there's some
12 acknowledgement of being a resident
13 then, I think there should be
14 acknowledgment of being a resident in
15 this situation as well.

16 So I understand the need to
17 lessen congestion, I understand the
18 need for the environment but I also
19 don't think the people here should be
20 penalized. It would be one of the few
21 cities, if not the only city in the
22 world, where a resident is treated
23 equally or potentially arguably worse
24 than people who come into their town
25 from out of town. Go to

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1 pick-your-town Chicago, pick-your-town
2 Miami, pick-your-town Kansas City,
3 people who go in and out of those
4 towns are not penalized for living
5 there. They're actually given some
6 benefit and I think we should have the
7 same. So that's really it. Thank you
8 very much, I appreciate the time.

9 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

10 Our next speaker is Joseph
11 Verebes, followed by Ingrid Wiegand.

12 Our next speaker is Ingrid
13 Wiegand, followed by James Corter.

14 Our next speaker is James
15 Corter, followed by Matthew Quezada.

16 Our next speaker, the 200th
17 person to sign up, is Matthew Quezada,
18 followed by Sean Geoghan.

19 Our next speaker is Sean
20 Geoghan, followed by Stuart Meissner.

21 SEAN GEOGHAN: Hi. Good
22 afternoon. Can you hear me?

23 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

24 SEAN GEOGHAN: Great. Good
25 afternoon. My name is Sean Geoghan.

1 I am a resident of Inwood. I work in
2 the Central Business District. I also
3 grew up in the Central Business
4 District and I am here today in
5 support of congestion pricing.

6 Many of the recent panelists
7 have spoken about the historical
8 nature of traffic in New York City.
9 And I want to remind everyone that
10 this is the 1970s in New York City.
11 We have had traffic in New York City
12 for a very long time. To blame
13 traffic in New York City on new things
14 that have come to traffic or to
15 streets in New York, like bicycles or
16 like outdoor dining, is not sufficient
17 because we have been dealing with
18 traffic for a long time.

19 Many other panelists,
20 specifically from the outer boroughs
21 just as well as from New Jersey, had
22 spoken a great deal about their
23 constituents that drive into the city
24 and they are advocating on behalf of
25 those constituents who drive into the

1 city. However -- so this data is
2 from Uday Schultz by way of the New
3 York Metropolitan Council. This shows
4 the number of entries into the Central
5 Business District by tunnel or by
6 entry way during the a.m. rush hour.

7 As we can see here through both
8 the Lincoln and the Holland Tunnel,
9 many more of those entries happen by
10 way of bus as opposed to by way of a
11 private car.

12 So as a result, I am here today
13 in support of congestion pricing to
14 encourage more folks to take buses, to
15 take public transit and to reduce the
16 congestion that has historically
17 existed in the Central Business
18 District and in New York City.

19 As many other speakers have
20 mentioned, we've seen a great increase
21 in pedestrian deaths across the city.
22 We've seen a great increase in the
23 number of cars that's in the city
24 post-Covid and it's very, very
25 important that we address this in

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1 order to decrease the number of
2 pedestrian deaths that we have in the
3 city, as well as to address the
4 environmental impacts of those both
5 inside the city and outside of the
6 Central Business District.

7 Finally, I want to highlight a
8 couple of other things that have been
9 said. One is that driving a car is
10 indeed a choice that many people can
11 make. You can choose to drive a car
12 or you can choose to take mass
13 transit. You can choose to drive a
14 car or you can choose to take the bus
15 or subway. However, many other
16 speakers have also noted that there is
17 not specific clarity from the MTA, the
18 city or the state on how these funds
19 will be used in order to improve
20 transit deserts, to make headways
21 smaller and to make sure there is
22 better and more accessible public
23 transit for those drivers who wouldn't
24 be the most impacted by congestion
25 pricing. I hope that there is

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1 additional research done and that all
2 of these funds are used in order to
3 improve transit and improve service
4 rather than to not.

5 That's my time. Thank you all
6 very much and have a great day.

7 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

8 Our next speaker is Stuart
9 Meissner, followed by Concerned New
10 Yorker.

11 Our next speaker is Concerned
12 New Yorker followed by Joseph Toronto.

13 Concerned New Yorker, you may be
14 on mute. We can't hear you.

15 CONCERNED NEW YORKER: I am an
16 elderly disabled senior citizen. I
17 cannot use the fast paced subway. I
18 have a disabled tag hanging from a
19 mirror. The disabled tags were not
20 included in exemptions and they should
21 be.

22 Financial mitigation measures
23 are unacceptable because they do not
24 help people who make so little, that
25 the credit amount would exceed the

1 amount of taxes paid; so the credit
2 would be of no benefit. Your plan has
3 shown no consideration for the
4 elderly, the immunocompromised, sick,
5 elderly, the business owners in the
6 district who will be adversely
7 impacted, the suburbanites who you
8 will harm.

9 COVID is not over. There is a
10 new vaccine for the sub-variant.
11 COVID requires social distancing.
12 Packing people together like sardines
13 in the subway will spread COVID and
14 any other viruses.

15 Per your own presentation, the
16 plan shifts congestion elsewhere. Any
17 potential benefit will be negated by
18 the adverse effects. You state that
19 in your objective is a price grab to
20 fund 15 billion dollars for capital
21 projects for the MTA Capital Program.
22 You do not emphasize adverse effects
23 including the increased traffic
24 westbound Long Island Expressway near
25 the Queens Midtown Tunnel.

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1 Today a teenager lost his arm on
2 the subway. The subway is unsafe and
3 making car drivers pay for mass
4 transit services they do not receive,
5 it is theft of money from hardworking
6 everyday citizens, by giving
7 preferential financial treatment for
8 mass transit users. You should not
9 punish drivers to unfairly subsidize
10 New York's mass transit and take food
11 out of people's mouths.

12 I'm opposed to congestion
13 pricing. It will hurt the environment
14 where there are adverse effects when
15 congestion is shifted. I'm suggesting
16 that those opposed use hashtag
17 #nocongestionpricing on Twitter and
18 that congestion pricing be brought to
19 a vote.

20 Thank you.

21 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

22 Our next speaker is Joseph
23 Toronto, followed by Kevin Curran.

24 JOSEPH TORONTO: Hello.

25 MR. WOJNAR: Hello. Please

1 proceed.

2 JOSEPH TORONTO: Okay. So while
3 I'm against congestion pricing in
4 general, this appears to be a forgone
5 conclusion. So I'm going to waste my
6 breath making that argument. Instead
7 I'm going to argue as to what I would
8 feel is a fair implementation.

9 My argument is on behalf of my
10 community of Staten Island that has
11 the worse public transit in the city.
12 Our choices are a ferry, that for much
13 of the island is only accessible by a
14 train that runs only every 30 minutes.
15 That ferry service also due to
16 mismanagement by the DOT, is currently
17 in crisis and is only running hourly
18 service at random intervals. Our
19 other choice is an express bus that
20 costs commuters \$14 a day and is
21 subject to random cancelations and is
22 overburdened due to ridership at peak
23 and often beyond off-peak hours.

24 Anyone who is trying to catch a
25 SIM1C south of Canal Street and is

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1 passed by because a bus can't accept
2 any more passengers, understands as
3 well. This is at 10 p.m. on a Tuesday
4 that this occurs.

5 Additionally, the 2018 Express
6 Bus redesign, was just a service cut
7 in disguise. No meaningful investment
8 in the public transit system here has
9 been done since the 1970s. My
10 husband, who is a nurse on the Upper
11 East Side, sometimes faces a two-hour
12 commute home. The same commute by car
13 is between thirty-five and forty-five
14 minutes.

15 So while Staten Islanders do use
16 public transit, for the above reasons
17 many of us do rely on cars. Our
18 situation is unique in that we have
19 already had been paying our own form
20 of congestion pricing in the form of
21 the Verrazzano Bridge, in which 417
22 million dollars of our money each year
23 goes to subsidizing a subway that we
24 don't have access to. Now, we're
25 faced with the prospect of not only

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1 having to pay that toll, but an
2 additional one to enter Manhattan; as
3 much as \$20 in some proposals and then
4 another to come back home.

5 A credit for the Verrazzano
6 Bridge toll applied towards the CBD
7 Toll for anyone with a Staten Island
8 Resident Program on their E-ZPass
9 account, would not only be fair but
10 would also help ease the pain this
11 program will cause.

12 As a side note, I'm also amused
13 by car-owning Manhattanites in the
14 Central Business District who are
15 stunned by the prospect of having to
16 pay a toll to return to their homes.
17 And all I can say to those callers is,
18 join the club.

19 What are we promised in return?
20 Absolutely nothing. In fact, the only
21 time you hear Staten Island mentioned
22 in the study is in reference to how
23 it's going drastically increase
24 traffic here.

25 I would like to hear some plan

1 to better connect us to the rest of
2 the city, whether with additional
3 ferry terminals in different parts of
4 the island or God forbid finish the
5 subway that was started in 1930 and it
6 should have been long since completed,
7 instead of spending that same amount
8 of money extending lives a few stops
9 in already transit rich Manhattan. I
10 feel it's unfair.

11 If you want us out of our cars.
12 You have to give us something. You
13 know, you're putting the cart before
14 the horse.

15 And I'm out of time, that's my
16 opinion on it. Thank you.

17 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker is Kevin
19 Curran, followed by Sam Farrouq.

20 Our next speaker is Sam Farrouq,
21 followed by Robin Feuer.

22 Our next speaker is Robin Feuer,
23 followed by Damaris Feliciano.

24 Our next speaker is Damaris
25 Feliciano, followed by Xcpher

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1 Calabrese.

2 Our next speaker is Xcpher
3 Calabrese, followed by Bernardo
4 Celerino.

5 Our next speaker is Bernardo
6 Celerino, followed by Christopher
7 Kolba.

8 Our next speaker is Christopher
9 Kolba, followed by Paul Weissman.

10 Our next speaker, the 211th to
11 sign up to speak, is Paul Weissman,
12 followed by Daniel Pizarro.

13 MR. WOJNAR: Paul, you're on
14 mute.

15 Paul, we can't hear you. You'll
16 have to unmute yourself.

17 PAUL WEISSMAN: Hello. Can you
18 hear me?

19 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

20 PAUL WEISSMAN: Hi. My name is
21 Paul Weissman. I'm 75 years-old and
22 I've lived my entire life and taught
23 on the Lower East Side.

24 I gave up my car in 2019 because
25 of traffic. However, there are

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1 aspects of this plan that are very
2 disturbing. As you know, 1st Avenue,
3 you have the VA, Bellevue, NYU. If
4 you have to go to the emergency room
5 late at night, how are those hospitals
6 going to compete with say, New York
7 Presbyterian on 70th Street for
8 qualified -- highly qualified nurses,
9 doctors and orderlies, particularly
10 the nurses and the orderlies, when, as
11 you know to get -- if you can't use
12 your car late at night you would have
13 to wait for the 1st Avenue or 2nd
14 Avenue bus maybe running once every
15 half hour and then transfer at 23rd
16 Street or 34th Street to get to the
17 subways. The hospitals will never
18 compete and this is a health problem.
19 This is a real health problem.

20 You say things are easy. I like
21 to travel with my wife. Getting to an
22 airport, I don't think I'm going to be
23 able to get the car services or taxis
24 that I was able to do -- to get to an
25 airport. And if you have to make a

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1 7:00 a.m. flight, you have to be there
2 at 5:00 a.m., which to take a bus and
3 a subway, would mean leaving at maybe
4 3:30, perhaps, in the morning.

5 And other people who pets, if
6 there's an emergency on the Lower East
7 Side with your pet late at night, how,
8 if we do not have taxis and car
9 services get up to the AMC, the Animal
10 Medical Center just outside the zone.

11 I think we will not be served
12 well in this zone by livery or taxis.
13 There are two services down here that
14 I know of, New day and Delancey.
15 Their drivers will have to pay \$23 a
16 day to come in before they work. They
17 don't make that much money and it will
18 cost them over \$6,000 a year.

19 And again the hospital situation
20 is terrifying at night and I don't
21 know how NYU will compete with
22 Columbia Presbyterian. And I would
23 like people like the Open Plans woman
24 who spoke say everyone, this is going
25 to benefit everyone. Let her speak

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1 for herself.

2 I thank you for this
3 opportunity.

4 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

5 Our next speaker is Daniel
6 Pizarro, followed by Gazmend Berdynaj.

7 Our next speaker is Gazmend
8 Berdynaj.

9 Our next speaker is Gazmend
10 Berdynaj, followed by Donna Meyers.

11 Our next speaker is Donna
12 Meyers, followed by Amanda Levine.

13 Our next speaker is Amanda
14 Levine, followed by Donna Orr.

15 Our next speaker is Donna Orr,
16 followed by Galina Kaminker.

17 MR. WOJNAR: Donna, go ahead.

18 DONNA ORR: Hi. I am a Bronx
19 resident and in less than a year I
20 will be a -- (technical difficulties)
21 spoke -- against the middle class tax.

22 When this plan unveils traffic
23 closed and traffic in the Bronx, which
24 I can attest to (technical
25 difficulties) increase exponentially.

1 And that is one of the main reasons
2 why traffic is at an all-time high and
3 as a result increase accidents, but I
4 don't hear anyone saying that.

5 I'm worried if this proposed
6 plan goes through that it will create
7 a system of haves and have not. My
8 mom was diagnosed with cancer and even
9 her oncologist in the Bronx referred
10 her to Manhattan saying the best
11 doctors were there. We chose NYU
12 Langone on 34th Street.

13 During her three-year cancer
14 journey, she was often admitted for
15 weeks or months at a time. And I'm
16 just thinking about myself being -- I
17 heard people talk about driving being
18 a luxury but you know what for me
19 having it, being a caregiver, and also
20 working daily, it wasn't for me.

21 I had to depend on having my
22 car. So I would pay for parking and
23 now this congestion pricing, I just
24 don't know. That would be an
25 additional \$23 on top of that.

1 I would hate for us to create a
2 system or a situation where people
3 would say, hey, can I go visit my
4 parent today, can I afford it. I just
5 wanted to bring that up. I really
6 did. We don't want to close off
7 healthcare to the outer boroughs,
8 supposedly the best in healthcare.

9 Did you guys get any of that?

10 MR. WOJNAR: Yes. Thank you.

11 DONNA ORR: Yeah? All right so
12 the clock stopped, am I done?

13 MR. WOJNAR: You have 30
14 seconds.

15 DONNA ORR: I have 30 seconds,
16 okay.

17 I just want to say also that 20
18 percent of New Yorkers are African
19 American and being on this recording
20 since 1:00 and it's now 5:16, I don't
21 see where you have reached out to
22 20 percent of New Yorkers.

23 So maybe in the future moving
24 forward, you can put in other efforts
25 to do. I just wanted to add that so

1 that we can get everyone's voice.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

4 Our next speaker is Galina
5 Kaminker to be followed by Ingrid
6 Wiegand.

7 GALINA KAMINKER: Can you hear
8 me?

9 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

10 GALINA KAMINKER: My name is
11 Galina Kaminker and I'm here to speak
12 on behalf of the yellow taxi industry.

13 I'm not sure if you're aware or
14 if you know but the taxi industry was
15 licensed by New York City. We -- it's
16 about -- total is today 113,500. It
17 doesn't mean that all of us are
18 actually on the road.

19 Before getting the license, we
20 had to pay -- right now average every
21 medallion owner is close to 7 or
22 \$800,000 but besides that we've
23 contributing to MTA. Since 2009, 50
24 cents per ride and then it was
25 increased to \$2.50 in 2019. We've

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1 contributed billions of dollars to the
2 MTA without any exemption. Like other
3 FHV entities, they've been not paying
4 like we did even though they think
5 they are.

6 And I just want to underline,
7 when we purchased our license, the
8 city made -- congestion pricing,
9 congestion, environmental impact to
10 the city and that's why we've been
11 servicing New York City. Another way
12 of transportation, of traffic. I
13 think it's by locals to New York
14 City -- considered to be another way
15 of transportation like MTA has buses
16 and trains, and none of this has been
17 considered.

18 Nobody will -- we are very close
19 -- 13,000 cabbies, yellow taxis, we
20 have nobody to speak up in our behalf,
21 we do it ourself. I did it now
22 because I feel if I don't speak up, my
23 family is going to be out on the
24 street. Because right now, we owe
25 about 600,000 dollars to the banks

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1 because we out that loan to purchase
2 that medallion -- pay our fair share
3 to the MTA. Been doing it, it's not
4 like others like the other FHV's,
5 there's like 140,000 in the streets.

6 There was no congestion pricing
7 nor environmental on that. But they
8 have millions and billions and dollars
9 with their companies and we
10 don't because we are immigrants.
11 Again, it's our city and if you're
12 going to surcharge on us -- like we've
13 spoken to other people, you know,
14 cabbies were driving into the city
15 with \$0, who is going to pay that
16 money.

17 I think all of the -- into
18 consideration. We already pay like
19 billion dollars on top of 750 million
20 dollars, all of this. And you're
21 going to kill 13,000 medallion
22 holders, putting their families on the
23 streets. Plus we're going to stop
24 servicing New Yorkers who depend, like
25 elderly people, disabled people who

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1 cannot use bus, who cannot use trains.
2 Not because they don't want to,
3 because they cannot, they're disabled.

4 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
5 your remarks.

6 GALINA KAMINKER: I guess you
7 have -- New York yellow taxis, you're
8 going to kill us. You're going to
9 kill 13 -- you're going to have 13,000
10 families on the street.

11 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker is Ingrid
13 Wiegand, followed by Mohammad Hossen.

14 Ingrid, be sure to unmute
15 yourself and you may proceed.

16 INGRID WIEGAND: All right.

17 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.
18 Go ahead.

19 INGRID WIEGAND: I'm here to
20 speak for congestion pricing, a
21 program whose time has come and not
22 gone.

23 When I'm parking my car in the
24 middle of Soho, I always wonder why
25 you're letting me do that. I'm not

1 handicapped. There are half a dozen
2 alternatives that get me wherever I
3 want to go. There are a half a
4 dozen -- if the city's flawed, but
5 nevertheless wonderful, MTA system
6 won't take me there, I've got all
7 kinds of people with cars who are
8 competing to pick me up and transport
9 me.

10 It costs more per trip, but
11 let's face it. It costs a lot more to
12 own a car. I'll admit that none of
13 the alternatives are as wonderful as
14 jumping in my car a block from where I
15 live, but then I chose to live in the
16 heart of one of the premiere cities in
17 the world and one of the congested.

18 So when I jump in my own car,
19 I'm not just adding to the congestion
20 of the streets, I'm adding to the
21 pollution of the air we breathe and
22 shortening my and everyone else's
23 life.

24 So let's get with the program,
25 MTA and DOT. Make all the exceptions

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1 that you need and there will be many.
2 Start congestion pricing and clean the
3 air and make some money for all the
4 things we need for what you should
5 have done over ten years ago. Thank
6 you.

7 MR. WOJNAR: Our next speaker is
8 Mohammad Hossen, followed by Donna
9 Meyers.

10 Our next speaker is Donna
11 Meyers, followed by Paul Wang.

12 DONNA MEYERS: Okay. I've just
13 unmuted.

14 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can hear
15 you.

16 DONNA MEYERS: This is Donna
17 Meyers. I wanted to say it seems to
18 me the people who are in favor of
19 congestion pricing are those people
20 who don't own cars, who can ride a
21 bike or who can walk for miles in the
22 city. But what about the rest of us?
23 Is their attitude to hell with you?

24 I've been a life-long New Yorker
25 and I've been living in Lower

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1 Manhattan for 30 years. I own a car.
2 I would like to be able to get around.
3 I don't commute to work any longer.
4 I'm retired.

5 I think everyone understands
6 that it's the very decisions made by
7 city officials that have created the
8 congestion problem. That's the irony
9 of the situation.

10 When you take away miles and
11 miles of car lanes to accommodate
12 bicyclists and you redesign streets
13 for pedestrian plazas, what did you
14 think would be the result? It doesn't
15 take a rocket scientist.

16 Well, I'm here to propose an
17 alternate moneymaking scheme for the
18 MTA. As a pedestrian, I fear
19 bicyclists way more than drivers
20 because bicyclists break every traffic
21 law in the book every minute of every
22 day and are not held accountable. I
23 can't even count how many of my loved
24 ones, neighbors and friends have been
25 physically hurt, even critically hurt,

1 by bicyclists. I even fair for my
2 life walking on the sidewalk because
3 apparently it's perfectly okay for
4 bicyclists, including e-bikes and
5 e-scooters, to zoom along the
6 sidewalks as well. Why hasn't this
7 problem been addressed?

8 So how about requiring licenses
9 for bicyclists, as well as issuing
10 tickets to every bicyclist who breaks
11 the law. The MTA stands to have a
12 windfall as a result.

13 Finally, I agree with a previous
14 speaker who asked for clarification
15 regarding Manhattan residents who own
16 cars. That would be very helpful and
17 I certainly would expect accommodation
18 for us. Thank you.

19 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Paul Wang,
21 followed by Mike Freeman.

22 MR. WOJNAR: Our next speaker,
23 the 220th to sign up, is Mike Freeman,
24 followed by Robbee Fian.

25 MIKE FREEMAN: Can you hear me?

1 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

2 MIKE FREEMAN: I'm Mike Freeman.

3 I'm a musician and I have been a
4 resident of Hell's Kitchen for 40
5 years. I depend on my car to
6 transport a large musical instrument
7 to and from gigs in order to work.

8 It's very frustrating for me to
9 hear people talk about how much money
10 car owners supposedly make.

11 If you build it, they will come.
12 A large part of the traffic congestion
13 problems on the west side of Manhattan
14 are the direct result of massive
15 overdevelopment. About 200 high-rise
16 buildings have gone up around the
17 Hell's Kitchen neighborhood.

18 When this was happening, there
19 was no restraints, thoughts or talk of
20 the greater good of the community.
21 The environmental impact of
22 overbuilding in Hell's Kitchen is
23 well-known to the people who lived
24 through the noise, pollution, added
25 traffic, bad air quality directly

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1 related to construction when these
2 buildings were going up one after
3 another.

4 Instead of charging residents
5 who have lived in the neighborhood for
6 decades before this development, I
7 suggest congestion pricing and funding
8 for the MTA should be paid for by
9 developers. They're the ones who
10 created the problem with heavy traffic
11 congestion and who have profited
12 greatly from it.

13 Long-time residents should not
14 be on the hook for a problem they did
15 not create. I'm against congestion
16 pricing and have made these points at
17 public meetings and emails to elected
18 officials prior to the pandemic.

19 Congestion pricing will have a
20 huge negative impact on musicians in
21 the entertainment capitol of the
22 world, especially those who live in
23 the congestion zone after a very
24 difficult past few years in the
25 industry. Thank you.

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1 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you. Our
2 next speaker is Robbee Fian, followed
3 by Kevin Sachs.

4 Our next speaker is Kevin Sachs,
5 followed by Clare Henry.

6 Our next speaker is Clare Henry,
7 followed by Adrienne Sosin.

8 CLARE HENRY: Am I the next
9 panelist?

10 MR. WOJNAR: Clare, you may
11 proceed.

12 Clare, we can hear you. You may
13 proceed.

14 CLARE HENRY: Okay. Thank you.

15 Hi. I live in Brooklyn, New
16 York. And I think no matter what we
17 say, this congestion pricing is going
18 to pass in any event.

19 But if it does, I think the
20 weekends should be exempt from any
21 surcharge for all cars, except
22 commercial trucks. I say this because
23 most people are off on the weekends
24 and I'm thinking of all the
25 grandmothers, the grandfathers, the

1 mothers, the fathers, the aunts, the
2 uncles, the cousins, the neighbors or
3 friends that -- who live in Manhattan
4 and get weekend visits from their
5 families or friends, especially those
6 that live alone who need supplies or
7 assistance and companionship.

8 The congestion pricing
9 surcharges will cause less visits to
10 the loved ones or friends, thereby
11 causing depression and loneliness.
12 This will be likely a continuous
13 pandemic-like lockdown, especially for
14 the elderly who live in the city and
15 look forward to family or friends'
16 visits that bring both much-needed
17 supplies and companionship to them.

18 Just to let you know, this does
19 not pertain to me. I'm just thinking
20 of the people who live in New York.
21 And why don't you leave it to the
22 voters to decide instead of
23 implementing the tax surcharge?

24 Thank you.

25 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

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1 Our next speaker is Adrienne
2 Sosin, followed by Peter Reiter.

3 ADRIENNE SOSIN: Hello.

4 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.
5 Please proceed.

6 ADRIENNE SOSIN: Okay. Thank
7 you. My name is Adrienne Sosin. I am
8 calling in because I am opposed to the
9 unfair implementation of congestion
10 pricing for residents.

11 I feel it is discriminatory. I
12 live in Manhattan below 60th Street
13 and anywhere I drive out of the
14 Central Business District or wherever,
15 I must return home. I have no choice.
16 That's because I live there. And
17 congestion pricing without exemptions
18 or rebates, is what I consider an
19 unfair discriminatory taxation. And
20 residents of Manhattan are being
21 treated inequitably, those above 60th
22 Street are being exempted from this
23 tax.

24 I feel that this could become
25 another cause for middle-class

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1 displacement in Manhattan and it has
2 been all too much of -- I agree with
3 the woman who spoke earlier about it
4 being a problem of overdevelopment and
5 creating the congestion.

6 We do garage our car and our
7 garage monthly payment has an
8 appropriate resident tax abatement,
9 but congestion pricing with a \$60,000
10 annual limit is too low. Even for
11 people on a fixed income living in
12 Manhattan, the costs are just that
13 great. I think an exemption or a
14 rebate for residents would be more
15 just and people in particular, seniors
16 or the disabled or elderly residents
17 with mobility issues.

18 I have experienced the
19 pedestrian dangers of bicycles on the
20 sidewalk and I do think that there is
21 a great need to make the MTA
22 responsible for escalators and
23 elevators that are now very
24 undependable.

25 We share a car to save money and

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1 -- residents who need a car.

2 So, I think that if we are
3 looking at this plan, take all these
4 notes and please revise this plan to
5 make residents exempt.

6 Thank you.

7 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

8 Our next speaker is Peter
9 Reiter, followed by David Ilku.

10 PETER REITER: (Technical
11 difficulties.) -- to go to my doctor
12 or visit any member of my family. I
13 am not going into the business
14 district. I am leaving the city and I
15 shouldn't be paying a congestion tax.

16 I also have family living in New
17 Jersey. If I want to go to the
18 Lincoln Tunnel and I take the West
19 Side Highway down to 42nd Street --

20 (Technical difficulties.)

21 MR. WOJNAR: We'll come back to
22 Peter.

23 Our next speaker is David Ilku,
24 followed by S-A O. Wilkinson.

25 Our next speaker is S-A O.

1 Wilkinson, followed by MB Rogers.

2 Our next speaker is MB Rogers,
3 followed by Steve Azor.

4 MB make sure to take yourself
5 off mute before you proceed.

6 MB ROGERS: Hello. Can you hear
7 me?

8 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

9 MB ROGERS: I'm very opposed to
10 the way that these public hearings are
11 being conducted that require internet.
12 That is a problem for a large majority
13 of New York City residents.

14 I also feel that the congestion
15 pricing is affecting aging people,
16 people with disabilities and the
17 middle-income people, more than the
18 people who cause the congestion.

19 When Vision Zero started under
20 Bloomberg followed by de Blasio and
21 continued by Adams, you have created
22 an outrageous problem in New York
23 City. And there has been nothing in
24 50 years of MTA management to expand
25 public transportation throughout the

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1 boroughs into areas that still have no
2 service in 50 years that I've lived
3 here, okay.

4 This is a big problem. I
5 wouldn't trust you with my money
6 again. All the executives in MTA and
7 DOT should be required to take public
8 transportation. No limos, no taxis,
9 no cars and then they would have to
10 make it better so that they would have
11 a decent ride to work.

12 It's outrageous that you want to
13 charge residents to go from one part
14 of the city to another. We are all
15 New York City residents.

16 The developers that pay very
17 nominal amounts get a lot of profit
18 and the people who then come in and do
19 not live in those apartments, they buy
20 them as a money laundering effort,
21 those people are not taxed. They pay
22 a one time property tax that's not
23 even commensurate with the price of
24 their apartment -- really. When you
25 think about it because they do not pay

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1 sales tax on a regular basis. They
2 don't contribute to all the
3 transportation.

4 Instead of eliminating 23 stops
5 in Jackson Heights, why aren't you
6 adding stops? I no longer can take
7 the Q66. You eliminated 23 stops, all
8 important businesses and medical
9 offices. And now I would have to walk
10 four blocks and not including the
11 block from Northern Boulevard to my
12 apartment, okay, to get to where a bus
13 stop used to be.

14 New York was famous for every
15 two blocks was a bus stop and every
16 ten blocks with a subway station. It
17 should have been expanded in 50 years.
18 What have you been doing? Nothing.
19 You didn't even maintain the bridges
20 that we already have. You pocketed
21 the money and eliminated the workers
22 who would keep the subways clean and
23 safe. You got rid of all the token
24 booths, where we at least had somebody
25 to go to in an emergency. Now we have

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1 nothing.

2 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
3 your remarks.

4 MB ROGERS: I'm concluding.
5 It's disgusting.

6 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Steve Azor,
8 followed by Jess Gonzal.

9 STEVE AZOR: Hi. Good evening.
10 Thank you for having me show up again.
11 I'm not going to try to make a plea
12 for not putting this tax, which is
13 what it really is, the tax on the
14 people of New York. I'm going to
15 pretty much just say that it's another
16 money grab and if you're going to grab
17 the money then everybody should have
18 to donate. Everybody, period, should
19 have to because we all are part of the
20 city and make the city go and use the
21 transportation in some way, whether
22 it's the DOT or the MTA.

23 So what we should do? There's a
24 couple of things that I think we
25 should do. First of all, you have to

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1 edit -- excuse me. You have to audit
2 the MTA. They need to be audited to
3 find out where all this money is
4 going. Millions of dollars was
5 already given from this congestion
6 pricing tax and has already been
7 allocated and given to them for years.
8 Where is that money? It's not really
9 being spoken about.

10 Another thing that we need to do
11 is get rid of all parking passes. A
12 lot of people, probably people that's
13 sitting on the panel right now, they
14 get to park in the city for free. So
15 they don't worry about that \$30 or \$40
16 or \$50 parking fee -- if you even find
17 it. They get parking passes. I even
18 heard the mayor say something about
19 they were going to try to eliminate 30
20 or 40,000 of the parking vouchers. So
21 that means that there's more than 30
22 or 40,000 parking passes and you're
23 just going to try to get rid of some.

24 No parking passes for anyone,
25 teachers, nurses, police officers,

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1 definitely people on the city council,
2 nobody gets a parking pass. You come
3 to the city, come to the city like
4 everybody else. No one is more
5 important than anyone else.

6 Another way you can make some
7 money on this is, bring back the
8 municipal parking in the outer
9 boroughs. I'm in a two-fare zone. I
10 need to take my car to the parking lot
11 into Long Island City, jump on the
12 train and then go up and down the city
13 like I want to. But after that, those
14 parking lots, those municipal parking
15 lots, those public parking lots are
16 now condominiums, co-ops or just
17 building luxury and office buildings.

18 How do those people get into
19 those buildings? Do they all drive --
20 I mean, do they all take the train?
21 No, they take Ubers, they take private
22 cars, they take a lot of things too in
23 and out of the city.

24 Shut down, you get rid of a
25 three-story building and you put up a

1 30-story building and you think
2 there's not going to be any
3 congestion.

4 I know I'm going to get booed
5 for this but, I don't hear them
6 talking about raising the train fare.
7 I mean, you're talking about the
8 train, the train, the train, put a
9 quarter on it.

10 Lastly, you know what's really
11 free, voting. This November, make
12 sure you vote, vote, vote. It's free,
13 get these people out of here. Bye.

14 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you. As a
15 reminder if you have joined the zoom
16 under a name different from the one
17 you used when you signed up to speak
18 or you did not sign up to speak but
19 would like to, please identify
20 yourself in the Q&A function.

21 Our next speaker is Jess Gonzal,
22 followed by David Latham.

23 Our next speaker is David
24 Latham, followed by Alec Soybel.

25 Our next speaker is Alec Soybel,

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1 soy followed by Anonymous Speaker 1.

2 ALEC SOYBEL: Good afternoon.

3 Could you hear me, please?

4 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.

5 Please proceed.

6 ALEC SOYBEL: Okay. My name is
7 Alec Soybel. And first off, I would
8 like to thank you. I'm very satisfied
9 with the public transportation because
10 I use subway and buses each day. But
11 I would like to talk about exemptions
12 for yellow taxis from MTA price tax.

13 As yellow taxis overly paid MTA
14 tax since 2009 and currently paid
15 \$1,750,000,000 to MTA. I repeat,
16 \$1,750,000,000 from 2009. In
17 addition, the yellow taxis bought very
18 expensive taxi medallions and help
19 city economy.

20 I myself bought mini fleet for
21 \$690,000 and from credit union and I
22 still owe \$400,000 to pay back credit
23 union and it's very expensive for me.
24 I still need to pay my loan, it's very
25 big loan.

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1 In addition, I would like to
2 claim that Uber and Lyft contributed
3 to congestion and should pay MTA
4 congestion tax. There are currently
5 96,000 Uber and Lyft cars in Manhattan
6 and there are also 13,000 yellow taxis
7 and there are not too many yellow
8 taxis like Uber. And I make -- I look
9 at statistics at TLC, Taxi Limousine
10 Commission, and I found that in the
11 business district, Central Business
12 District, each day there are about
13 250,000 Uber cars each day -- they
14 make trips, 250,000 trips, each day in
15 Central Business District.

16 Yellow taxis make 100,000 trips
17 in Central Business District but
18 business district, Central Business
19 District, is the main place where
20 yellow taxis do their business for 85
21 years and they have no other place to
22 do our business. And we do our
23 business by people hail, by hands, to
24 yellow taxis and we take them.

25 In addition, we also have

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1 wheelchair accessible cars and allow
2 people to take them to different
3 locations. And I would also like to
4 address that Uber and Lyft and share a
5 ride, they pay 75 cents instead of
6 \$2.75. So in July, they make 800
7 trips with shared ride, and they only
8 pay 75 cents. But they -- only one
9 person was is in the car. They take
10 advantage of this --

11 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
12 your remarks.

13 ALEC SOYBEL: So I'd like to
14 thank you for your job, and I would
15 like please excuse yellow taxis'
16 medallions.

17 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

18 ALEC SOYBEL: -- from this tax
19 because --

20 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

21 Our next speaker is Anonymous
22 Speaker 1, followed by Jimmy Singh.

23 ANONYMOUS SPEAKER 1: Hello.
24 Can you hear me?

25 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, please

1 proceed.

2 ANONYMOUS SPEAKER 1: Okay.
3 Hello. I'm a Brooklyn citizen and in
4 my younger years, I relied on buses
5 and trains everyday. Now, I'm an
6 adult and a caretaker, like so many
7 others that have spoken. And I agree
8 where we're being told we have a
9 choice. Whether we drive our own
10 vehicles or take a cab, when we're
11 caretakers we can't be on a
12 motorcycle. We have to rely on a
13 vehicle, whether it's our own or
14 public transportation.

15 I haven't used public
16 transportation in five years and I
17 will not until the remainder of my
18 life. I have no problem contributing
19 to a program that was there for me
20 during my school years and employment
21 years.

22 I understand air quality. I
23 volunteer for New York City Park and
24 Rec. There are methods through New
25 York City Parks and Recreation

1 Department that we can address air
2 quality now and I'm not sure if this
3 has happened, but why aren't we
4 involving New York City Parks and Rec
5 and borough presidents for land-use
6 ideas to improve air quality right now
7 and start implementing those things
8 now.

9 I understand congestion, I do.
10 But I find it hard to believe that
11 with every single government agency
12 that's involved, that the only resolve
13 for paying for public transportation
14 and reducing congestion is a toll.
15 And I agree this process does not feel
16 democratic at all and approving this
17 swiftly, it makes it even more so.

18 So I can only hope that there is
19 no dire emergency to put this plan in
20 place, that we can have more time to
21 discuss this and remove this language
22 of accusing each other as citizens.

23 And our government officials, we
24 put you in place and we have this
25 trust that you can do right by us, but

1 then we need further discussions.
2 This is not something that can just be
3 implemented just because we have been
4 thinking about it for decades. It
5 hasn't been put in place because it's
6 not perfect and -- discuss what can
7 make it close to perfect. Thank you.

8 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

9 Our next speaker is Jimmy Singh,
10 followed by Sudeep Uprety.

11 Our next speaker is Sudeep
12 Uprety, followed by LD.

13 Our next speaker is LD, followed
14 by Guido Hartray.

15 LD: Can you hear me?

16 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

17 LD: Your proposed financial
18 mitigation measures to those making
19 less than \$60,000, are unacceptable
20 because they do not help people who
21 make so little, that the credit amount
22 would be greater than the taxes paid.
23 The credit, therefore, would be no
24 benefit.

25 There needs to be another

1 financial mitigation measure,
2 particularly for those who are so
3 poor, who pay no taxes. The credit
4 won't help them.

5 Listening, I have heard the
6 adverse effects on healthcare workers,
7 entertainment industry, the increased
8 cost that will result living in the
9 district, the increased cost to the
10 elderly, the disabled, the
11 immunocompromised, the livery
12 industry, the adverse effect of
13 congestion at the Queens Midtown
14 Tunnel, the Hugh Carey Tunnel, the
15 Cross Bronx Expressway, the Staten
16 Island Expressway, the LIE.

17 The fact that some who will be
18 affected do not have internet and
19 cannot even participate in the
20 meetings. Many elderly do not use the
21 internet.

22 I have heard the pain of the
23 middle-class, the lower-class, the
24 unfair discriminatory taxation.
25 You're going to create a two-level

1 system in New York, the haves and the
2 have-nots. You may force people to
3 leave their homes or choose between
4 medicine, food and paying the tax.

5 This is the first congestion
6 pricing in this nation. This is a
7 democracy and in a democracy people
8 vote. Even though it's not legally
9 obligated, why not bring congestion
10 pricing to a public vote to see what
11 all the stakeholders want, in and
12 outside of the CBD, in and outside of
13 New York.

14 At each prior hearing I've
15 attended, more people spoke against
16 than for congestion pricing. The
17 people that I see speak for congestion
18 pricing appear to be young and
19 healthy.

20 The plan is insensitive because
21 someone with cancer, who is
22 immunocompromised, who cannot ride on
23 the germ-filled subway for medical
24 reasons, should not have to subsidize
25 the MTA.

1 For many, driving is not a
2 choice. It is a necessity for life.
3 Given the hybrid workforce, congestion
4 has decreased. Your congestion goals
5 have been met. You are shifting
6 congestion elsewhere and the potential
7 environmental benefits will be negated
8 to the adverse effects to the
9 environment elsewhere.

10 You state your objective is a
11 price grab to create a funding source
12 to fund 15 billion dollars for capital
13 projects. So increase the rates on
14 those who choose to ride the MTA. It
15 is a choice to ride the MTA.

16 Your pricing will harm the
17 marginalized, the disadvantaged. The
18 wealthy will still continue to drive
19 and not be adversely impacted. You
20 may destroy the Central Business
21 District.

22 Tourists may not come here.
23 It's not practical for families to
24 carry their luggage on the public
25 transit. People don't dress up and go

1 to the theater district in nice
2 clothes. Young mothers with strollers
3 find it difficult to navigate the
4 subway. There will be outward
5 migration from the CBD.

6 Safety is a huge issue. Today a
7 teenager lost his arm on your subway,
8 the subway that you lead. People have
9 been thrown to their death on the
10 tracks, people have been stabbed,
11 murdered and pick-pocketed. If you
12 make it safe, people will come.

13 For those opposed, I suggest we
14 use the hashtag No Congestion Pricing
15 on Twitter. People are feeling deep
16 economic pain with unbearable taxes,
17 inflation is hitting new highs, food
18 and gas prices are skyrocketing. And
19 now they are forced to pick between
20 putting food on their table or paying
21 their energy bill. At a time when New
22 Yorkers need financial help the most,
23 please don't tax them more. Thank
24 you.

25 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

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1 Next speaker is Guido Hartray,
2 followed by Ali Inayat.

3 Our next speaker is Ali Inayat,
4 followed by Bob Mann.

5 Ali, if you're on mute be sure
6 to unmute and proceed.

7 Our next speaker is Ezekial
8 Zimmerman, followed by Patrick
9 O'Reilly.

10 Our next speaker is Patrick
11 O'Reilly followed by Jay T.

12 Our next speaker is Jay T,
13 followed by Denise M.

14 MS. FLAX: We have reached the
15 final two speakers on the list.

16 After they have been called,
17 we'll call the names of all speakers
18 who we've previously called, but did
19 not speak yet. As we make our way
20 through the list of speakers for the
21 second time, those present who have
22 not spoken yet, will be given an
23 opportunity to comment. If you missed
24 your name being called, did not sign
25 up to speak but would like to speak or

1 joined the Zoom under a name that is
2 different from the one you used when
3 you signed up to speak, please
4 identify yourself in the Q&A function.
5 You may also request to speak
6 anonymously.

7 Our next speaker is Jay T.

8 JAY T: Hi, can you hear me?

9 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

10 JAY T: Hello. I'm an Orange
11 County resident and an essential
12 worker working in the Lower Manhattan
13 area. Due to the nature of my job, I
14 work evenings and sometimes my job
15 requires me to stay past midnight to
16 -- staff needs.

17 Your proposed congestion pricing
18 is a slap in the face for every New
19 Yorker, especially those serving the
20 city and the people. Charging
21 commuters like me \$9 to \$23 after
22 paying \$10 to \$15 to cross either the
23 GW Bridge or Tappan Zee is complete
24 lunacy.

25 How can you sit with a straight

1 face and propose these outrageous
2 prices when people are already
3 struggling to feed families? We're
4 not the privileged few who have
5 take-home cars or high salaries.

6 Already we're paying high enough
7 inflation on groceries, food and
8 everything else and proposing such a
9 high amount rate, is completely
10 idiotic and stupid. Why don't
11 investigate the MTA for the billions
12 of dollars that they have got from the
13 bailout from federal government and
14 see where that money has gone.

15 For all of my life, all I
16 remember about the MTA is about the
17 mismanagement of funds and the money
18 that they seem to be spending on many
19 different projects with no relief in
20 sight. I'm tired of paying these
21 outrageous bills. You guys need to
22 wake up and honestly start serving the
23 people of this state and make sure
24 that this doesn't go through.

25 Many people have already spoken

1 about their fears about getting to
2 places where they need to go, such as
3 hospitals and this is just a complete
4 outrage.

5 Honestly, it's hard for me to
6 even speak to this because I feel it
7 will fall on deaf ears and you guys
8 will do whatever you want. But if
9 there is something that could get
10 through, just know that the majority
11 of us do not support this. If you're
12 going to charge something, at least
13 charge something reasonable, not \$9 to
14 \$23.

15 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

16 Our next speaker is Denise M.

17 DENISE M: Hi. Can you hear me?

18 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

19 DENISE M: Hi. Thank you for
20 giving me the opportunity to weigh-in.
21 I hope that this is not just like a
22 performative, you know, session, that
23 you actually take people's comments
24 into consideration.

25 I've been on a lot of other

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1 meetings recently about DOT plans and
2 neighborhood street changes and when
3 community feed back, it gets
4 overlooked completely. So I hope that
5 this isn't the case.

6 I'm against congestion pricing.
7 I take the subway. I'm a life-long
8 New Yorker. I take the subway and I
9 see every single day people not paying
10 their fare, nobody is doing anything
11 about it. If there's revenue that
12 needs to be collected, right there
13 there's something.

14 Also, when the first talk of
15 this toll was, you know, being
16 discussed, the time was totally
17 different than what, now you're
18 proposing that it's until 8:00 p.m.

19 I work in Midtown Manhattan in
20 an in-person job, where I've worked
21 throughout the pandemic. We were
22 closed for a couple months. I'm in a
23 business that relies on people being
24 in-person, in their offices in Midtown
25 Manhattan. They're not coming back.

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1 It's like a small -- I mean, you know,
2 can look up the percentage of people
3 that have returned to the office --
4 very small. This is going to further
5 discourage people from coming.

6 I grew up in a bus to subway
7 neighborhood and went to high school
8 in Manhattan. It took, you know, over
9 an hour to get there. I was a
10 teenager, that was fine. You know,
11 just to not have the option for family
12 to pick you up if you're there late,
13 like now it's, you know, until 8:00
14 p.m.

15 This is just an unfair tax on
16 just the middle and working class.
17 And I also live now in a neighborhood
18 where if people were to do a
19 park-and-ride kind of situation, where
20 they drive closer to an accessible
21 subway, you've already taken away a
22 majority of parking under the BQE on
23 the street, somebody mentioned the
24 municipal parking in Long Island City.

25 The DOT is proposing taking away

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1 a lane of traffic on McGuinness
2 Boulevard. Like it's just going to be
3 insanity -- I'll wrap it up.

4 Collect fares from people, get
5 money off of Lyft and Uber who your
6 congestion -- that's where the
7 congestion's from. It's documented
8 how many Lyft and Uber vehicles are in
9 New York City creating congestion.
10 You can see with your own two eyes,
11 you know, when you're -- how many cars
12 have the T-plate.

13 I think the numbers should be
14 limited of Lyft and Ubers. You can
15 start from there to get rid of some of
16 the congestion. Thank you.

17 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker Renee Lau.

19 RENEE LAU: Hi.

20 MS. FLAX: You may begin your
21 remarks.

22 RENEE LAU: Hi. I'm a life-long
23 New Yorker. I live in the Central
24 Business District, I work in the
25 Central Business District. My parents

1 have businesses here and now that
2 they're a little elderly, I have to
3 travel.

4 I have a car in the Central
5 Business District. I have to travel
6 out of the borough at times to take
7 care of them. So I understand what
8 the situation is. You guys are trying
9 to raise money because you guys do
10 have a gap, well-known budget gap for
11 quite some time, and I am against the
12 Central Business District Tolling
13 because I think that it won't
14 necessarily do everything that you're
15 intending.

16 So for example, the
17 environmental effects, I think that a
18 lot of the traffic that you -- looking
19 on the street, there are a lot of Uber
20 and Lyfts. They're not necessarily
21 yellow taxis and the yellow taxis are
22 already paying \$2.75 every ride. I
23 think they should be exempt.

24 I think there should be
25 reasonable exemptions for all people

1 that have difficulty, elderly people
2 that live in the area. But to think
3 that -- and what also needs to be
4 considered is that in London where
5 this was initially implemented, there
6 was a decrease in the business in the
7 Central Business District. So that
8 should really be considered.

9 I think if you do implement it,
10 it really does need to be a smaller
11 amount so that people can digest it
12 and then you slowly raise it up, okay.
13 And probably what you need to do is, I
14 think what they did in London is that
15 it's more punitive for high -- not
16 fuel efficient vehicles, diesel
17 vehicles and things such as that.

18 And someone else suggested that
19 perhaps you should also have some
20 licensing for the bicycles and I think
21 that makes a lot of sense. I know a
22 lot of people have been hurt riding
23 bicycles and it's a lot of times
24 because they're not observing the
25 rules of the road and then they get

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1 hurt, and I think that that should be
2 considered, so.

3 Consideration for fuel efficient
4 vehicles, I think should be
5 considered. You know, I have a green
6 E-ZPass. My car doesn't emit anything
7 so I think that really should be
8 considered.

9 If you are trying to raise the
10 overall money for the MTA, you should
11 consider those things and what would
12 be the least resistant in terms of
13 what the public will accept. That's
14 all I have to say. Thank you.

15 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

16 MR. OLIVA: As a reminder, in
17 addition to the virtual public
18 hearings, there are several other ways
19 you can provide comments on the
20 Environmental Assessment through
21 September 9, 2022. We encourage the
22 public to comment via the CBDTP
23 website, where you can also find the
24 latest project information and sign up
25 to stay informed via e-mail.

1 If you do not have internet
2 access, you can phone into these
3 hearings. That information is on our
4 website with a dial-in number and
5 webinar ID.

6 MS. FLAX: We will now read our
7 list of people who signed up to speak
8 a second time, giving those who have
9 not spoken yet an opportunity to
10 speak.

11 If you missed your name being
12 called, please let us know by
13 identifying yourself in the Q&A
14 function. We will start with those
15 speakers who we believe are in
16 attendance.

17 Joshua Bienstock, followed by
18 Joanna Smith.

19 Joshua Bienstock.

20 Joshua Bienstock.

21 Joanna Smith, followed by Ali
22 Inayat.

23 JOANNA SMITH: Good afternoon.
24 I am calling from vacation because
25 it's late-August and I assume that's

1 what a lot of other New Yorkers are
2 doing right now.

3 I decided to not prepare a
4 statement because I don't want to
5 spend my vacation doing that. But I
6 am ecstatic that congestion pricing is
7 finally moving forward. I know there
8 have been plans floating around Albany
9 at least for a decade, if not longer.

10 I want to just refresh everybody
11 on how we've come to be here at this
12 hearing. It's because we elected
13 people to go to Albany to represent
14 us. Those people considered all the
15 aspects of congestion pricing for a
16 very, very long time and they finally
17 passed it three years ago, so it's
18 law.

19 This is going to happen. It
20 needs to happen. It's happening far
21 too late. We find ourselves today
22 2022, in the middle of a climate
23 dystopia. We've crossed the tipping
24 point.

25 The climate's breaking down and

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1 we are playing a role, all of us, all
2 act like little animals running around
3 New York trying to get to work, trying
4 to take care of our families, trying
5 to hang out with our friends, we're
6 all causing this climate breakdown by
7 how we get around.

8 MTA has a great offering for us,
9 subways, buses, things that can move
10 us around without destroying the
11 environment. And this hearing is
12 about the Environmental Assessment,
13 which, I think, is quite thorough at
14 this point. I think we need to stop
15 spending time studying. We need to
16 start spending time implementing.

17 I've enjoyed hearing all the
18 beautiful names of my fellow New
19 Yorkers at this hearing. I'm really
20 disappointed that more of them were
21 not here. There were a lot of
22 systemic issues with how MTA rolled
23 out this hearing, such as not
24 reminding people about it or how they
25 could access it. Hoping you guys take

1 that into account for future hearings.

2 I just want to, you know, make
3 sure that everyone who has larger
4 systemic, socioeconomic and economic
5 just -- it's a disaster, right. We're
6 living in a breakdown of capitalism, a
7 breakdown of democracy.

8 Congestion pricing is not going
9 to make or break that. What it is
10 going to do is going to protect the
11 one out of ten New Yorkers who suffer
12 from asthma. It's going to prevent a
13 great bulk of the at least 6,000
14 pedestrians who are injured in traffic
15 crashes. It's going to make our
16 environment in the CBD calmer for
17 everyone, cleaner for everyone, safer
18 for everyone and we'll all be able to
19 get around a lot easier. Thank you.

20 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

21 Our next speaker is Ali Inayat.

22 Ali?

23 ALI INAYAT: Can you hear me?

24 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

25 ALI INAYAT: Yes. This is Ali

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1 Inayat. I actually have -- I'm -- a
2 Uber driver. We've been paying with
3 the -- from 2018, \$2.75 below 96.
4 That's already like for -- and it's
5 like they attacked yellow cab too.
6 They are paying too. It's already so
7 much. I don't know how much the MTA
8 -- they want to be greedy.

9 We already paying since from
10 that time they're collecting millions
11 and millions dollars. So I think so
12 they should give a break for Uber taxi
13 car service. But they want to charge
14 like a decent price. Not so much
15 because which one I'm able to afford.
16 I don't know like at the moment, it's
17 like a lot of people struggling and
18 everybody go normal yet and everything
19 going rocket high and you want -- rent
20 very difficult to afford on everybody.
21 So that's all I want to say.

22 Please think about that. We are
23 human beings too, you know.

24 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

25 ALI INAYAT: You're welcome.

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1 MS. FLAX: We'll now continue
2 calling the list of speakers a second
3 time. Again, if you hear your name
4 called or believe that your name was
5 missed, please identify yourself in
6 the Q&A function.

7 Councilmember David Carr.

8 Ross Carstens.

9 Allison Stone.

10 Emilio Ron.

11 Wendy Nodiff.

12 Joshua Bienstock.

13 Michael Murray.

14 Bruce Lander.

15 Krishna Pendyala.

16 Anne Lueck.

17 John Law.

18 Adrienne Meisels.

19 Fakhul Islam.

20 Rosannex Alberts.

21 Charles Bergman.

22 Josue Martinez.

23 Nathan Giannini.

24 Emmanuel Agostini.

25 Matthew Joseph.

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1 Bert Hirsch.
2 Jonathan Sobel.
3 Jesus Urena.
4 Josephine Peterson.
5 Nicolaos Petrakakos.
6 Dimitris Koutoumbas.
7 Gerald Adames.
8 Balde Abdoul.
9 Galen Criscione.
10 Philip De Guzman.
11 Todd Maisel.
12 Michael Marel.
13 Som Ramrup.
14 Richard Robbins.
15 Jonathan Martin.
16 Charles Warburton.
17 Umair Zaeem.
18 Derek Evers.
19 Cindy Morris.
20 Irine Tkeshelashvili.
21 Ella Pultinas.
22 Teara Wilson.
23 Andrew Lester.
24 Rob Littell.
25 Buzz Roddy.

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1 Stephane Sykes.
2 1420 GC.
3 Jessica Jean-Baptiste.
4 Eric Limpscomb.
5 Madelene Agcaoili.
6 Mark Williams.
7 Thomas Proctor.
8 Ride Anthony.
9 Nathan Werksman.
10 Linda Lublinbrooksoff.
11 Megan Martin.
12 Karen Beluso.
13 Anne Nacinovich.
14 Michael Golz.
15 Jill Pilgrim.
16 Milana Meytes.
17 Ryan Beickert.
18 Kelvin Alvarez.
19 John Cimillo.
20 Maureen McDonough.
21 Mohammad Hossain.
22 Michael Lupo.
23 Michael Dull.
24 Christopher Gomez.
25 We're now at the hundredth

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1 person signed up to speak. If you've
2 heard your name called and missed it
3 or think that we haven't called your
4 name, please let us know in the Q&A
5 function.

6 We'll now continue the reading
7 of the list for a second time.

8 Ryan Goldberg.

9 Sheila Bidar.

10 Kathy Francis.

11 Warren Haring.

12 Constance Stellas.

13 K.C. Jones.

14 Melva Smith.

15 Ronni Libertson.

16 Rick Versace.

17 Ruth McDaniels.

18 Thomas Matte.

19 Rodrick Ruddle Daley.

20 Michael Levario.

21 Lucia Deng.

22 Martin Landsman.

23 Stephen Santangelo.

24 Herbert Feuerstein.

25 Faith Zuckerman.

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1 Marc Kirschner.
2 Alana Wilson.
3 MD Muzir Uddin.
4 Roshnie Kewal.
5 Alex Weinberg.
6 Danny Sena.
7 Debra Wevers.
8 Ray Dries.
9 Harriet Black.
10 Frank Turzio.
11 Nickya Whittington.
12 Sarah McHenry.
13 Eric Sanders.
14 MD Hussain.
15 Jack Drury.
16 Ryanna Milligan.
17 Steve Flack.
18 Reilly Owens.
19 Lawrence Lipman.
20 Lionel Morales.
21 Alison Glestein.
22 Alison Glestein.
23 Alison, you may begin your
24 remarks.
25 ALISON GLESTEIN: Man brutally

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1 attacked on subway while coming home
2 from work; Man fatally stabbed on
3 Brooklyn subway platform on the way to
4 work; Mass shooting on subway, at
5 least ten shot; Woman violently groped
6 inside Brooklyn subway station; Man
7 breaks 39 year-old woman's jaw in NYC
8 subway attack.

9 Those are just a small handful
10 of headlines over the last couple of
11 months in New York City. I drive to
12 Manhattan from Brooklyn for work six
13 days a week. I don't drive because I
14 want to, I drive because I'm afraid to
15 ride the subway. I'm not comfortable
16 riding it.

17 CP can potentially cost me \$552
18 a month, if drivers are proposed the
19 \$23 a day.

20 How will I or other people
21 afford that? They won't. We're not
22 going to be forced to choose between
23 our safety and possibility of our
24 lives or putting food on the table,
25 clothes on our kids' backs, or paying

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1 rent. It's not a choice that
2 hard-working New Yorkers who don't
3 have the option of working in the
4 comfortability of an office they
5 should have to make.

6 New Yorkers should not be
7 slammed another tax just to drive to
8 work in their own city where they are
9 already paying taxes. This is clearly
10 a money grab for the failing MTA. In
11 2022, just this year, the MTA received
12 six billion dollars in grants, the
13 largest lump sum in federal transit --
14 in history. Bringing their grand
15 total to 15 billion in federal aid
16 since the start of the pandemic.

17 The subway system is more
18 dangerous and dirtier than ever right
19 now. Where did this money go? Until
20 they can account for that money,
21 congestion pricing should be stopped
22 in its tracks. Until the MTA and the
23 city can assure we're safe on the
24 subway, safe standing on the platform,
25 in the station or walking down the

1 stairs, until they clean up the subway
2 stations, which are grotesque, come up
3 with a plan to curb the raging rat
4 problem, this money is going to waste.

5 Personal safety and security
6 rank the top of the list of what needs
7 to improve. To increase rider
8 satisfaction, the MTA's June customer
9 survey found followed in order by
10 homeless people, people behaving
11 erratically, wait times and
12 cleanliness. Why doesn't the city and
13 the MTA work on these fixes as a
14 start. We should not be forced from
15 the safety of our cars because we can
16 no longer afford to drive to work and
17 forced into the crime-riddled, filthy,
18 dangerous, unreliable public
19 transportation system.

20 Thank you.

21 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

22 Our next speaker is Ezekial
23 Zimmerman.

24 EZEKIAL ZIMMERMAN: Hi. Good
25 afternoon. I'm here as a resident of

1 Lower Manhattan, my wife, myself, our
2 three children live in the Kips Bay
3 area.

4 We have one car. Our families
5 are all in Queens, so we're back and
6 forth a lot of times to visit family.
7 But we live in Lower Manhattan and
8 most of the time, our car just stays
9 in our garage. We need it for certain
10 times when we're taking kids to
11 sporting events and things like that,
12 visiting family, like I said.

13 Most of the times it stays in
14 the garage, which is expensive enough.
15 I think we really need to have certain
16 carve-outs for families who live in
17 the Central Business District and, you
18 know, make under a certain amount for
19 the entire family scaled up for income
20 or who just have one car and leave it
21 in the garage. Otherwise, I mean, the
22 costs are just too much and I feel
23 that ourselves and many other families
24 in our neighborhood who are in similar
25 situations, we have to choose between

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1 possibly leaving Manhattan, where we
2 enjoy living, where we have a great
3 community, where we have our friends,
4 we have our schools, you know, whole
5 networks, but pricing us out of it
6 simply because of an extra tax on
7 owning a car, whether or not we use
8 it, whether or not we're even taking
9 it in or out of that district or if it
10 just sits in our garage that -- that
11 might just be too much for us and
12 other families like us to bear.

13 So we hope you guys will
14 reconsider a vastly reduced fee for
15 those who reside in this part of the
16 business district who have one car,
17 like I said, or are under certain
18 incomes. That would be very helpful,
19 it would help us know for sure that
20 our budgets can still fit without us
21 having to think about moving out.

22 Thank you very much.

23 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

24 We will now continue reading the
25 list a second time. Again, if you

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1 hear your name called, believe you've
2 missed your name being called, please
3 let us know in the Q&A function.

4 Walter Iwachiw.

5 Yvette Banks.

6 Dario Gutierrez.

7 Gwen Davis.

8 Donna Steele.

9 Ron Simoncini.

10 McIntyre Aleusledain.

11 Andrew S.

12 John Burns.

13 Jorge Urana.

14 Christopher Davids.

15 Zaheer Nota.

16 Daniel Yahraes.

17 Josh Youner.

18 Charles O'Neill.

19 Nicole Chimienti.

20 Oliver Henderson.

21 Anna Holness.

22 Li Lin.

23 Sha Bhuiyan.

24 Christine Kramer.

25 William Ritziu.

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1	Johansen Concepcion.
2	Jean Hahn.
3	Ricardo Pacheco.
4	Fran Nieman.
5	Gordon Lee.
6	Sherlly A.
7	Dawn Belotti.
8	Elie Chiha.
9	Joseph Verebes.
10	James Corter.
11	Mathew Quezada.
12	Stuart Meissner.
13	Kevin Curran.
14	Sam Farrouq.
15	Robin Feuer.
16	Damaris Feliciano.
17	Xcpher Calabrese.
18	Bernardo Celerino.
19	Christopher Kolba.
20	Daniel Pizarro.
21	Gazmend Berdynaj.
22	Amanda Levine.
23	Mohammad Hossen.
24	Paul Wang.
25	Robbee Fian.

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1 Kevin Sachs.

2 Peter Reiter.

3 David Ilku.

4 S-A O. Wilkinson.

5 Jess Gonzal.

6 David Latham.

7 Jimmy Singh.

8 Sudeep Uprety.

9 Guido Hartray.

10 Bob Mann.

11 Patrick O'Reilly.

12 This concludes the second
13 reading of the list of speakers.

14 MR. OLIVA: Thank you all for
15 joining us today. For those of you
16 who did not do so already, we
17 encourage you to take our short survey
18 via the QR code or link currently
19 being displayed. The link can also be
20 found in the Q&A section of the Zoom.

21 For details about upcoming
22 hearings, please visit the project
23 website at mta.info/CBDTP or call the
24 Public Meeting Hotline at (646)
25 252-6777. You can also obtain

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1 information regarding participating in
2 these hearings by phone.

3 As a final reminder, in addition
4 to the virtual public hearings, there
5 are several other ways you can provide
6 comments on the Environmental
7 Assessment through September 9, 2022.
8 We encourage the public to comment via
9 the CBDTP website, where you can also
10 find the latest project information
11 and sign up to stay informed via
12 e-mail.

13 You may also e-mail comments to
14 CBDTP@mtabt.org, send them via mail to
15 CBD Tolling Program, 2 Broadway, 23rd
16 Floor, New York, New York 10004, or
17 call (646) 252-7440.

18 Comments may also be provided
19 directly to the Federal Highway
20 Administration via e-mail to
21 CBDTP@dot.gov, or via mail to FHWA -
22 New York Division, RE: CBDTP, Leo W.
23 O'Brien Federal Building, 11A Clinton
24 Avenue, Suite 719, Albany, New York
25 12207.

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1 The time is currently 6:33 p.m.,
2 this concludes our hearing. Thank you
3 again for your participation.

4 (TIME NOTED: 6:33 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF NEW YORK)

:SS

COUNTY OF QUEENS)

I, MAKEDA EDWARDS, a Notary Public
within and for the State of New York, do hereby
certify:

That the witness whose examination is
hereinbefore set forth was duly sworn and that
such an examination is a true record of the
testimony given by such witness.

I further certify that I am not related
to any of these parties to this action by blood or
marriage, and that I am not in any way interested
in the outcome of this matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set
my hand on this 29th day of August, 2022.

Makeda Edwards

MAKEDA EDWARDS