

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 30, 2022

1 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT CONGESTION PRICING PROGRAM

2 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PUBLIC HEARING

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4 VIDEO CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM

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6 DATE: AUGUST 30, 2022

7 TIME: 5:01 p.m.

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In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
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1 A P P E A R A N C E S :

2

3 Lou Oliva, Hearing Officer

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

6 Nichola Angel, Vice President, Triborough Bridge
7 and Tunnel Authority

8 Richard Wilder, Deputy Chief Engineer Design for
9 the New York State Department of Transportation

10 Patrick Smith, Senior Policy Advisor for New York
11 City Department of Transportation

11

12 Rick Marquis, New York Division Administrator for
13 the Federal Highway Administration

14 Anna Price, Director for Office of
15 Programs for the Federal Highway Administration

16 Leah Flax, Moderator

17 Michael Wojnar, Moderator

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1 Good afternoon. We will now
2 begin the hearing. Today is Tuesday,
3 August 30, 2022, and the time is 5:01
4 p.m. My name is Lou Oliva, and I will
5 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 264 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 and evening,
8 we will regularly let everyone know
9 where we are in the list so you can
10 gauge how much longer you may need to
11 wait to 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 the Central Business

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

8 You may also submit comments
9 directly to the Federal Highway
10 Administration via email at
11 CBDTP@dot.gov or by mail at FHWA-New
12 York Division, Re: CBDTP, Leo W.
13 O'Brien Federal Building, 11A, Clinton
14 Avenue, Suite 719, Albany, New York
15 12207. Comments submitted by mail,
16 phone, e-mail, online form or verbally
17 at a hearing will be considered
18 equally and carry the same 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 will 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. C. 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 evening, I am representing
4 the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel
5 Authority and MTA more broadly, and I
6 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 other project sponsors
11 for this effort. Richard Wilder,
12 Deputy Chief Engineer Design for the
13 New 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 this project. He will be
22 joined by Anna Price, Director of
23 Office of Programs.

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 all of you for
18 your earlier input; I believe you will
19 see firsthand how your comments
20 affected what we explored and how we
21 addressed 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 Environmental
16 Assessment findings. It is a bit
17 longer than one might expect, but
18 there is a lot of important
19 information here and we want to ensure
20 that everyone has an opportunity to
21 hear about the areas in which they may
22 be interested.

23 After the presentation, we will
24 listen to those of you who would like
25 to provide oral comments. The formal

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

8 Now, let's begin the
9 presentation.

10 [Taped presentation begins -
11 Narrated by Dr. C. De Cerreño.]

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

22 As defined by the act, vehicles
23 entering or remaining in the Manhattan
24 Central Business District on or below
25 60th Street, which is shown in the map

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1 in orange, would be tolled. The FDR
2 Drive, West Side Highway, Battery Park
3 Underpass and any surface roadway
4 portion of the Hugh L. Carey Tunnel
5 connecting to West Street. In
6 essence, the dark red line along the
7 edges of the orange area on the map to
8 the right, would be excluded from the
9 toll.

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

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

21 With respect to how the
22 Manhattan CBD Tolling Program would
23 work, locations for infrastructure
24 would include detection points placed
25 at entrances and exits to the

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1 Manhattan CBD. On the avenues, these
2 detection points would generally be
3 between 60th and 61st Streets and an
4 algorithm would be used so those who
5 stay on excluded roadways are not
6 tolled.

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

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

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

1 arms, as you see on the left.
2 Importantly, the tolling system
3 equipment will be clustered and housed
4 in a single-unit enclosure as shown on
5 the bottom.

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

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

24 The benefits of the program
25 would include reduced vehicular

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

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

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

1 in the decision-making process.

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

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

22 The need is to reduce vehicle
23 congestion in the Manhattan Central
24 Business District and create a new
25 local recurring funding source for

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

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

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1 Many efforts have been made and
2 yet, congestion in New York City
3 consistently ranks among the worst in
4 the United States. Indeed, congestion
5 costs 102 hours of lost time, equating
6 to almost \$1,600 per year per driver
7 in delay.

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

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

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1 New Yorkers easing congestion and
2 creating growth, and improving safety
3 and customer service through
4 technology.

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

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

1 the Manhattan Central Business
2 District, and generate funds for MTA's
3 capital investments to subways, buses
4 and commuter railroads.

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

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

25 As I said a moment ago, there

1 are two alternatives for this
2 Environment Assessment, the no-action
3 and the Central Business District
4 Tolling Alternative.

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

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

24 So let me walk you through.

25 Along the top, are the tolling

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

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

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

1 crossing credits.

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

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

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

25 And as you read across to the

1 right, you will see under each of the
2 different tolling scenarios how these
3 different types of vehicles were
4 treated with respect to caps or
5 exemptions.

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

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

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

24 First and foremost, tolling the
25 Manhattan Central Business District in

1 all scenarios, reduce traffic entering
2 the Manhattan Central Business
3 District and results in a net benefit
4 in congestion reduction for the
5 region.

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

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

23 It results in less effect
24 reducing traffic from Queens and much
25 less effect reducing traffic from New

1 Jersey. They result in greater
2 effects reducing traffic from north of
3 60th Street in Brooklyn and they
4 result in more traffic at the
5 Queens-Midtown tunnel, the Hugh L.
6 Carey Tunnel and the Long Island
7 Expressway.

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

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

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

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1 further away tend to have fewer
2 commuters to the Manhattan Central
3 Business District.

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

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

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

1 commute by car, approximately eight
2 percent of them are from counties in
3 New York, roughly three percent in New
4 Jersey and less than one percent from
5 Connecticut.

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

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

1 one is looking at.

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

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

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

1 of increased delays at certain times.

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

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

23 In addition,
24 post-implementation, the project
25 sponsors will monitor effects. And if

1 needed, Triborough Bridge and Tunnel
2 Authority, TBTA, will modify the toll
3 rates, crossing credits, exemptions
4 and/or discounts to reduce those
5 adverse effects.

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

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

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

23 The project team looked closer
24 at why trucks were diverting in the
25 modeling. We found that the extent of

1 the diversion was linked to the truck
2 toll and price differential in the
3 initial six tolling scenarios where
4 trucks are tolled at a higher price.
5 To test this, we created tolling
6 Scenario G, which prices all vehicle
7 types the same.

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

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

1 modeling in the form of increased
2 delay at certain times. And you can
3 see them here on the right.

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

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

24 We do see that in some scenarios
25 increased ridership could adversely

1 affect passenger flows at specific
2 stairs or escalators, what we refer to
3 as stationed elements.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 Central Business District or reverse
2 commuting, traffic patterns on local
3 streets or community facilities and
4 services.

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

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

23 Depending on the tolling
24 scenario, the toll could reduce taxi
25 and for-hire vehicle revenues in the

1 Manhattan Central Business District.
2 While the industry would remain
3 economically viable overall,
4 individual drivers could be adversely
5 affected, and this is dealt with a
6 little bit later in the presentation.

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

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

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

1 local exceedances of air quality
2 standards.

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

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

24 In terms of environmental
25 justice, the study did find adverse

1 effects where mitigation is required.
2 The map to the right shows the
3 communities that are environmental
4 justice communities throughout the
5 region. They are widespread and as
6 shown earlier in some cases, certain
7 EJ communities will benefit directly
8 from this project.

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

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

25 There will be a tax credit for

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

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

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

1 discounted transit fare products and
2 programs.

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

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

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

23 TBTA will work with MTA New York
24 City Transit to institute an
25 employment resource coordination

1 program to connect drivers
2 experiencing job insecurity with a
3 direct pathway to licensing, training
4 and job placement with MTA or its
5 affiliated vendors at no cost to the
6 drivers.

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

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

1 tolling system equipment, and
2 restoration of the roadway, sidewalk
3 or ground surface.

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

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

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

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

25 Central Park and the High Line

1 have the potential for a de minimis
2 use. Federal Highway Administration
3 is soliciting input from the public on
4 the effects of installing equipment
5 and signs within and on these
6 properties. Signage and for
7 replacement poles with tolling
8 technology would be installed in
9 Central Park.

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

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

24 Federal Highway Administration
25 has concurrence on a proposed finding

1 from officials with jurisdiction over
2 Central Park and the High Line and
3 will consider public input on its
4 proposed finding received during this
5 public review of the Environmental
6 Assessments.

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

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

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

1 as data becomes available and analysis
2 is completed.

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

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

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

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1 meetings.

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

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

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

24 With respect to schedule, this
25 shows where we currently are. We did

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1 our early public outreach in 2021. In
2 early 2022, we prepared the
3 Environmental Assessment, we've
4 notified agencies and organizations
5 and individuals of the Environmental
6 Assessment's availability and we're
7 now in the midst, in orange here, of
8 public review and comment on the
9 Environmental Assessment.

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

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

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1 As noted, our public comment
2 period is open until September 9,
3 2022. If you would like to submit
4 written comments, you may do so in the
5 following ways: Through our project
6 website, by email, mail, phone or fax,
7 or to the Federal Highway
8 Administration by email or mail.

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

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

25 [Taped presentation ends.]

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

7 We are gathering public comment
8 today on the Environmental Assessment
9 for the Central Business District
10 Tolling Program. Comments will be
11 recorded, indexed and responded to as
12 part of the Environmental Assessment
13 process. Responses will not be made
14 during today's hearing.

15 There are 264 speakers signed up
16 to speak tonight. 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 a beep
20 notifying you that you have 30 seconds
21 remaining. We ask that speakers keep
22 their remarks to the three-minute time
23 frame out of respect for all other
24 speakers.

25 We will be calling speakers in

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

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 Jessica
8 Sider, followed by Donna Westervelt.

9 Jessica, your audio doesn't
10 appear to be connected yet.

11 Jessica, we will try to -- oh,
12 it looks like you're connecting. If
13 you're able to unmute yourself, then
14 you can begin your remarks.

15 JESSICA SIDER: Can you hear me
16 okay?

17 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

18 JESSICA SIDER: Okay. Great.

19 My name is Jessica Sider. I am
20 a resident in what everyone is calling
21 the Central Business District. Just
22 calling to, you know, put a couple of
23 comments in.

24 Firstly, as a resident, I
25 personally feel a little erased by

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1 this zone being called the Central
2 Business District. It is an erasure
3 of scores of residents, and I think
4 that grouping them under the
5 congestion label is a misnomer. I
6 think having, essentially, a daily tax
7 is extremely onerous, especially for
8 residents like me that are considered
9 low-income. You know, many of us
10 don't have the extra cash flow to, you
11 know, pay a daily tax, you know, you
12 don't have the ability to, you know,
13 wait until tax time to recoup, you
14 know, costs for stuff like that.

15 We already are paying a premium
16 to live here. And, you know, there
17 are residents that I know are like me.
18 We don't have the ability to move
19 around easily because we're
20 lower-income. I personally live in an
21 apartment that I acquired through the
22 housing lottery. So it's not so easy
23 for a lot of us to pick up and leave
24 as much as we might want to.

25 Secondly, as far as congestion

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1 and air quality issues, I really don't
2 think this does a lot. I think what
3 this does is it reroutes congestion
4 and air quality problems to locations
5 that are going to be just outside the
6 border. I suspect that we're just
7 going to be, you know, people that are
8 maybe doing a park and ride situation
9 or just getting off just outside the
10 border to avoid paying all these
11 taxes. So this doesn't really address
12 that and it actually might bottleneck
13 a lot of the existing congestion.

14 You know, there's not really any
15 impact to climate change, it sounds,
16 right. There's no actual reduction in
17 emissions, it's just rerouting traffic
18 around. And in my opinion, this is
19 just another failed to pollute, you
20 know, policy. Where only the
21 wealthiest could wield that privilege
22 to just, you know, exist. As a
23 resident, it's difficult because we
24 don't have a choice to be here. We're
25 not congestion, we live here.

1 Lastly, all of New York City and
2 beyond uses the MTA system, not just
3 those in and around the Central
4 Business District. I personally think
5 that federal lawmakers should fight
6 for more federal funding to fund a
7 robust MTA, especially since climate
8 catastrophe is a crisis that the
9 entire nation is facing. It's not
10 really, you know, just kind of
11 localized here.

12 Lastly, privacy concerns; the
13 constant automated movement tracking
14 that's a --

15 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
16 remarks.

17 JESSICA SIDER -- huge privacy
18 concern. In conclusion.

19 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

20 JESSICA SIDER: -- as a resident
21 in this district, I feel that there
22 should be a waiver. Anything --

23 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
24 Donna Westervelt, followed by Burton
25 Thelander.

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1 Our next speaker is Burton
2 Thelander, followed by Kevin Anthony.

3 Burton, you may begin your
4 remarks.

5 BURTON THELANDER: Hi. I want
6 to thank the folks that described the
7 results of the data gathering about
8 the impact of the toll collection
9 process in the Central Business
10 District. So I thank you for that
11 analysis and presenting that data.

12 I live in Orange County with my
13 wife. We are both RNs, we work
14 part-time in the Central Business
15 District. And we believe that it
16 really is important to promote mass
17 transit use, reduce vehicle
18 congestion, vehicle use in the Central
19 Business District. And we believe
20 that climate change, global warning is
21 something that we really have to take
22 action to reduce that impact.

23 So we support the tolling
24 program, and thank you again for
25 listening to my comments.

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1 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

2 Our next speaker is Kevin
3 Anthony, followed by David-Paul
4 Gerber.

5 Our next speaker is David-Paul
6 Gerber, followed by Michael Murray.

7 DAVID-PAUL GERBER: Hello,
8 everyone. Good afternoon. How you
9 doing? This is David-Paul Gerber
10 calling in regard -- this is in regard
11 to the meeting which is held in August
12 where very few people -- many people
13 be on vacation itself.

14 And in regards to the meeting,
15 something needs to be addressed about
16 license plate covers, yes, the ones
17 that are used on the front and rear
18 vehicles to illegally cover them or
19 make them that we're -- would not be
20 able to get the tolls in order.
21 Meaning that if you have a license
22 plate cover and you go through the
23 Central Business District tolling, for
24 the camera, it may not be able to take
25 a picture itself.

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1 And I have seen that. I have
2 seen it myself. I've seen two people
3 today in Lower Manhattan with license
4 plate covers. And you know who does
5 that, city workers, government
6 workers, construction workers,
7 everyday -- everyday Joe Schmo. Some
8 even have one for the MTA. Or
9 maybe -- he parks down there over near
10 2 Broadway. It's a black Honda. He's
11 from New Jersey. He has got two
12 license plate covers, front and back.
13 There's one there that I also saw that
14 belongs to a fire department employee,
15 also have license plate covers.
16 There's going to be an increase of
17 these drivers using plate covers to
18 evade the Manhattan Central Business
19 District toll.

20 The Manhattan Central Business
21 toll as intended for the funding of
22 the MTA capital program is misguided.
23 It does not really reduce traffic. It
24 only brings more traffic to the Upper
25 East Side, Upper West Side where they

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1 will park and then take the train
2 down.

3 So there's a lot of abuse with
4 these covers. They need to be
5 addressed. Otherwise, I don't see
6 anything -- if you're not going to
7 enforce it, why should people pay a
8 toll up to \$30 to enter Manhattan
9 below 60th Street if the next guy, who
10 happens to be maybe an MTA employee,
11 not pay the toll itself using those
12 plate covers?

13 They're already used to evade
14 tolls on MTA and Port Authority
15 bridges, and to evade enforcement
16 cameras, such as speed and red light
17 cameras.

18 Thank you very much.

19 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Michael
21 Murray, followed by Harold Awerbuch.

22 MICHAEL MURRAY: Hello. My name
23 is Michael Murray. Can you hear me
24 okay?

25 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

1 MICHAEL MURRAY: Yes. Well,
2 first, for the benefit of the
3 gentleman from the U.S. Department of
4 Transportation, I'd like to say that
5 the happy findings of the
6 environmental impact study done by the
7 MTA absolutely defy logic and need to
8 be looked into more seriously.

9 In any event, I'm grateful for
10 this opportunity to offer my thoughts
11 with respect to congestion pricing.
12 My wife and I are both retired senior
13 citizens living on a fixed income in
14 what would be the Manhattan Central
15 Business District.

16 Moreover, I suffer from severe
17 COPD and emphysema, with air pollution
18 being a clear and present danger that
19 threatens my very existence. In
20 theory, this should make me a champion
21 of congestion pricing that promises to
22 improve air quality. But the reality
23 is far different.

24 Congestion pricing as currently
25 proposed would be an absolute disaster

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1 for my wife and I. My health problems
2 preclude me from using mass transit.
3 We need to drive to essential medical
4 care, and under the current proposal,
5 we face punishing tolls every time I
6 need to go to NewYork-Presbyterian to
7 see the lung transplant team or
8 whenever I need to get to the National
9 Jewish Respiratory Institute at Mount
10 Sinai.

11 Moreover, we face onerous tolls
12 whenever driving to see relatives on
13 Long Island or simply doing to
14 something like going to Stew Leonard's
15 in Yonkers.

16 In essence, the current proposal
17 would largely limit our lives to the
18 confines of the Central Business
19 District erasing our right to travel.
20 No other population would face the
21 hardships that would be imposed on
22 residents of the CBD.

23 Moreover, residents of the CBD
24 are not the cause of our traffic
25 congestion. Commuters, trucks, and

1 for-hire vehicles cruising our streets
2 while they wait for fares are clogging
3 our streets. And the groups claiming
4 that residents of the CBD have many
5 options other than driving, all seem
6 to assume that people are healthy
7 enough to walk, bike or use mass
8 transit.

9 While the Ubers, Lyfts and taxi
10 lobbyist arguing that they should get
11 exemptions are asking the rest of us
12 to subsidize the very activities that
13 are at the heart of our congestion
14 problem, while undermining congestion
15 pricing's ability to get more people
16 to use mass transit.

17 In sum, fairness requires
18 exemptions for residents of the CBD,
19 especially seniors and the handicap.
20 And if politics precludes fair
21 treatment of residents of the CBD,
22 then perhaps we could follow London's
23 successful congestion pricing program
24 where residents of the CBD get a
25 90 percent discount.

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1 Lastly, I've yet to hear how any
2 of us will vote during the time
3 between the imposition of congestion
4 pricing and the actual improvements to
5 mass transit that congestion pricing
6 is supposed to fund. If congestion
7 pricing works as --

8 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
9 comments.

10 MICHAEL MURRAY: -- it will cause
11 a massive increase in the use of mass
12 transit forcing riders into a --

13 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

14 MICHAEL MURRAY: -- handle
15 alone.

16 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
17 Harold Awerbuch, followed by Colette
18 Vogell.

19 Our next speaker is Colette
20 Vogell, followed by Norbert Cyran.

21 COLETTE VOGELL: Hi. Can you
22 hear me?

23 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

24 COLETTE VOGELL: Hi. My name is
25 Colette Vogell. I live in Murray

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1 Hill. I spoke at the last two
2 meetings, and I'm going to be speaking
3 again, as many meetings as I can to
4 express my disgust with the idea of
5 congestion pricing. Not just for the
6 residents that live in this zone, who,
7 by the way, we have a subway desert,
8 we have no access to the 2nd Avenue
9 subway.

10 So if you're going to go
11 anywhere South of 2nd Avenue, you have
12 to walk or take a car. It's not right
13 that you're even considering it,
14 considering you have not expanded the
15 2nd Avenue subway all the way down to
16 Lower Manhattan. We need access to
17 that subway.

18 But in terms of your proposal
19 earlier about adverse effects, the one
20 thing that you're missing is the
21 adverse effect that it will have on
22 the people that get assaulted on your
23 subway systems. You still have not
24 addressed the high rise of crime on
25 your subways and buses. And there's

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1 no plan in your environmental study to
2 address that, you need to address
3 that. If you want people to feel safe
4 to use your subways and buses, you
5 need to fix the crime problem that you
6 have down in your subway systems. And
7 no one is addressing that, not one
8 person or not one study has brought
9 that up.

10 So I don't believe that this
11 environmental impact study is
12 accurate. I think it's totally
13 slanted to the MTA. I agree with the
14 other gentleman that said that this
15 will do absolutely nothing to climate
16 change, all you're doing is moving it
17 around.

18 The FDR now is a mess on rush
19 hour, can you imagine if this goes
20 through. No one would be able to
21 move. No one would be able to go
22 anywhere. It takes approximately 40
23 minutes to go from 38th Street to 96th
24 Street on the FDR during rush hour.
25 Can you imagine how much longer that

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1 will take now if you implement this
2 congestion pricing? It will be
3 impossible.

4 I also want to address all the
5 mom and pop businesses in this area.
6 So anyone who goes shopping, who buys,
7 who gets a haircut, who gets a repair
8 refrigerator man that comes to the
9 home, all of those costs of goods and
10 services will increase dramatically.

11 You don't think that businesses
12 are going to absorb a 23-dollar fee
13 for deliveries for all their goods,
14 no, they are going to pass it on to
15 the consumer. Again, we already pay
16 the most amounts of money and taxes
17 anywhere in the country, the cost of
18 groceries skyrocketed, and now to add
19 the congestion pricing on top of that
20 is not feasible or reasonable to even
21 consider.

22 So this thing needs to be thrown
23 away and you need to start from
24 scratch because this plan is horrible.
25 And unless you all change your mind,

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1 we will not elect any public official
2 that is supporting this. We will make
3 sure that you are not elected the next
4 time you run for office.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Norbert
8 Cyran, followed by Samir Chatterjee.

9 Our next speaker is Samir
10 Chatterjee, followed by Deirdre
11 Huntley-Smith.

12 Our next speaker is Deirdre
13 Huntley-Smith, followed by Michael
14 Streeter.

15 Our next speaker is Michael
16 Streeter, followed by our 15th speaker
17 to sign up, Mikhail Shchukin.

18 Our next speaker is Mikhail
19 Shchukin, followed by Chris Von Der
20 Lieth.

21 Our next speaker is Chris Von
22 Der Lieth, followed by Margaret Van
23 Cleve.

24 Our next speaker is Chris Von
25 Der Lieth.

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1 CHRIS VON DER LIETH: Hi. Chris
2 Von Der Lieth here. Can you hear me?

3 MS. FLAX: We can hear you.

4 CHRIS VON DER LIETH: Okay. I
5 registered just because I'm totally
6 against this congestion pricing for
7 several reasons. You know, obviously
8 it's a tax on, you know, anyone who
9 comes into the city. And also, on top
10 of that, I think to some of the other
11 callers that called in, it's going to
12 increase the costs of goods and
13 services in regards to deliveries, in
14 tradespeople.

15 I also feel that this is just
16 the worse time to put in this
17 congestion tax due to the fact that,
18 you know, the city is coming back from
19 COVID. You also have less -- you
20 have, you know, less folks in the
21 offices and more office capacity.
22 It's just a terrible tax on regular
23 working people. And it's -- the
24 timing couldn't be worse as well, et
25 cetera.

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1 And it's also -- you know, my
2 understanding is it's even -- I
3 believe the tax is also for seven days
4 a week. So even if someone wanted to
5 bring their family and spend money on
6 the weekend, you know, off-peak hours,
7 the tax will still be in place.

8 Again, I'm very much against it.
9 I think it's really a ploy to take
10 money out of working people's hands
11 and just, you know give it to, you
12 know, big developers and offices.
13 It's just terrible. I mean, you know,
14 when I was growing up, the fee to go
15 across -- when I graduated high
16 school, the fee to cross the George
17 Washington Bridge and the Lincoln
18 Tunnel was \$4.

19 Now we're paying \$16, and I live
20 in New Jersey. And it's just -- you
21 know, just now we're paying 16, if we
22 don't get a credit, 23, and 16, it's
23 almost \$40 to come visit the city with
24 your family. And it's just a horrific
25 tax on those people that can, you

1 know, least afford it.

2 So that's where I'll left it at
3 that and that's my comment.

4 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

5 Our next speaker is Margaret Van
6 Cleve, followed by Davindranauth
7 Shiwratan.

8 Our next speaker is
9 Davindranauth Shiwratan, followed by
10 Birain Parikh.

11 Our next speaker is Birain
12 Parikh, followed by our 20th speaker
13 on the list, Carla Sanderson.

14 Our next speaker is Carla
15 Sanderson, followed by Heather
16 Saslovsky.

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

19 CARLA SANDERSON: Hi. Good
20 evening. My name is Carla Sanderson.
21 I work in Midtown Manhattan and have
22 commuted there for over ten years.

23 I think the process is flawed
24 because the Environment Assessment
25 procedure does not consider the harm

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1 of doing nothing. It doesn't consider
2 the status quo and how horrible it is.
3 Cars, trucks, and SUVs are absolutely
4 destroying our city, and this goes to
5 the Central Business District and
6 elsewhere. Pedestrians are getting
7 killed, children and babies are
8 getting killed. There is a glut of
9 paper license plates everywhere.
10 These cars should be towed off our
11 street. Our air quality is getting
12 worse and worse; it smells, it's loud
13 and it's dangerous.

14 The congestion pricing should do
15 everything to decrease car ownership
16 and driving in the Central Business
17 District as much as possible. We
18 should incentivize as much public
19 transit use as possible. We have an
20 excellent subway and bus system
21 throughout the Central Business
22 District.

23 And for those who can take it,
24 they should take it. And I saw some
25 speakers were afraid to ride the

1 subways, but far more people die on
2 the city streets every day from bad
3 drivers. I also don't see why buses
4 should be charged, I don't see why
5 taxis should be charged multiple times
6 a day if we're trying to discourage
7 individuals from driving into the
8 Central Business District.

9 People who can take their
10 families on the PATH train, on public
11 transit when they commute in. Drivers
12 should pay for the use of our streets
13 and the harm to our air and quality of
14 life, especially those who are
15 commuting into New York City who don't
16 live here.

17 Again, I urge you to consider
18 the harm of the status quo and the
19 absolute mess caused by so many cars,
20 SUVs, and trucks.

21 Thank you very much.

22 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

23 Our next speaker is Heather
24 Saslovsky, followed by Public Advocate
25 Jumaane Williams.

1 Our next speaker is Public
2 Advocate Jumaane Williams, followed by
3 Michael Sosin.

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE

5 WILLIAMS: Hello. Can everyone hear
6 me?

7 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

8 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE

9 WILLIAMS: Thank you so much. Peace
10 and blessings, love and light to
11 everyone.

12 I just want to thank everyone,
13 including the MTA, New York State
14 Department of Transportation, New York
15 City Department of Transportation for
16 holding these hearings on Central
17 Business District Tolling Program,
18 commonly known as congestion pricing.

19 First, I do want to say that I
20 believe this needs to move forward and
21 needs to move forward expeditiously.
22 Not only because of course the funding
23 that will help come to our
24 transportation, but of course because
25 of the help that will come to our

1 planet.

2 I do think in order for this to
3 work there has to be minimum to no
4 exemptions. Because with lot of
5 exemptions comes a lot of loopholes.
6 There are two areas I think if
7 exemptions aren't given, there should
8 be some nominal fees.

9 One of those would be to yellow
10 taxi drivers, I believe that industry
11 has almost been decimated. I believe
12 the government has been culpable in
13 that decimation. We also know that
14 they give already 50 percent of every
15 trip since 2009, 2.50 when that trip
16 begin and ends on 96th Street and
17 below since 2019.

18 We also know a portion of the
19 vehicle lease paid by drivers who rent
20 their cabs already go to the MTA. So
21 I think that industry, if there was
22 one to ever get an exemption, it
23 should be that one. They have not
24 contributed to the congestion that's
25 there. As a matter of fact, they

1 might help it.

2 When it comes to Uber and Lyft
3 drivers, I do think, unfortunately,
4 they have added to the congestion
5 that's there. But in this new
6 schematic, I think it would help to
7 move folks around. So while I don't
8 know that they should be treated like
9 yellow cabs if they get an exemption,
10 I do think 9 to 25 to \$23 would be way
11 too much.

12 I think there should be a
13 nominal 50 cents, a dollar, \$2. But
14 it shouldn't be charged to the
15 drivers, it should be charged to the
16 companies. So we want to make sure
17 we're getting the money from the
18 people who need to pay this and not
19 the people who are just trying to make
20 a living.

21 Lastly, if there's going to be
22 anything else, we may want to think of
23 some kind of rebate based on people's
24 income and how often they have to
25 travel in that district. Perhaps at

1 the end of the year, if not full
2 payback -- considerable depending on
3 your income.

4 It's really, really important
5 that we get this right. I know
6 there's going to be a lot of people
7 pushing for exemptions for this. And
8 that reason, many of them will have a
9 lot of good reasons to really think
10 about it. But the more you open up
11 exemptions, the less this is going to
12 work.

13 So it's my opinion that those
14 three buckets that I described are the
15 only places we should be thinking of,
16 and I would just implore to you to do
17 this as quickly as possible. It's
18 been needed, it's been held up. And
19 I'm glad we're doing this now for the
20 sake of our entire planet, for my new
21 baby girl --

22 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
23 remarks.

24 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE

25 WILLIAMS: -- for my daughter, and for

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1 the people who will be coming later,
2 and of course for the mass transit who
3 is suffering right now.

4 Thank you so much.

5 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
6 Michael Sosin, followed by David
7 Ramales.

8 Our next speaker is David
9 Ramales, followed by Peter Wong.

10 Our next speaker is Peter Wong,
11 followed by Gerald Adames.

12 Our next speaker is Gerald
13 Adames, followed by Jason Seo.

14 Our next speaker is Jason Seo,
15 followed by Brandon Buchanan.

16 Our next speaker is Brandon
17 Buchanan, followed by Stacia Cohen.

18 BRANDON BUCHANAN: Greetings.
19 My name is Brandon Buchanan and I'm
20 the director of regulatory affairs
21 with the American Bus Association.
22 Thank you so much for giving us the
23 opportunity to participate in these
24 proceedings labeled Central Business
25 District Program.

1 Just briefly, the American Bus
2 Association does represent motor coach
3 passengers, motor coach operators, as
4 well as tour operators, and also
5 destinations. They're not only
6 located in the Central Business
7 District, but throughout the North
8 America.

9 If this proposal were to move
10 forward, we would like to see motor
11 coaches and other mass transportation
12 providers exempted from tolling
13 aspects if the program.

14 Overall, we would like to see
15 this program reconfigured and a full
16 environmental impact statement
17 prepared as we believe that this
18 process is being rushed and that more
19 time is needed for additional study.
20 Not only to ensure important
21 stakeholders have an opportunity to
22 meaningfully participate, but also
23 that we believe that there is some
24 data that is missing from being
25 considered. Nor is there an economic

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1 impact assessment of the entire
2 program and what that could mean for
3 New York City and the region.

4 I would note that we have
5 requested a 120-day extension to this
6 comment period. As other commenters
7 have stated in prior testimony, we
8 believe this process is missing input
9 from daily commuter communities; such
10 as Eastern Pennsylvania, the Hudson
11 Valley, New Hampshire, as well as
12 Boston.

13 With those communities and
14 commuters missing for data
15 calculations, we believe the impacts
16 would be significantly greater than
17 projected. The number of people who
18 have attempted to participate in these
19 hearings further suggest that
20 additional sessions are necessary.

21 I also would note the timing of
22 these hearings butting up right
23 against the Labor Day weekend, which
24 is the busiest travel time of the
25 year, while people are rushing away to

1 get their last vacation trips over
2 before the fall.

3 The monumental length of the
4 proposal is far greater than any other
5 environmental assessment that we have
6 found to date. We'll spell out more
7 in our formal comments, but typically,
8 per the regulations, environmental
9 assessments are required to be 75
10 pages or less. And this is over 830
11 pages with more than 3,000 pages of
12 appendices. We do think there should
13 be some increased transparency with a
14 publication of a public docket. We'd
15 like to see FHWA come and lead that
16 effort.

17 We do believe that some of the
18 contributions that private motor coach
19 services provide are not included, and
20 we hope that you will consult with the
21 Port Authority bus terminal and the
22 New York City Department of
23 Transportation and the Interstate Bus
24 Permit Program. Provide some
25 additional traffic figures that you

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1 could add to the document as there's
2 more than 650 permanent stops and
3 thousands of daily trips provided by
4 -- including charter bus operations
5 that are not considered in the
6 analysis.

7 So I will close by asking that
8 we look for some clarity for the
9 progression of the program. We'd like
10 to hear more information about how you
11 viewed for exemptions, pricing,
12 revenue caps, audits, et cetera, et
13 cetera. Will there be ongoing
14 oversight at the FHWA like with
15 previous valued pricing programs
16 participations --

17 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
18 remarks.

19 BRANDON BUCHANAN: Thank you for
20 the opportunity to address you today,
21 and we hope there will be additional
22 changes made to this program and
23 hope --

24 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

25 Our next speaker is Stacia

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1 Cohen, followed by Sandra Fleming.

2 Our next speaker is Sandra
3 Fleming, followed by Malik
4 Graves-Pryor.

5 Sandra, you may unmute yourself
6 and begin your remarks.

7 SANDRA FLEMING: I am Sandra
8 Fleming. I am a motorcyclist in New
9 York City. I've been commuting around
10 New York City for the last 20 years or
11 so.

12 I now work in the Wall Street
13 area. I initially took this job
14 because I thought it was work from
15 home, I didn't want to commute. I
16 work in the field as a social worker.
17 And I live near Kennedy Airport, so I
18 wanted to work from home and not have
19 to commute.

20 Now my job has changed and I
21 need to commute into the Central
22 Business District, actually the Wall
23 Street area. My commute by Long
24 Island Rail Road is \$25. If I take
25 the public transportation, it takes me

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1 two hours to get there because it's
2 really far.

3 So I ride my motorcycle year
4 round to Downtown Manhattan and I can
5 park for free because motor two feet,
6 three feet at the max. So I'm able to
7 slip in and park there.

8 Now, every other country that
9 has instituted congestion pricing
10 using the Sam Schwartz plan has
11 incentivized two-wheel vehicles as
12 they found significant reduction in
13 the amount of fuel consumed. My
14 vehicle, it gets about 45 miles per
15 gallon. So we also have a very small
16 footprint on the destruction of the
17 roads and need for maintenance.

18 So I believe we should follow
19 the example of all other countries
20 that have instituted congestion
21 pricing by incentivizing two-wheel
22 vehicles. Not only do I save money as
23 a lone homeowner in Queens, and I'm a
24 lone homeowner because my partner died
25 last year, I can't afford \$25 a day,

1 nor do I have an extra two to three
2 hours to commute to Manhattan.

3 If -- I would have to find
4 another job on Long Island or
5 somewhere where I could commute
6 because it's really a waste of life
7 and a poor quality of life for me with
8 it.

9 So it would be fair to not have
10 to charge motorcycles the same as cars
11 because we don't cause the same kind
12 of damage. We are the true congestion
13 reducers as well as reducing
14 pollution. Again, at 25 -- I think if
15 you use motorcycles, if you went to
16 80 percent cars, 20 percent
17 motorcycles, you reduce the fuel
18 conception by 122 million dollars with
19 just using motorcycles.

20 And we see now more two-wheel
21 vehicles or electric vehicles which
22 would reduce congestion even more. So
23 please -- redemption for motorcycles
24 because we are the true congestion
25 reducing, fuel-economy vehicles and

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1 the reason and most efficient way of
2 reducing congestion.

3 So thank you very much for your
4 time.

5 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

6 Our next speaker is Malik
7 Graves-Pryor, followed by Elise
8 Liebowitz.

9 Malik, you may begin your
10 remarks.

11 MALIK GRAVES-PRYOR: Hi,
12 everyone. My name is Malik
13 Graves-Pryor, and I live in the
14 proposed CBD zone. I drive, take the
15 subway, ride my bike extensively and
16 walk when I can. In other words, I'm
17 a multi-motor New Yorker.

18 Why do I fully support the CBD
19 tolling without exemption? One,
20 traffic is a constant challenge in
21 Manhattan and New York City generally.
22 In particular, as a resident, getting
23 into and out of the zone is a
24 nightmare.

25 This consists of having to get

1 around the constant stream of parked
2 and idling trucks picking up and
3 unloading the goods and services on
4 small side streets leading to
5 significant backlogs of traffic. Or
6 those same trucks parking in bike
7 lanes on major arteries enforcing
8 dangerous diversions by cyclists into
9 traffic. Worse still is when trucks
10 simply park in driving lanes and cause
11 traffic jams by cars trying to divert
12 around them.

13 In addition, I find there are,
14 on average, roughly ten to 20 TLC
15 drivers for every non-TLC driver in
16 every one of the frequent traffic
17 forms in New York City. Many times,
18 those same slow driving and or idling
19 cars lead to the very traffic we're
20 trying to alleviate with CBD tolling,
21 as well as the noise and air quality
22 pollution degradation that comes with
23 them.

24 By reducing the number of cars
25 and trucks on the road, this would

1 help steer individuals to other modes
2 of transit which are far more dense
3 and less environmentally taxing as
4 rail, buses, subway, bicycles, and
5 sidewalks.

6 Two, this tolling would help
7 directly fund the capital investments
8 that the MTA requires as well, such as
9 the Bike, Pedestrian, and
10 Micromobility Strategic Action Plan,
11 the 2nd Avenue subway expansion, and
12 others. And basically support the
13 influx of these multi-motor New
14 Yorkers across the various forms
15 throughout the boroughs and reduce our
16 dependence on cars.

17 Our subways are a century old
18 and in desperate need of improvement.
19 Our buses are horribly slow outside of
20 the minimal number of dedicated lanes
21 and corridors that exist; and it's one
22 of the reasons that I tend not to use
23 them.

24 Our cycling infrastructure is
25 improving but still woefully behind

1 other global cities like Amsterdam.
2 Reducing car and truck traffic would
3 also allow the general maintenance and
4 upkeep of these road to go much
5 further since they aren't being beat
6 to hell as much.

7 We need this tolling in order to
8 reduce our dependency on cars and
9 trucks, increase demand for public
10 transit, cycling and walking, and
11 especially in this world of increasing
12 global climate change and the
13 challenges that come with them. It's
14 time we actually take this seriously
15 rather than making performative
16 statements that ultimately lead to no
17 action at all. CBD tolling should
18 just be the first step.

19 In closing, with luck, I have
20 another 40 to 60 years on this earth,
21 which means that I will be alive to
22 see the worst of the climate change
23 disaster to come if we do not make
24 these changes, so will my goddaughter
25 and children of close friends, nieces

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1 nephews, and cousins. Many of whom
2 are not even out of elementary school.

3 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
4 remarks.

5 MALIK GRAVES-PRYOR: I believe
6 it's time we're individually and
7 collectively stop being selfish and
8 self-interested and put the greater
9 good of New York City and the planet
10 --

11 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
12 Elise Liebowitz followed by Sean
13 Scott.

14 Our next speaker is Sean Scott,
15 followed by Esta Fischer.

16 SEAN SCOTT: Hello. And thank
17 you to the MTA CBD Tolling Program
18 team for listening to the public. I'm
19 Sean and I'm resident of the CBD and
20 financial district and I also work
21 here.

22 I walk, bike, take the subway,
23 and I also sometimes take taxis and
24 rent a car from here. I want to
25 commend the team for considering all

1 details of individual staircases, that
2 was certainly impressive, and will
3 echo one of the previous speakers that
4 yes, the assessment is 4,000 pages
5 long with appendices, so this does
6 seem thoroughly considered.

7 I also note that we have a
8 little bit of a vocal minority group
9 affected by this compared to the
10 silent majority of 20 million New York
11 area residents that stand to benefit
12 from reduced noise, congestion
13 pollution, death and stress caused by
14 cars. And I hope to represent some of
15 those folks in my remarks today that
16 take public transit, bike, and walk.

17 I wanted to go back to comments
18 made by MTA Chairman Janno Lieber a
19 couple of months ago when he said that
20 fare-paying riders feel like suckers
21 compared to fare evaders, which I
22 thought was interesting.

23 But in reality, I think
24 that's -- you know, I thought about it
25 and I think -- I feel a sucker riding

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1 public transit compared to driving in
2 a private car, which a previous
3 speaker, Sandra, very astutely
4 mentioned that riding public transit
5 is more expensive than driving
6 currently, and this is not a -- not a
7 sustainable situation. You can't
8 expect anyone to actually want to take
9 public transit if it is more expensive
10 than driving.

11 What I like to think about is
12 for a group of friends or a family of
13 four doing a round trip, what would
14 the public transit cost. And just to
15 illustrate some of those costs, from
16 Manhattan to Brooklyn, so just within
17 the New York City subway, that would
18 be \$22 round trip at current prices.
19 To Westfield, New Jersey, that would
20 be \$74, again, on public transit. And
21 if you have to add the cost of the
22 subway, that would be \$96, the 22 plus
23 74. If you're going to Newark
24 Airport, that's \$124 taking the train
25 from Penn Station to Newark Airport,

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1 plus, again, the \$22 if you took the
2 subway, so for a total of \$146.

3 All that to say that these
4 congestion prices feel miniscule
5 compared to the cost of a family or a
6 group of four people going -- taking
7 public transit. And so I would urge
8 the tolling program to implement these
9 fees now and support public transit so
10 that equation is corrected.

11 Thank you.

12 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

13 Our next speaker is Esta
14 Fischer, followed by Jared Markowitz.

15 Our next speaker is Jared
16 Markowitz, followed by Janet Liff.

17 JARED MARKOWITZ: Hi, everyone.
18 Can you hear me?

19 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

20 JARED MARKOWITZ: Great.

21 Hi. My name is Jared Markowitz.
22 I am a resident in Sunnyside, Queens.
23 And yes, I'm here to give my comment.

24 I don't own a car, and so I rely
25 on public transit for everything I do

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1 in the city and outside of it. I use
2 the 7 everyday to get into the city
3 for work and then I use a bunch of the
4 other lines to get around depending on
5 where I'm going. I also use the 24
6 bus line to get to Williamsburg and
7 back every now and then.

8 Anyways, I'm here today to urge
9 Governor Hochul and all of you transit
10 leaders to work together to implement
11 congestion pricing as quickly as
12 possible. I fully support it. It's
13 important to me because we should be
14 prioritizing people over cars in our
15 city.

16 Our public transit is in
17 desperate need of improvements.
18 Almost every day the 7 will have some
19 sort of delay, one of the trains won't
20 slow up or it will be slow or the
21 monitors are just off. When I do take
22 the 24, if I catch it, it's great. If
23 not, it only runs every 30 minutes,
24 which is kind of crazy. And sometimes
25 that doesn't even show up.

1 So congestion pricing would be
2 great because it would provide more
3 funds to improve our transit. Which
4 would, you know, encourage more people
5 to take transit if it was running
6 better.

7 Additionally, cars are also a
8 crazy safety concern in the city.
9 When I'm not using transit, I try to
10 bike into the city. There's only a
11 handful of like really protected bike
12 lanes in the city, and then a lot of
13 bike lanes are just kind of like
14 painted on.

15 And then regardless of the type
16 of lane, a lot of times you have cars
17 just parked in those lanes. And so,
18 it's like really hard for me as like a
19 pretty aggressive biker, I can only
20 imagine what it's like to bike as
21 someone who is like not ready to like
22 drive their bike into traffic and
23 stuff like that.

24 So anyways, yeah, the pricing
25 would help because it would reduce the

1 amount of cars in the city making
2 biking less dangerous in addition to
3 just all the car injuries that come --
4 all the injuries that happen in the
5 city because of cars. I think it's
6 like the number three cause of
7 injuries among children, or something
8 like that. It's crazy.

9 So thanks for listening. I
10 urges Governor Hochul, again, and all
11 of you transit leaders to implement
12 congestion pricing as quickly as
13 possible. Unlike other infrastructure
14 changes, this doesn't require a large
15 construction project or a bunch of
16 crazy investments, it's something that
17 is fairly quick, so we can see results
18 very quickly and it would be a win for
19 everyone's quality of life whether
20 they live in the city or not.

21 Thank you for listening.

22 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

23 Our next speaker is Janet Liff,
24 followed by Elaine Walsh.

25 JANET LIFF: Hello. Thank you.

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1 I'm Janet Liff. I live in the Central
2 Business District, and I am here to
3 say that I fully support congestion
4 pricing. And I am sure that I am one
5 of the 85 percent of my neighbors who
6 lives car free.

7 I'm lucky enough to live car
8 free in the city, but it's also why
9 I'm here. I think about leaving New
10 York City, and every time I think
11 about leaving New York City, my sister
12 says to me, well, you'd have to get a
13 car. And I live here because I don't
14 want to get a car.

15 On congestion, you know that the
16 statistics. You know that the true
17 cost of congestion in terms of fuel,
18 time-loss productivity, and business
19 loss runs into the tens of billions of
20 dollars. And you also know that the
21 majority of us, I think it's 67
22 percent, use mass transit to reach the
23 Central Business District.

24 And ultimately, you must know
25 it's just a matter of geometry. Cars

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1 take up a disproportionate amount of
2 space in a space-starved city. The
3 numbers -- and I can share with you
4 later, I think a car needs roughly 700
5 square feet to move around. Whereas,
6 a person in a bus only needs 45, and a
7 pedestrian only needs ten square feet.

8 So this city functions only
9 because most of us take transit and is
10 completely reliant on our transit
11 system. So it has to be our number
12 one priority to reduce congestion and
13 invest in our transit.

14 And then just a few personal
15 observations, someone mentioned safety
16 and a few other people mentioned it.
17 I feel far safer in the subway than
18 getting in a car. Getting in a car
19 crash is way more likely to happen to
20 any of us on this call.

21 Somebody talked about \$20 that
22 the -- that the plumber might have to
23 pay, well, he saves an hour or two
24 hours, actually, getting to the job
25 site. That time saved will more than

1 make up for that 20-dollar fee.

2 As for not being the time to do
3 it, it is hundred percent the right
4 time to do this. Traffic is up to
5 almost 100 percent of pre-COVID,
6 whereas our offices are only
7 40 percent full. We can't afford to
8 move to 120 percent of our current
9 level and -- you know, and the
10 resulted impact on noise, air
11 pollution, quality of life. I mean,
12 now is absolutely the time.

13 And then just a few more asides
14 for personal experience, I work in
15 commercial real estate, 25 years of
16 doing office leasing, customers never
17 inquire about parking. Their major
18 concern is their location vis a vis
19 transit and transit commute times. No
20 office flier ever references easy
21 access to the FDR Drive.

22 I implore you to do what's right
23 for the vast majority of New Yorkers
24 and move forward with congestion with
25 minimal carve-outs. A toll is a toll,

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1 keep it that way. Keep it fair and
2 effective. And once it's in place, we
3 can see the effects and improve upon
4 it.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Elaine
8 Walsh, followed by Susan Mendelsohn.

9 ELAINE WALSH: Yes. This is
10 Elaine Walsh. Do you hear me?

11 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

12 ELAINE WALSH: Okay. Sorry.
13 After three years of COVID, I
14 shouldn't have to say that, but it's a
15 weird system you have.

16 Good evening. My name is Elaine
17 Walsh. I'm the board president of
18 East 86th Street Merchants/Residents
19 Association speaking tonight on behalf
20 of our members on the Upper East Side
21 in Yorkville opposed to congestion
22 pricing proposal.

23 This is the third attempt for
24 the MTA to get congestion pricing.
25 Three is not the charm. I'm not going

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1 to repeat what others have said about
2 proposing. Let me get to some of our
3 points, given the limited information,
4 lack of specificity, as well as no
5 examination of other avenues to obtain
6 funds to fix the MTA, the East 86th
7 Street Association is opposed to any
8 plan. Particularly one that impacts
9 the Manhattan residents being charged
10 for leaving or entering their home and
11 going south of 60th Street.

12 We request the state legislature
13 and the governor look at other ways to
14 eliminate the MTA deficit and fix the
15 subways. How many times do we have to
16 be burdened with additional costs for
17 MTA's mismanagement? We're already
18 paying a payroll tax to the MTA, plus
19 a charge of \$3.30 to use a taxi in the
20 community. We've asked how are these
21 funds used, but we don't get an
22 answer.

23 We do hope if this does goes
24 through that we have a credit for
25 \$3.30 we are now paying and have paid

1 since 2009. When Richard Ravitch was
2 head of the MTA, he wanted to raise
3 the subway fare to avert this crisis.
4 Why did this not happen?

5 We also believe that the
6 commuter tax should be reinstated.
7 Yes, it's legislative, but don't put
8 it on us because it is too hard for
9 the legislators to get this done
10 again. And indeed, once again, we
11 want a credit for our 3.30.

12 Congestion pricing is an
13 ill-conceived scheme that opens a new
14 revenue of taxation for New Yorkers
15 while rewarding the incompetence of
16 the MTA with good money after bad.
17 This scheme is regressive and will put
18 an unfair burden on the backs of the
19 poor, elderly, disabled, working and
20 middle class.

21 Since all subways are not ADA,
22 what choices do the elderly and
23 disabled have for their care? You are
24 negatively impacting our business
25 theater district. Bring back the

1 commuter price. There's no -- there's
2 a commuter price.

3 But let me say the congestion
4 pricing with displace traffic and
5 congestion to residential
6 neighborhoods such as ours in CB 8 and
7 is sure to create pollution and et
8 cetera. We have one of the highest
9 asthma rates in children. What we are
10 asking is your plan, who controls the
11 money, why do residents have to pay
12 for this, how are they spent?

13 Projected income --

14 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
15 remark.

16 ELAINE WALSH: I'm sorry --
17 projected income over the cost of
18 installation and what --

19 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Susan
21 Mendelsohn, followed by Max Kislevitz.

22 Our next speaker is Max
23 Kislevitz, followed by Bohdan Semciw.

24 Our next speaker is Bohdan
25 Semciw, followed by our 40th speaker

1 to sign up, Jose Moronta.

2 Our next speaker is Jose
3 Moronta, followed by Sheldon Sud.

4 Our next speaker is Sheldon Sud,
5 followed by Sylvia Lin.

6 Our next speaker is Sylvia Lin,
7 followed by Rebecca Jones.

8 Our next speaker is Rebecca
9 Jones, followed by Chris Coppa.

10 REBECCA JONES: Hello. I am
11 Rebecca Jones. I'm a biker, walker,
12 and subway rider living and working in
13 the Central Business District.

14 I say yes, tax cars and trucks.
15 Yes, let's do all of the things to
16 achieve independence from cars and
17 trucks. I'm one of the people in the
18 65 percent of people who use transit
19 while cars take up 65 percent of
20 public space, I'm here to say that we
21 need to have wholesale changes to
22 decrease car traffic.

23 For one, equity; there is a
24 disproportionate amount of public
25 space given to those cars. Two,

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1 environmental justice; cars produce
2 lots of air pollution and cause health
3 problems. Three, safety; cars cost
4 deaths. They're not safe for bikers
5 and pedestrians. Four, noise
6 pollution as traffic backs up. And
7 five, independence from the combustion
8 engine to reduce climate change
9 impacts.

10 Personally, as a biker, I'm
11 looking for space from the West Side
12 Highway to my apartment or to work,
13 and I'm having to divert myself around
14 highly congested zones like Canal
15 Street or zig-zagging through narrow
16 streets with a bunch of cars.

17 And with this reduction of car
18 traffic, I'm hoping that more space
19 can be taken for bicycle lanes and
20 other modes of transportation along
21 with just increasing the efficiency of
22 buses.

23 I am concerned about the studies
24 showing an additional burden on the
25 Bronx with the diverted trucks, so I

1 ask that that is definitely addressed.
2 And -- in general though, noise
3 pollution wasn't even affected with
4 the Environmental Assessment, so like
5 in a lot of ways, I'm not sure if
6 congestion pricing actually addresses
7 all of my concerns with car traffic.

8 I am still on board with the
9 congestion pricing, but I think we
10 just need to be taking space away from
11 cars. They're like a gas and they
12 only eat up the space that is
13 available to fill, and I think we need
14 to be making that space smaller and
15 smaller.

16 And one of the points that I'm
17 getting is that the good thing about
18 congestion pricing is the money influx
19 to fund the MTA capital plan. And I'm
20 not sure -- I think this money needs
21 to be going to not maintaining the
22 status quo and filling budget gaps,
23 but that they need to be funding new
24 alternatives to actually provide for
25 all of these alternative modes.

1 So we can reduce car usage in
2 New York City and give all the New
3 Yorkers more efficient sustainable
4 ways to get around. As long as that's
5 true, I'm pro congestion pricing. And
6 let this just be the first step in
7 many to achieve equity with space
8 environmental justice, safety,
9 reducing noise pollution, and
10 providing new modal alternatives to
11 achieving mitigating climate change
12 effects.

13 Thank you.

14 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

15 Our next speaker is Chris Coppa,
16 followed by Louis Alifano.

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

19 CHRIS COPPA: Oh. Okay. All
20 right, so number one, I'd like to
21 point out that I do ride a bike. I
22 have a car for long trips, certainly
23 outside of the city, but I don't use
24 it in the city very much at all.

25 I am in favor of the congestion

1 pricing plan, but I'm also in favor of
2 having certain exemptions. I think
3 that exemptions should be had for
4 disabled persons who have no choice.
5 I have a friend who literally can't
6 walk down to the ferry to take that
7 ferry, or take the train, and things
8 like that. She has no choice but to
9 go in by car. So I think disabled
10 persons should have a pass on that.

11 As far as Uber, there's also
12 been a proposal for Uber drivers to
13 get an exemption to only have to pay
14 once in a day. I don't think that
15 they should be getting an exemption at
16 all. Because I think we need less
17 Uber drivers in the city than we have.
18 We really have too many cars and
19 that's just another car.

20 We don't need to have a system
21 and basically subsidize a system that
22 allows a person to get a car within
23 three to five minutes, that's
24 ridiculous. We have -- that's
25 incentivizing people to take cars

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1 everywhere they go. We don't need
2 that, people can get on the bus or
3 take a subway if they are in
4 Manhattan. So, as far as Uber,
5 definitely not exemptions for that.

6 I think that one of the reasons
7 I have problems with riding in
8 Manhattan, I only ride on the West
9 Side or the East Side Drive because
10 it's too dangerous anywhere else. We
11 have to make our bike lanes safe for
12 bike-cyclists. More protected lanes,
13 as opposed to just painted on lanes
14 that car drivers just drive onto or
15 park in. So we have to make that
16 part harder for drivers.

17 And I think that we're also
18 incentivizing people from Brooklyn to
19 just drive into Manhattan instead of
20 taking the subways. They say it's
21 cheaper just to drive into Manhattan
22 instead of to get on the subway, so
23 they drive into Manhattan. We need to
24 take away that incentive.

25 So yes, I'm in favor of the

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1 proposal with those certain
2 exemptions; disabilities --

3 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
4 remarks.

5 CHRIS COPPA: Okay. So
6 certainly disabled should have an
7 exemption, Uber drivers should --

8 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

9 Our next speaker is Louis
10 Alifano, followed by Sylvester
11 Otasowie.

12 Our next speaker is Sylvester
13 Otasowie, followed by Bill Bierds.

14 Our next speaker is Bill Bierds,
15 followed by Carlos Cole.

16 Our next speaker is Carlos Cole,
17 followed by Neil Cosgrove.

18 Our next speaker is Neil
19 Cosgrove, followed by our 50th speaker
20 on the list, David Draper.

21 Our next speaker is David
22 Draper, followed by Claudia Leyva.

23 Our next speaker is Claudia
24 Leyva, followed by Peter Petino.

25 Our next speaker is Peter

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1 Petino, followed by Jessica
2 Jean-Baptiste.

3 Our next speaker is Jessica
4 Jean-Baptiste, followed by Eva
5 Jakubowski.

6 Our next speaker is Eva
7 Jakubowski, followed by Ira
8 Gershenhorn.

9 EVA JAKUBOWSKI: Hi. Can you
10 hear me?

11 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

12 EVA JAKUBOWSKI: Hi, everyone.
13 My name is Eva Jakubowski, and I have
14 lived in thee East Village Lower East
15 Side area since 1978. Which obviously
16 part of the so-called Central Business
17 District.

18 In the early '80s, I worked with
19 a group of my neighbors converting
20 abandoned buildings in Alphabet City
21 to an HDFC co-op -- my neighborhood,
22 the lower East Village Lower East
23 Side, is now and has always been
24 predominately residential
25 neighborhood. That despite the

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1 current gentrification, these homes
2 are mostly low and middle-income
3 residents.

4 It is very unfair to ask those
5 of us who have a car to have to pay
6 the fee to leave and return to our
7 homes. How do you think people who
8 live in Brooklyn -- how do you think
9 people who live in Brooklyn, Queens,
10 Bronx, and Staten Island would feel if
11 they had to pay a fee to enter and
12 leave their neighborhood? I'm sure
13 they would be outraged. There would
14 probably be riots.

15 It is often said that people who
16 live in Manhattan should not have
17 cars. And I admit it can be
18 frustrating to deal with cars. But as
19 a Manhattanite, I feel that I have
20 just as much right to own a car as my
21 fellow New Yorkers in the other four
22 boroughs.

23 I would also like to comment on
24 the proposed tax credit, which is a
25 tax credit not an exemption, for

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1 residents in the district earning
2 \$60,000 a year or less. In 2022, very
3 few families can manage living in New
4 York on that income.

5 You know, as a comparison,
6 President Biden now proposes to
7 eliminate all or portions of student
8 debt for individuals earning 125,000
9 or less and families earning \$250,000
10 or less. That is what the government
11 considers low income. The current
12 Central Business District Tolling
13 Program only provides tax credits to
14 the very poorest residents, who
15 probably don't even have a car.

16 I would propose that a much
17 fairer and simpler solution would be
18 to implement a toll on all free East
19 River crossings; you know, the
20 Brooklyn Bridge, the Manhattan Bridge,
21 the Williamsburg Bridge, the
22 Queensboro Bridge. That would spread
23 the penalty much more equally and
24 probably also help to even out the
25 traffic between the various crossings.

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1 How many times has everyone sat in
2 traffic on the BQE to get to the
3 Brooklyn Bridge as they watch the
4 traffic move easily on the BQE to the
5 Battery Tunnel entrance?

6 In conclusion, as someone who
7 has lived in the zone for many years,
8 I strongly urge the tax credits or
9 exemptions for CBD residents to be
10 expanded to include middle-income as
11 well as senior and handicap residents.

12 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
13 remarks.

14 EVA JAKUBOWSKI -- East River
15 crossings which has been a plan
16 proposed numerous times.

17 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

18 EVA JAKUBOWSKI: Thank you.

19 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
20 Ira Gershenhorn, followed by
21 Christopher Trivell.

22 IRA GERSHENHORN: I support --
23 my name is Ira Gershenhorn. Can you
24 hear me?

25 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

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1 IRA GERSHENHORN: I support the
2 Central Business Tolling Program.
3 Anyone asking for perfection is asking
4 too much. This has been delayed too
5 long. You cannot set conditions for
6 it to start, as there will always be
7 conditions and it will never start.
8 All predictions are speculative. I
9 cannot believe people are saying
10 there's no congestion now because of
11 COVID. Vehicles not moving? I have
12 to trust MTA models over speculation
13 and anecdotes from individuals.

14 I live in view of the West Side
15 Highway, and it moves so slowly at
16 many times of the day. There are many
17 car collisions, there's much cost and
18 trash resulting from the highway. I
19 look forward to a reduction of traffic
20 on the West Side Highway and the
21 Harlem River Drive.

22 Congestion pricing would allow
23 converting both sooner to boulevards,
24 would result of reducing highway
25 speeds and allowing productivity to

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1 water and not affecting average travel
2 time, possibly decreasing average
3 travel time and reducing costs due to
4 fewer collisions.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Christopher
8 Trivell, followed by Alex Glatt.

9 Our next speaker is Alex Glatt,
10 followed by Joshua Steinberg.

11 Our next speaker is Joshua
12 Steinberg, followed by Thomas Walsh.

13 Our next speaker is Thomas
14 Walsh, followed by our 60th speaker on
15 the list, Elaine O'Sullivan.

16 THOMAS WALSH: Hello. My name
17 is Thomas Walsh. Can you hear me?

18 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

19 THOMAS WALSH: Okay. I just
20 wanted to first mention that the
21 program is really not doing much to
22 quell congestion as much as it is to
23 just moving congestion to a different
24 part.

25 I believe that there will be a

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1 lot of traffic around the 60th Street
2 entrances. Taxis will just be
3 building up there waiting for people
4 to come meet them there so that they
5 cannot enter.

6 But otherwise, I'm an employee
7 of the City of New York. My yard is
8 located in Downtown Manhattan on 38th
9 Street. And the burden that this is
10 putting on workers who are servicing
11 the city, people who are keeping your
12 city safe, putting out your fires,
13 cleaning up your garbage and, you
14 know, keeping the water running,
15 they'll now be charged to go in to
16 work for city, by the city they are
17 protecting and helping and trying to
18 keep clean.

19 Our profession's running around
20 the clock, so right there some forms
21 of public transportation are off the
22 table. What's left is sporadic,
23 unreliable, and unsafe.

24 I work in -- I live in Staten
25 Island and the only way for me to get

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1 into the city is a ferry sometimes,
2 which is now notoriously not running
3 at times. A city bus ends at 5:30, 6
4 p.m., that's not an option for some
5 shifts.

6 It's going to do nothing but
7 push workers out of Staten Island -- I
8 mean out of Manhattan. They can go to
9 other boroughs to work, you're going
10 to be left with nothing but low --
11 newer people working in Downtown
12 Manhattan that really can't afford it.

13 And I also want to know what the
14 plan is for when snow hits the city.
15 We're emergency workers, obviously
16 buses stop so emergency workers really
17 should get an exemption on these
18 tolls. The remedy is pretty simple,
19 city workers should get one exemption
20 per day just to come into and out of
21 the city. We're not driving around
22 here. We're just coming to work and
23 leaving.

24 I think congestion is also a bad
25 idea for everyone. It's going to do

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1 nothing but just jam up the Cross
2 Bronx and the Staten Island
3 Expressway. The children in the Bronx
4 have the highest rates of asthma in
5 the world.

6 And we're just left with an
7 unsafe subway system and the MTA who
8 is notoriously terrible at managing
9 money, corrupt, inefficient, and we're
10 not trusting them with billions of
11 dollars extra that they'll do the
12 right thing, which I'm sure they'll
13 mismanage as well.

14 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
15 remarks.

16 THOMAS WALSH: That's it. Thank
17 you.

18 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
19 Elaine O'Sullivan, followed by Joshua
20 Steinberg.

21 Our next speaker is Joshua
22 Steinberg, followed by Valerie Mason.

23 Joshua, you may begin your
24 remarks.

25 JOSHUA STEINBERG: This is

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1 Jonathan Steinberg here. As a
2 resident of both neighborhoods, the
3 lovely New York City and London, I
4 definitely part of the districts, I'm
5 outraged with the money grab and
6 drivers are -- congestion pricing,
7 many can justify that it's perfectly
8 okay, both the New York City and
9 London hate drivers and make them pay
10 through the nose through public
11 transportation all over the state.
12 The proposed charge is staggering to
13 begin with if and when implemented,
14 increase exponentially. I think --
15 congestion pricing is being staged
16 because one -- a simple mistake was
17 made and then pushing it and -- asked
18 people who will be affected if they
19 approve the city basically grabbing
20 their money.

21 More surprisingly those affected
22 who approve this outrageous charge --
23 asking people who -- aren't affected,
24 such the governor -- not New York City
25 -- and those affected should be

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1 charged -- (technical difficulties.)
2 to gain traction when the governor
3 realizes she may not lose the election
4 -- she can make it sufficiently
5 attractive to people in Albany -- New
6 York City people should be charged for
7 driving in New York City. New York
8 City businesses should be able --
9 charging their customers to come to
10 their doors.

11 This is frankly outrageous to
12 tell people -- if you turn left out of
13 your apartment, you have to pay a
14 charge and some don't. The promise to
15 help congestion in London, congestion
16 is just as bad now as traffic
17 congestion was in the previous -- if
18 it was a general benefit it can stand
19 alone. It wouldn't be necessary to
20 back it up with propaganda. What sort
21 of propaganda -- telling blatant lies.
22 We know we have been lied -- so stop
23 telling blatant lies -- with no plans
24 -- we're now here -- we know that we
25 have been lied to -- congestion

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1 pricing. (Technical difficulties.)

2 That's --

3 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

4 Our next speaker is Valerie
5 Mason, followed by Noel Hattem.

6 VALERIE MASON: Good evening,
7 everyone. Thank you for the
8 opportunity. My name is Valerie Mason
9 and I'm the president of the East 72nd
10 Street Neighborhood Association.

11 I first want to point you to a
12 public hearing that was held on March
13 21, 2019 at Cooper Union at the behest
14 of the then Manhattan Borough
15 President Gale Brewer. You should
16 really take a look on that hearing, it
17 went for over five hours. And it was
18 before congestion pricing was passed
19 by the legislature, and it was a clear
20 showing that congestion pricing was
21 nothing more than a regressive tax
22 scheme.

23 I want to applaud the people who
24 thought about it because everyone in
25 the city is against congestion,

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1 they're against the horrible effects
2 of climate change. And for the
3 government to be using that as a tool
4 to put through a regressive tax is
5 absolutely shameful. There is nothing
6 that is coordinated with this
7 congestion pricing scheme that is
8 coordinated in order to reduce
9 congestion in this city.

10 For example, why not reduce or
11 eliminate parking on crosstown streets
12 that are feeders to tunnels and
13 bridges between 7:00 and 10 a.m., and
14 then between 4:00 and 7:00? What
15 about making out-of-state residents
16 pay to park in our streets? What
17 about getting rid of the thousand of
18 parking placards that encourage city
19 employees to come in via car? What
20 about the fact that most of our
21 elected officials choose to ride
22 around the city in cars? These are --
23 what about higher penalties for
24 idling? None of this is accompanied
25 by congestion pricing.

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1 In addition, CEO Janno Lieber
2 from MTA, in November 2021, said that
3 congestion pricing wasn't necessary.
4 The MTA has received millions and
5 billions of dollars from the federal
6 government to do the necessary repairs
7 and upgrades that the system needs.
8 The congestion is, in our opinion,
9 mayor made. The Department of
10 Transportation has reduced the number
11 of lanes of traffic to create a false
12 narrative here.

13 And I want to add -- there's so
14 much more to say, but I want to say
15 right now the fact that there's a
16 congestion pricing tax is killing the
17 taxi industry, and it is unfair to
18 everyone who lives on the island of
19 Manhattan that has to pay more to come
20 home from city airports just because
21 we happen to live in Manhattan.

22 This is a discriminatory tax.
23 It is completely unfair and it needs
24 to be repealed immediately. All
25 during COVID, elderly people who lived

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1 on the Upper East Side of Manhattan
2 had to pay extra money to go to
3 hospitals within their district, \$3.50
4 on a ten-dollar fare, 3.50 of which
5 was moneys that needs to be spend in
6 order to get to the hospital.

7 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
8 remarks.

9 VALERIE MASON: The fact that
10 this continues is an outrage, and
11 should be --

12 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

13 Our next speaker is Noel Hattem,
14 followed by Jacqueline Hayes.

15 Noel, you may unmute yourself
16 and begin your remarks.

17 NOEL HATTEM: Okay. Hi.

18 MS. FLAX: We can hear you.

19 NOEL HATTEM: Okay. Sorry about
20 that.

21 So I -- first of all, I have
22 been on the Community Board 2, member
23 of the Traffic and Transportation
24 Committee for seven years in the past.
25 I ride my bike a lot around the city,

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1 that's my main mode of transportation.
2 I'm also from Queens, I know the roads
3 really well. I'm not convinced that
4 people who are involved in this scheme
5 really do know the roads that well.

6 And so, I also do own a car,
7 okay. And -- but I only put three or
8 4,000 miles on it a year, so I use it
9 primarily for leisure. In your study,
10 to begin with, I didn't see how
11 much -- you didn't say how much money
12 might be lost for this city. If
13 people are taxed this money, they may
14 not come in. You didn't mention
15 higher costs that might result from
16 it. How much does it cost to
17 implement this whole thing?

18 There's -- also, nothing was mentioned
19 much about Lower Manhattan, which is
20 where I live.

21 So I think it's important to
22 work with some of the dynamics if
23 you're going to implement this. To
24 raise a one billion dollars, it's a
25 big calculation, and -- but it does

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1 have a great impact, and it is a great
2 expense on people. I don't find it to
3 be very fair. You have the governor
4 of New Jersey criticizing it. You
5 have Staten Island criticizing it.
6 You have cab drivers criticizing it.

7 And I mentioned I live in West
8 Village, and it's very little
9 congestion down here. You're charging
10 people who don't have much to do with
11 creating congestion in Midtown, such
12 as myself. And that, to me, is not
13 very fair. I think you need to
14 consider Manhattan residents and where
15 they live in this program.

16 Particularly people who are south of
17 14th Street.

18 Now I mentioned also that, you
19 know, I don't contribute to the
20 traffic around here or Midtown. I
21 don't use my car for that. So just
22 for some suggestions, I think it's
23 totally absurd if I have to take the
24 West Side Highway and pay \$9 to get
25 of, I live a block from the West Side

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1 Highway, then I have to pay \$9. To
2 me, that's totally absurd.

3 Now my mother also, she's in
4 assisted living on Long Island. I
5 visit her twice a month. Now I have
6 to pay \$23 to visit her, I think that
7 that's ridiculous. I think the tax
8 deductions that you mentioned won't
9 amount to much savings.

10 I think seniors and disabled
11 should get some kind of breaks. And I
12 think you need to find better ways to
13 raise money. Especially for people
14 who barely contribute to congestion
15 and traffic in the city, such as Lower
16 Manhattan.

17 And I know there are certain
18 intersections in Lower Manhattan that
19 do create traffic, but you have to
20 find a better way and there are --
21 Williamsburg Bridge, the Holland
22 Tunnel --

23 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
24 remarks.

25 NOEL HATTEM: I think I've said

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1 enough, and you should reconsider this
2 whole thing.

3 Thank you.

4 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

5 Our next speaker is Jacqueline
6 Hayes, followed by Jane Reiff.

7 Our next speaker is Jane Reiff,
8 followed by Mercedes Castrelo-Huntley.

9 Our next speaker is Mercedes
10 Castrelo-Huntley, followed by Barbara
11 Kasavana.

12 Our next speaker and 66th
13 speaker on the list is Barbara
14 Kasavana, followed by Renee Lau.

15 Barbara Kasavana.

16 Barbara, you may unmute yourself
17 and begin your remarks.

18 Our next speaker is Renee Lau,
19 followed by Micheal Westervelt.

20 Our next speaker is Micheal
21 Westervelt, followed by Victoria
22 Andino.

23 Michael, you may unmute yourself
24 and begin your remarks.

25 Michael, you're unmuted, but we

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1 can't hear you.

2 MICHEAL WESTERVELT: How about
3 now?

4 MS. FLAX: Now we can hear you.

5 MICHEAL WESTERVELT: Sorry abut
6 that.

7 Thank you for taking the time to
8 listen to my comments. I am a
9 Weehawken, New Jersey resident, just
10 outside of New York and the Lincoln
11 Tunnel, and this plan directly affects
12 me, my work, and it's it needs further
13 review.

14 The purpose of the program is of
15 course to reduce congestion, it is to
16 increase revenues for the city. All
17 of which I understand and appreciate.
18 Bottom line is that it does not take
19 into consideration the environmental
20 impact of different types of vehicles.

21 We had a caller earlier who was
22 talking bout her commute using a
23 motorcycle, and that needs to be
24 considered. There's a reason why toll
25 prices vary based on what type of

1 vehicle you're driving, because not
2 all vehicles are created equal. You
3 have some that are polluting, you have
4 some that are tearing up the roads,
5 you have some that are creating more
6 congestion than others, a
7 tractor-trailer simply doesn't take up
8 as much space as a motorcycle (sic).

9 So I know I speak for Sandra,
10 that caller who obviously will be
11 affected by this, and I speak for
12 electric vehicle owners well. There's
13 no consideration whatsoever for the
14 many individuals who choose to
15 purchase an electric vehicle to make
16 those investments and to do what's
17 right.

18 And quite frankly, it's shocking
19 to me and unacceptable that the impact
20 of electric vehicles has not been
21 considered at all on this program and
22 it needs to be. And I think before
23 anything moves forward, it absolutely
24 needs to be part of the conversation
25 in an effort to not only reduce

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1 congestion, but also the environmental
2 impact.

3 So thank you.

4 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

5 Our next speaker is Victoria
6 Andino, followed by Ruth Klein.

7 Our next speaker is Ruth Klein,
8 followed by our 71st speaker on the
9 list, Daniel Buzzetta.

10 Our next speaker is Daniel
11 Buzzetta, followed by Joshua Williams.

12 DANIEL BUZZETTA: Can I be
13 heard? Yes?

14 MS. FLAX: We can hear you.

15 DANIEL BUZZETTA: Sorry. Yeah.

16 My name is Daniel Buzzetta, and
17 I am a owner of Peter Jarema Funeral
18 Home located on East 7th Street in the
19 East Village.

20 As a small business owner in the
21 CBD, I'm asking for consideration for
22 some exemptions for hearses and
23 removal minivans. I'm not asking for
24 private funeral director vehicles,
25 family vehicles, anything of that

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1 sort. The New York City medical
2 examiner's office is located in the
3 CBD, multiple hospitals, multiple
4 nursing homes, New York City health
5 department, all funeral directors when
6 moving bodies, both on a stretcher and
7 on a casket to go to a cemetery or a
8 crematory, have to use a vehicle.

9 For obvious reasons, we cannot
10 use public transportation. All I'm
11 asking is for some consideration for
12 that because 25 years ago, there was
13 about 25 to 30 funeral homes in the
14 lower -- excuse me, in the CBD zone.
15 Currently, there's about eight or nine
16 funeral homes left.

17 This is because there's a
18 constant attack of taxes and fees and
19 policies that make owning a small
20 business in the CBD zone harder and
21 harder and harder. And when you have
22 a death in your family and you call
23 somebody, you certainly hope that a
24 funeral director is there to answer it
25 and can assist you.

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1 If -- I already know I'm going
2 to have to raise my prices because
3 you're not going to give consideration
4 to casket deliveries, funeral
5 supplies, embalming fluid supply
6 companies, I get it. They're hitting
7 me up for fuel surcharges now, for the
8 past two years because the gas price
9 has gone up.

10 I know what's going to happen
11 when this gets hit. It's just going
12 to go on my bill with every single
13 delivery and I'm going to have to pass
14 that along to all the families I
15 serve. Because a single funeral can
16 cost -- probably could be tolled
17 three, four times; pick up a body at
18 Mount Sinai, 98th Street, bring it to
19 my place.

20 There is not a cemetery or
21 crematory in the CBD zone, which means
22 every single funeral that we do, we
23 are going to be leaving the zone and
24 coming back in that hearse or that
25 removable minivan. It's unavoidable.

1 And so basically, I'm just
2 asking -- there's only, like I said,
3 seven to ten of us, maybe a couple of
4 funeral homes outside the zone, we're
5 talking about a maximum of 50 to 100
6 vehicles total. Most places, like
7 mine, I have one hearse and one
8 removable minivan. That's it. Not
9 talking about a fleet of 30 cars here.
10 I own one funeral home. It's a
11 family-owned mom and pop small
12 location. That is all.

13 I'm hoping -- you know, we're
14 not taxis, we're not Ubers, we're here
15 to serve the neighborhood and
16 obviously moving bodies requires a
17 full-size vehicle, either a hearse or
18 a minivan.

19 And I know once the tolls are
20 implemented, it's only going to go up;
21 \$23 this year, \$25 next year, three
22 years later, it'll be 30 bucks.
23 Before you know it, I'm closing up
24 shop because I can't charge \$400 in
25 tolls for every job I do.

1 Thank you have a good day.

2 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

3 Our next speaker is Joshua
4 Williams, followed by Cheryl Stewart.

5 Joshua, you may begin your
6 remarks.

7 JOSHUA WILLIAMS: Hello,
8 everyone. My name is Josh Williams.
9 I work in Manhattan and I teach night
10 classes at School of Visual Arts. My
11 wife works in the West Village, she
12 teaches recreational cooking classes
13 in the evenings. We live in
14 Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

15 We recently got a car because of
16 COVID. And honestly, I love driving
17 in the city, it's great. I get to
18 pick up my wife after she's off work.
19 You know, I think at night now, she's
20 not as comfortable riding the train
21 home. She's been assaulted, she's
22 been groped multiple times.

23 Like the trains, they're kind of
24 sketchy right now. People are like
25 openly smoking crack pipes on the

1 train. You know, it's like it's not
2 the best. So I think, you know,
3 that's fine, that's kind of what we do
4 we hang out in the city, we grab sushi
5 in the West Village, and then come
6 home.

7 I also drive when I go to teach
8 because, you know, I don't want to
9 really have to transfer trains at
10 night, there's a lot of times
11 construction and it's really difficult
12 for me to get home at night from the
13 place I work. So for me, I drive in,
14 I find a spot, I pay the meter.

15 I'm doing all the things that
16 you want me to do and I honestly can't
17 afford a 23-dollar toll to come into
18 the city to pick my wife up at night,
19 or to get home from my night job, the
20 trains are often under construction
21 when I get off work.

22 I mean, it's honestly really
23 insulting that Manhattan thinks that
24 it's the exclusive borough when we're
25 all New Yorkers. I pay a New York

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1 City tax just like everyone else who
2 lives in New York City. And, you
3 know, I would understand if this is
4 some short of toll that's like
5 equivalent, you know.

6 Like I love MTA. I have a 9:00
7 to 5:00 job that's not remote. There
8 is a change in the way work happens.
9 And maybe MTA needs to look at their
10 budgets separately from those who
11 drive cars. Because, you know, it's
12 different now. You know, we're not
13 all going into Manhattan for work
14 anymore. And they need to kind of
15 come to a realization with that.

16 So there's other things MTA
17 budget needs to think about other than
18 car congestion. Because this bill
19 doesn't seem about car congestion, it
20 seems about MTA needing to think about
21 what they are doing. And if we all
22 want to pay 2.75 to get into
23 Manhattan, I'm fine with that, you
24 know. I understand if I need to pay a
25 little bit just like I used to on the

1 train, that's cool. But to say that I
2 need to pay ten times more because I'm
3 in a car, that's super unfair, guys.
4 It's just super, super unfair.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Cheryl
8 Stewart, followed by Sheila OConnor.

9 CHERYL STEWART: I'm Cheryl
10 Stewart representing Riders Against
11 Congestion. I'm cofounder of the New
12 York Motorcycle & Scooter Task Force
13 and a founding member of the Sirens
14 Women's Motorcycle Club. In addition,
15 I serve on the Motorcycle Advisory
16 Council convened by New York City DOT
17 to address motorcycle safety.

18 I'm a professional freelance
19 artist. I live in Red Hook, Brooklyn,
20 a neighborhood poorly served by public
21 transportation. Many of my workdays
22 find me transporting my sculpture
23 tools; reciprocal saws, rasps,
24 chisels, mallets, keyhole saws.

25 Like any construction worker,

1 I'm not allowed to bring these tools
2 on an MTA bus or subway. And yet, I
3 must transport them. If the subway
4 served my neighborhood, which it does
5 not, I would still need to use a
6 private vehicle to transport myself
7 and my tools to work.

8 Many of my coworkers load up
9 their giant pickup trucks. I strap my
10 tools on the back of my
11 fuel-efficient, congestion-reducing
12 motorcycle, which is my primary
13 commuting vehicle.

14 I was surprised and displeased
15 to read in the Environmental
16 Assessment that my commuting
17 motorcycle has been mis-categorized as
18 a recreational vehicle and therefore,
19 is not included in the count of New
20 York City commuter vehicles.
21 Moreover, this plan calls for tolling
22 my alternative congestion-reducing
23 vehicle at the same rate as a
24 commercial van.

25 The original goal of congestion

1 pricing is and was reducing New York
2 City's notorious traffic. We can help
3 do that, just as London city planners
4 continued to incentivize a mode shift
5 towards motorbikes as part of their
6 successful congestion reduction
7 strategy. Our small lightweight
8 vehicles have an outsized effect
9 reducing traffic congestion.

10 Sam Schwartz himself authored a
11 2008 report demonstrating that even a
12 small mode shift away from autos and
13 towards motorbikes would result in
14 enormous decreases in traffic delays
15 and a commensurate reduction in CO2
16 emissions. With our tiny parking
17 footprint, six motorcycles can fit in
18 a parking space occupied by one SUV.
19 Plus our lightweight vehicles produce
20 manageable wear on roads and
21 infrastructure.

22 Motorcycles receive a 100
23 percent exemption from congestion
24 tolling in London and Stockholm, as
25 well as every other European -- where

1 congestion pricing has been
2 successfully imposed, everywhere.
3 Incentivizing motorcycles is part of
4 their congestion reduction strategy,
5 why would -- then not employ the same
6 congestion reduction strategies
7 employed by London and Stockholm.

8 Danny Harris, Executive Director
9 of Transportation Alternatives has
10 said that -- wants New York City to
11 adopt the London congestion pricing
12 plan in its entirety. We agree, as
13 they do in London, the MTA should
14 grant motorcycles a one hundred
15 percent exemption from congestion
16 tolling as part of New York City's
17 congestion reduction strategy because
18 we're part of the solution.

19 Thank you.

20 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

21 Our next speaker is Sheila
22 OConnor, followed by Luc
23 Athayde-Rizzaro.

24 SHEILA OCONNOR: Good evening.
25 My name is Sheila OConnor, and I'm a

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1 resident of Hell's Kitchen, which of
2 course is part of the Central Business
3 District. And I'm here to express my
4 strong support for the congestion
5 tolling program.

6 Like the overwhelming majority
7 of residents in my neighborhood, I do
8 not own a car. I walk, I bike, I use
9 public transit. Yet, I pay the price
10 of the congestion I experience daily;
11 poor air quality, excessive noise, and
12 delays for emergency vehicles.

13 Walking across 9th Avenue, where I
14 live, after 3 p.m. is a simple hazard.
15 The intersections are often blocked
16 and it's insanity every day.

17 Just to give you an example of
18 how the current state of congestion
19 impacts residents in my neighborhood
20 every day, a year ago, while I was
21 recovering from a broken ankle, I had
22 limited mobility and I needed to get
23 to a location on 11th Avenue, just two
24 blocks away. I used a for-hire
25 vehicle and it took an hour and a half

1 to get two blocks.

2 Essentially what that means is
3 someone with limited on the West Side
4 near the Lincoln Tunnel is trapped in
5 their home after 3 o'clock every day
6 because they cannot move around if
7 they aren't able to walk. And a
8 friend of mine who is in this
9 neighborhood is faced with that, she
10 does have limited mobility and has
11 often had to cancel doctors'
12 appointments because the traffic was
13 too much and she just couldn't get
14 there.

15 Commuters are making a choice to
16 drive into Manhattan, and they need to
17 pay for that privilege. The traffic
18 has gotten significantly worse since
19 offices have come back. Because many
20 offices have gone hybrid, so commuters
21 are deciding that since I only have to
22 come in a couple of days a week, it's
23 actually cheaper to drive than to use
24 public transit.

25 So we need to not only

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1 incentivize using public transit, but
2 we need to make it more appealing than
3 driving. And that means investing in
4 our public transit system so that the
5 trains run more smoothly and it's more
6 comfortable for riders to take that
7 on.

8 So again, I just want to applaud
9 the work you've done so far and
10 emphasize that I fully endorse what
11 this will do for my community on the
12 West Side.

13 Thank you.

14 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

15 Our next speaker is Luc
16 Athayde-Rizzaro, followed by Michael
17 Benson.

18 Our next speaker is Michael
19 Benson, followed by Thomas Lamadrid.

20 Our next speaker is Thomas
21 Lamadrid, followed by Michael Golz.

22 Our next speaker is Michael
23 Golz, followed by David Zelman.

24 Our next speaker, the 80th
25 person to sign up, is David Zelman,

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1 followed by Marcia Robbins.

2 Our next speaker is Marcia
3 Robbins, followed by Gary Roth.

4 MARCIA ROBBINS: My name is
5 Marcia Robbins. I'm a residential
6 renter inside the northern part of the
7 proposed congestion pricing zone on
8 the West Side. I've lived in my home
9 for 18 years before it became filled
10 100-story mega towers housing view and
11 causing a new name for the streets
12 around Central Park, i.e., Billionaire
13 Row.

14 I am a senior, and my car is 21
15 years old. I paid it off before I
16 returned to New York City after a job
17 took me to Florida. So while I may
18 not have purchased a new car living in
19 New York City, having it has been
20 absolutely essential for
21 transportation to see and help an
22 elderly mother out of state with
23 errands and doctors' appointments and
24 visit other family not inside
25 Manhattan.

1 Congestion pricing will
2 discriminate against people living in
3 the zone, particularly seniors like
4 myself who already are dealing with
5 significant increases in rent and
6 other costs that have driven so many
7 out of my neighborhood.

8 There is a misperception that
9 all the residents of our Midtown
10 congestion pricing area are wealthy
11 and can afford the additional costs it
12 imposed. I heard this from an office
13 of one of my elected officials in New
14 York City, "Is this the purpose, to
15 reduce traffic for the wealthy?"

16 Congestion pricing is a
17 regressive tax on people who are older
18 with an income leveling off,
19 especially during a pandemic that
20 still persists. My income took a big
21 hit during the last few years and I'm
22 still trying to recover.

23 In London, one of the first
24 cities to implement congestion
25 pricing, residents of the congestion

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1 pricing zone receive a 90 percent
2 reduction in cost directly, a discount
3 in the cost upfront. A tax credit is
4 not sufficient because it is delayed
5 and unfair to many. Why not adopt
6 London's model here for residents in
7 the CBD?

8 I am not a commuter, I do not
9 drive around Manhattan. But when
10 exiting the city, I will pick up my
11 car off the street where I park, and
12 pick up my luggage at my building.
13 When I return, I drop my luggage off
14 or any other heavy bags at my
15 building's entrance. For this five to
16 ten-minute pick up, I will be
17 penalized, taxed, to drop off my own
18 belongings to my own apartment right
19 inside the northern part of the zone.

20 Carrying luggage or bags ten
21 blocks or more up or down subway
22 stairs to reach my apartment is unsafe
23 and untenable as a senior. I'm
24 requesting an exemption or major
25 reduction in the cost for residents,

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1 like London, especially for older
2 residents, like myself, who live just
3 inside the zone.

4 Thank you very much for this
5 opportunity.

6 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Gary Roth,
8 followed by Eric Bell.

9 Our next speaker is Eric Bell,
10 followed by John Doe.

11 ERIC BELL: Hello?

12 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.
13 Please proceed.

14 ERIC BELL: Hi. My name --

15 MR. WOJNAR: Eric, I think you
16 muted yourself.

17 ERIC BELL: My apologies.

18 My name is Eric Bell. I grew up
19 in Rockland County. I currently
20 reside -- sorry, lived in the Bronx
21 and currently reside in Westchester.
22 I use public transit and I also drive.

23 I am speaking today in objection
24 to the congestion pricing plan due to
25 its lack of comprehensiveness. The

1 fantasy of this plan is the assumption
2 that people will drive less and
3 instead take mass transit. I would
4 like to show how the incentives to
5 drive less and therefore curb
6 pollution, are just not there.

7 Here are my four points and
8 corresponding suggestions:

9 Number one: The MTA still does
10 not offer a green pass or a carpool
11 E-ZPass plan to encourage drivers to
12 use electric or hybrid vehicles or to
13 carpool. This needs to be added to
14 this plan.

15 Number two: The New York City
16 Department of Transportation needs to
17 increase parking in the city to avoid
18 cars from circling blocks to find a
19 spot.

20 Number three: I work overnight
21 and the Metro-North Railroad does not
22 operate when I get out of work. My
23 only option is driving, so the plan
24 just penalizes me for the lack of
25 another option.

1 If my wife and I want to come to
2 the city on the weekend from Central
3 Westchester, it costs over \$60 round
4 trip, plus parking. Yet, if I take
5 the car to the city, even with
6 congestion pricing, it's still cheaper
7 to drive. So make commuter rail more
8 affordable and fully transferable to
9 all the other MTA rails so that more
10 people will use it.

11 Number four: This plan sets the
12 precedent of the MTA collecting tolls
13 for areas not considered their
14 property. The question for me is if
15 the MTA can ask drivers to fund the
16 transit system, where might this
17 expand to in the future when the MTA
18 will inevitably need more money? Will
19 the MTA soon ask cyclists and
20 pedestrians to pay a toll? Might
21 there be tolls at the borders of the
22 city and surrounding counties where
23 they operate the rails?

24 I think with this precedent set,
25 there's no stopping future tolling.

1 So I've come to the conclusion that
2 this is just another case of the MTA
3 needs more money. There's no trial
4 period to see if this will increase or
5 decrease congestion or pollution.

6 The state and the MTA have
7 refused to look internally to
8 restructure, modify their bloated
9 salaries, curb overtime or ask New
10 York City transit riders to pay more
11 for their unlimited service they use.

12 No matter how much money the MTA
13 says they need, if you give it to
14 them, they will always turn around and
15 ask for more. I ask you to reject or
16 rethink the details of these plans
17 with some of those suggestions.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is John Doe,
21 followed by Richard Sonenberg.

22 Our next speaker is Richard
23 Sonenberg, followed by Lucy Koteen.

24 Our next speaker is Lucy Koteen,
25 followed by Scott Goldberg.

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1 LUCY KOTEEN: Hello?

2 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.

3 Please proceed.

4 LUCY KOTEEN: Yes. Thank you.

5 The people have spoken, but is
6 anyone listening? Governor Hochul,
7 are you listening? Of those who have
8 spoken, the comments have been three
9 to one opposed to the plan.

10 Those in support have been
11 mostly young white men who show no
12 understanding, no compassion, no
13 thought of the needs of anyone but
14 themselves. Their response to every
15 issue is hop on a bike, hop on the
16 train. They lack imagination to see
17 that one day it will be them who is in
18 need.

19 It doesn't matter if you are
20 disabled, if you have respiratory
21 disease, if you are old, if you
22 afraid, if you have encountered racial
23 hate on the subway, if it would take
24 you three hours to get to your job on
25 the subway, if you're taking a

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1 relative to get medical care, if you
2 are an essential health care worker
3 with an off-hour shift in the zone, if
4 your residence is in the zone and you
5 just want to your home.

6 Your family and friends will no
7 longer visit you in the zone because
8 they don't want to pay the fee. The
9 businesses will leave, the long-time
10 residents will be forced to move. And
11 congestion will shift to surrounding
12 areas and boroughs, including in EJ
13 communities.

14 At a time of recovery, tourism
15 will suffer. Clearly working-class
16 people who the city depends on will be
17 hurt. And no, it is not only the
18 wealthy who own cars. At a time of
19 soaring inflation and financial
20 hardship, there are no exemptions from
21 the past on increased charge from
22 truck fees.

23 Every grocer, pharmacy, theater,
24 bar, restaurant, bodega will pass its
25 tax on to you, the consumer. With

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1 these fees, Chinatown, the theater
2 district and cultural institutions
3 will suffer.

4 The city has created the
5 congestion along with handmaids of the
6 cult-like lobbying group
7 Transportation Alternatives.
8 Restaurant sheds, cycling, plazas,
9 commercial enterprise have taken over
10 lanes and parking spaces. And no
11 limit was placed on the number of Uber
12 or Lyft vehicles circling our streets.
13 Endless construction of highrises
14 block lanes of traffic that cause
15 street backup.

16 The repeated refrain is that the
17 public does not trust the MTA. They
18 have squandered billions of dollars.
19 Executives have obscenely large
20 salaries. There are cost overruns on
21 every project. With every utility
22 bill, you pay a subsidy to the MTA.
23 every taxi rider subsidizes the MTA
24 with a 3.50 charge.

25 How many times did you hear this

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1 is nothing but a money grab? The MTA
2 will come back to the people after
3 they squander this tax. You cannot
4 shut that door once it is open. You
5 heard it said that subways are not
6 reliable and not safe. How many
7 millions will it cost to build out the
8 infrastructure; 300 to 400 million of
9 the budget will go to administer
10 congestion pricing alone and the
11 administrative --

12 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
13 your remarks.

14 LUCY KOTEEN: -- New York State.
15 I'll send in the rest. Thank
16 you.

17 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker is Scott
19 Goldberg, followed by Ezekiel
20 Zimmerman.

21 Our next speaker is Ezekiel
22 Zimmerman, followed by Vincent
23 Jenkins.

24 Our next speaker is Vincent
25 Jenkins, followed by Dana Ohlmeyer.

1 We're ready for you.

2 If the ASL interpreter would --
3 yeah, thank you.

4 ASL INTERPRETER: I think the
5 time limit is setting up.

6 I'm sorry. Hold on one second.

7 Okay.

8 MR. WOJNAR: Could you ask
9 Vincent to start over.

10 VINCENT JENKINS: Hi. My name
11 is Vincent and my last name is
12 Jenkins.

13 And I feel that this is a huge,
14 huge inconvenience and the information
15 is so much information and such an
16 impact on that area, the Central
17 Business District. I don't know much
18 about that area, but deaf people need
19 to be set up with, you know, different
20 services so that we can understand
21 more about that community and the
22 hard-of-hearing community that's in
23 that.

24 The MTA needs to do more
25 advertising and reaching out to that

1 community. They need to do more
2 outreach to provide more information
3 about development and what's going on,
4 for the students and for everybody
5 that's involved. I just feel that we
6 as a deaf community are -- we're not
7 being recognized. And our input is
8 inclusive upon this and that we need
9 to be involved in this process.

10 So we need more discussions.
11 The MTA need to involve more of the
12 transportation issues and the tolls
13 and the buses and the subways. I
14 mean, we have very, very little
15 information. There's no captioning.
16 There's no area for the blind. I
17 mean, you haven't even fixed that yet.

18 It's so dangerous for deaf
19 people and for people that are blind,
20 for the subways and for any kind of
21 mass transit. That needs to be fixed
22 first before anything happens. You
23 know what, it's just extremely
24 dangerous. And there's no visibility
25 for people that have -- that are going

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1 to have problems, visual signs, visual
2 problems.

3 And for people that are deaf,
4 there's no captioning anywhere in
5 Manhattan. The elevators don't work
6 half the time. It's very rare the
7 communication is -- again, I'm
8 repeating myself, but this has got to
9 be fixed.

10 Every day there is a problem
11 with the State of New York and what's
12 going on with the licensing, and that
13 needs to be checked. My license -- I
14 mean, I just feel that everything --
15 thank you. Thank you for listening to
16 me but I think that this is a huge
17 impact on myself as a deaf individual.
18 And I feel -- I've learned a
19 tremendous amount, tremendous about of
20 what is -- what needs to be done with
21 the community and what hopefully will
22 be done.

23 Thank you very much for
24 listening. Thank you. I appreciate
25 it very much. Thank you.

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1 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

2 Our next speaker is Dana
3 Ohlmeyer, followed by Constance
4 Stellas.

5 Dana, if you could unmute
6 yourself, you can proceed.

7 DANA OHLMEYER: I just did.

8 MR. WOJNAR: Great.

9 DANA OHLMEYER: My name is Dana
10 Ohlmeyer. I live in Long Island City
11 and I've got some statistics if you're
12 concerned with environment and with
13 congestion.

14 Mayor de Blasio oversaw the
15 increase of numbers of riders that use
16 rideshare from 80,000 to 120,000
17 licenses, just the licenses, that were
18 given out. That's from 2018 to
19 2020 -- 2019, that's one year. He
20 went to town on giving all these
21 licenses out. The cabs stayed the
22 same 13,500. So yellow cabs, not
23 green cabs, yellow cab licenses.

24 In 2019, there were some
25 incredible numbers; 498,641 rides.

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1 That's the number of times people rode
2 around, mostly within the congestion
3 area. If you want environmental
4 impact and if you want congestion
5 impact, take down those rideshares.
6 All you have to do is have them --
7 make people go to the trains that way.

8 What's happening is that the
9 privileged, who have the money to pay
10 for these rideshares, are okay, they
11 are fine. What happened to the
12 subways, I don't care. They don't
13 want to know about the subways. Make
14 them get on the subways, they have the
15 money and the legs.

16 I'm a senior citizen. I use the
17 car that I have, a 2011 Prius with
18 40,000, to go once a week to my
19 concert at -- essentially, the Solomon
20 Series, Town Hall, it's on 43rd
21 Street and 6th Avenue. I get to my
22 lovely concert four or five times on
23 Sundays. And you know what, as a
24 senior citizen, it's a privilege to
25 get there.

1 I have the use the car because
2 going down the stairs and up the
3 stairs in the subways is a big
4 struggle. And people who are younger
5 than me are going past me, and through
6 me, and around me and over me.

7 You have to give a break to the
8 people who are older, as well as get
9 rid of the congestion in one foul
10 swoop. It's easy. Get ride of all
11 the rideshares or half of them at
12 least. If you want to have the
13 gasoline delivery bikes off the street
14 without hitting people, I almost got
15 hit a couple of times, they go in the
16 lanes.

17 If you want to go on Broadway,
18 Uptown, to go to a restaurant, your
19 life is in your hands because all the
20 delivery guys are going past you in
21 the bike lanes at 50 miles an hour.
22 They have no cares. Again, this was
23 what de Blasio instituted. You have
24 to reverse engineer to get back to
25 pre-de Blasio levels of congestion.

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1 Thank you very much.

2 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

3 Our next speaker is Constance
4 Stellas, followed by Steven Kasavana.

5 Our next speaker, the 92nd
6 person to sign up, is Steven Kasavana,
7 followed by Diahann Browne.

8 STEVEN KASAVANA: Am I on now?

9 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.

10 STEVEN KASAVANA: Okay. My name
11 is Steve Kasavana and I reside in
12 Queens. I'm opposed to the congestion
13 pricing for the following reasons:

14 Number one: You must look
15 outside of the DOT and MTA to see
16 who -- who in God's name designed the
17 bicycle lanes. They narrow each
18 street; often they're up against the
19 curb forcing cars, vans and trucks to
20 park in the middle of the street
21 causing congestion. The cyclists,
22 they pay no usage fees, are a menace
23 to people who cross through their
24 lanes, sometimes in both directions.
25 And blast through the stop signs and

1 stoplights unimpeded.

2 Number two: Also, motorized
3 scooters, razors, E-bikes, are
4 sometimes driven by children in their
5 teens or younger with no helmet. They
6 whiz up and down sidewalks, streets,
7 they have no fees, follow no rules
8 whatsoever. Their darting in and out
9 of traffic causes congestion because
10 drivers must slow down. And if there
11 is an accident, it's always the
12 driver's fault, unfortunately.

13 Number three: We motorists have
14 plenty of rules and regulations,
15 licensing fees, tolls, taxes, fees,
16 and red light cameras, speed bumps up
17 the kazoo, and solve the problems of
18 the mismanaged, out of control, MTA.
19 They want the congestion pricing fees
20 to bail them out. Fix our roadbeds
21 instead.

22 NUMBER FOUR: Congestion pricing
23 in other cities like London, and
24 according to my friends who live
25 there, put the city in worse financial

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1 straits because they are eroding tax
2 space. Many firms relocated outside
3 the city limits, just as the
4 congestion pricing could force more
5 firms out of New York City and into
6 Connecticut and New Jersey.

7 Thank you for your time. I hope
8 you listen and heed what I've said.
9 Congestion pricing is yet another
10 government ploy of taxing the motorist
11 yet again for mass transit.

12 Mismanagement from mass transit,
13 mismanagement. However, it will not
14 reduce congestion. Statistics say
15 what you want them to say.

16 Thank you very much.

17 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker is Diahann
19 Browne, followed by Arthur Miller.

20 DIAHANN BROWNE: Hello. Can you
21 hear me?

22 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

23 DIAHANN BROWNE: Wonderful.

24 So I am a resident of East New
25 York, Brooklyn, very close to

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1 Southeast Queens. So I'm going to
2 share a lot of the sentiments that we
3 have here. This congestion plan is
4 highly inconsiderate of folks who live
5 not near the city and, quite frankly,
6 highly capitalist and needs to be
7 reconsidered.

8 For those of us who live in this
9 area, we already drive toll roads and
10 we pay tolls to go in and out of the
11 city already, which are already
12 exponential. This will negatively
13 impact those of us in the area who are
14 black and brown, low and barely
15 middle-income citizens.

16 So the notion of having a
17 65,000-dollar threshold for those who
18 will get a rebate, not even a
19 discount, a rebate, is just completely
20 unrealistic when the cost of living in
21 the city, in general, is well above
22 \$83,000.

23 This will also really just --
24 this whole entire plan just sounds
25 very Manhattan-centric. It doesn't

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1 really consider anybody in the other
2 four boroughs, let alone those of us
3 who are living in the margins because
4 we have nowhere else that we can
5 afford.

6 Bus routes and other
7 alternatives have not been offered to
8 us at all. We have been historically
9 under-serviced. Many of us live in
10 what we call a two-fare zone. Meaning
11 that we have to take a bus, maybe even
12 two buses, to a train.

13 And that's even just to get to
14 the train, not even considering the
15 breakdowns of trains, delays on
16 trains. Which for many of us at end
17 of lines can make or break our getting
18 to work and to where we need to be
19 going on time.

20 These patterns need to be
21 rethought, effort needs to be put into
22 considering the black and brown
23 populations of the city as well as
24 rethinking traffic patterns that
25 already -- that already do not make

1 sense as everything seems to be
2 funneling to a chokehold point where
3 you could decentralize it and actually
4 create routes that circumvent that.

5 So I think that the MTA and DOT
6 and everyone involved really needs to
7 do a little bit better in
8 reconsidering what this all means,
9 what this all looks like and to be
10 more transparent when they are coming
11 up with these plans.

12 And not waiting until the last
13 week of Labor Day and giving five very
14 inconveniently scheduled Zoom meetings
15 in order to get community feedback
16 when you don't reach out to the
17 communities who it will affect the
18 most.

19 Thank you very much.

20 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

21 Our next speaker is Arthur
22 Miller, followed by Adam Liggio.

23 Our next speaker is Adam Liggio,
24 followed by Craig Sands.

25 Our next speaker is Craig Sands,

1 followed by Denise Ruggiero.

2 Our next speaker is Denise
3 Ruggiero, followed by Josh Gottheimer.

4 Our next speaker is Josh
5 Gottheimer, followed by Pamela Feuer.

6 JOSH GOTTHEIMER: Hi. This is
7 Josh Gottheimer. Can you hear me?

8 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

9 JOSH GOTTHEIMER: Thank you so
10 much.

11 As I said, I'm Josh Gottheimer
12 and I represent New Jersey's 5th
13 Congressional District.

14 From nurses in the early shift,
15 restaurant workers and Uber drivers
16 working the late shift, many of the
17 residents in my district in the cross
18 North Jersey have no other choice but
19 to drive to New York to make a living.

20 I join the overwhelming majority
21 of those who already testified in
22 strongly opposing the MTA's outrageous
23 congestion tax. Not only because it
24 will drain our families' pocketbooks
25 and the small businesses who are

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1 struggling, but it also does nothing
2 to actually help the environment or
3 ease congestion.

4 In fact, for those of us in
5 North Jersey near bridges and tunnels,
6 to those in the outer boroughs and
7 north of 60th in Manhattan, the
8 congestion tax, by the MTA's own
9 admission, will lead to more traffic
10 and more pollution, disproportionately
11 hurt lower-income families and poison
12 our children's air.

13 From the MTA's perspective, they
14 desperately need the cash, despite the
15 surge of 15 billion in federal COVID
16 dollars, their willful mismanagement
17 and lax enforcement of fare
18 collection, has led to a two and a
19 half billion-dollar budget deficit.

20 In their eyes, who better to pay
21 the bill than Jersey drivers and the
22 outer boroughs. And the number is
23 eye-poppingly insane. Can you imagine
24 the hard-working nurse or taxi driver
25 from New Jersey having to pay \$23 a

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1 day or \$5,000 a year on top of the \$16
2 they pay to go over the GW Bridge?
3 When you add gas and parking, that's
4 \$20,000 a year. Well, I'm sorry to
5 say to the MTA, New Jersey is not your
6 ATM machine, we're not your piggy
7 bank.

8 And let me be clear, every
9 scenario the MTA released will whack
10 drivers with a new tax. That's why
11 there has been such an outcry of
12 opposition from taxis, Uber, Lyft,
13 seniors, and the elderly, small
14 businesses that will get whacked, and
15 so many hard-working families.

16 Parents shouldn't have to choose
17 between spending money on their
18 families or paying some surtax.
19 Elderly and people with disabilities
20 who have no choice but to drive
21 because of their health, shouldn't be
22 forced to travel in the dangerous,
23 dirty, and inaccessible subway, or
24 instead pay congestion tax.

25 Should -- people should not be

1 taxed for driving to receive
2 life-saving care at Beth Israel or NYU
3 because they can't risk being on
4 public transit. This is nothing more
5 than a cash grab to fund the terribly
6 mismanaged MTA.

7 I hope New York's mayor and
8 governor are listening because our
9 families, our governor, Governor
10 Murphy, the city's small business
11 owners, and taxi and Uber drivers are
12 telling the MTA to reverse course on
13 their congestion tax plan.

14 This public pushback is
15 overwhelming as you've heard tonight
16 and night after night. Please rethink
17 this, it's the right thing to do to
18 save the taxpayers money and to help
19 all those who need help.

20 Thank you so much for your time
21 and consideration.

22 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

23 Our next speaker is Pamela
24 Feuer, followed by Liam Blank.

25 PAMELA FEUER: Hello. Can you

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1 hear me?

2 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

3 PAMELA FEUER: Yes. Hello.

4 Thank you for the opportunity to
5 speak. My name is Pamela Feuer. I am
6 a resident of the CBD, in the Hell's
7 Kitchen neighborhood. I am a born and
8 bred New Yorker who returned 20 years
9 ago to the city to continue my career
10 as a pediatric intensive care
11 physician, for which I provide
12 services to the critically ill and
13 injured children of New York City at
14 all hours of the day or night. And
15 currently do that in Staten Island
16 where there are very few experts in my
17 field.

18 I live in this neighborhood and
19 I also moved my octogenarian
20 nonagenarian parents into the
21 neighborhood five years ago so that I
22 could help them enjoy the later years
23 of their life and manage their health
24 care as best as we can.

25 I find that this program, as

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1 presented, is a huge mistake. And
2 it's very discriminatory for those of
3 us who live in the Central Business
4 District and have positions, and
5 family obligations, caretaker
6 obligations, which require use of a
7 vehicle. I certainly cannot get in a
8 timely fashion to take care of my
9 patients by any means of public
10 transportation.

11 Two years ago, I was considered
12 a health care hero and driving through
13 the desolate streets of New York to
14 take care of patients when many people
15 where locked behind doors at home.
16 Now, I'm told that on top of my
17 26-dollar commute to Staten Island,
18 I'm going to have to pay a tax to come
19 in and out of my own neighborhood, my
20 own garage to get sleep at all
21 different hours of the night, to get
22 my parents to health care
23 appointments, to shop.

24 I use the city -- I use the city
25 for everything, to shop, support small

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1 businesses. I exercise in the city.
2 I utilize all the parks. I'm a
3 cyclist.

4 Really, the congestion that
5 should be worked on is the congestion
6 on the sidewalks, the wheeled
7 vehicles, the scaffolding. All of the
8 things that need programs to work on
9 improving our pedestrian life in New
10 York.

11 So thank you for your time.

12 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

13 Our next speaker is Liam Blank,
14 followed by Rosa Reyes.

15 LIAM BLANK: Good evening. My
16 name is Liam Blank. I'm the policy
17 and communications manager for
18 Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a
19 non-profit organization fighting for
20 sustainable mobility in the New York
21 City Metro area.

22 Today I join with those
23 advocating for New York City's
24 Congestion Pricing Program. The key
25 to ensuring safer, more reliable,

1 efficient and accessible public
2 transit, as well as cleaner air, less
3 traffic congestion, and safer roads,
4 is through a swift implementation of
5 congestion pricing.

6 Congestion pricing is expected
7 to generate one billion dollars per
8 year. Thus, allowing the MTA to
9 complete its essential capital program
10 to remedy long-standing issues
11 plaguing our public transit systems.

12 The state and city should act to
13 mitigate any potential negative
14 impacts that congestion pricing may
15 have on environmental justice
16 communities located in the outer
17 boroughs.

18 The Environmental Assessment
19 lists seven tolling scenarios to
20 investigate potential impacts.
21 Tolling the Central Business District
22 will lead to reduced traffic entering
23 the area with a net benefit of
24 congestion reduction for the region.

25 Discounts, crossing credits, and

1 exemptions will lead to higher toll
2 rates for everyone else. Daily truck
3 traffic in Manhattan's core could
4 decline anywhere 21 percent to 81
5 percent, meaning thousands of trucks
6 will no longer drive through
7 Manhattan. The diversion of these
8 trucks has been accounted for through
9 the truck reduction programs outlined
10 in the Environmental Assessment.

11 If more exemptions are allowed,
12 higher toll rates would still lead to
13 more traffic reduction in the CBD.
14 But depending on the scenario,
15 potential adverse impact could turn up
16 along the Staten Island Expressway and
17 the Cross Bronx Expressway. The MTA
18 will need to mitigate these impacts as
19 it creates the final program, this is
20 imminently doable.

21 Under some of the scenarios, the
22 MTA's transition towards electrifying
23 its fleet through deploying zero
24 emission buses will reduce emissions
25 in neighborhoods most affected by poor

1 air quality and climate change.

2 Later this year, the MTA will
3 prioritize deploying new electric
4 buses at the Kingsbridge depot and Gun
5 Hill depot, both located in and
6 serving primarily environmental
7 justice communities in Manhattan and
8 the Bronx. Tri-State believes the
9 identified potential impacts in the
10 outer boroughs are solvable through
11 coordinated mitigation efforts by the
12 multiple agencies responsible.

13 The bottom line is we all want a
14 clean planet, but what many drivers
15 tend to want more than that is cheap
16 gas, no tolls, and free parking. When
17 the price of driving starts to creep
18 up, people get unhappy.

19 The way I think about it, we're
20 still very much in the fossil fuel
21 age. If we're going to talk an
22 aspirational game of net zero by 2050,
23 then we need to start taking the
24 necessary steps today. This is the
25 year 2022 and we're still way too

1 dependent on gas-powered cars.

2 I'm terrified that we're not
3 going to do nearly enough fast enough.
4 The clock is ticking. It's hard to be
5 optimistic that our region will get
6 it's act together in a way that's
7 going to allow us to make a meaningful
8 difference. Climate changes means, to
9 me, looking in the eyes of my children
10 and wondering what kind of hell they
11 are going to have to pay.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

14 Our next speaker, the 101st
15 speaker to sign up, is Rosa Reyes,
16 followed by Waheed Habib.

17 ROSA REYES: Hello. Thank you
18 for the opportunity to speak at this
19 hearing. My name is Rosa Reyes.

20 I want to start by saying that
21 if congestion pricing was in another
22 neighborhood or in another borough, my
23 reaction would be sure, do it, because
24 it doesn't affect me, just like
25 politicians who don't live in the zone

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1 and support it.

2 But I do live in the zone, I
3 live in a natural occurring retirement
4 community. And it is completely
5 outrageous to penalize residents and
6 businesses by subjecting us to pay
7 these fares just to enter and leave
8 the area. Congestion pricing will
9 destroy the economy in the zone
10 because businesses will be affected,
11 as will residents.

12 Once business overhead costs
13 increase, what do you think will
14 happen? What do you think will happen
15 to consumer goods and services? The
16 prices won't stay the same.
17 Businesses are not going to take the
18 loss. So the increased cost of doing
19 business in the zone will be passed on
20 to consumers that live in the area.

21 So whether or not you own a car,
22 you will be adversely affected. And I
23 want to repeat that; whether or not
24 you own a car, you will be adversely
25 affected. Small businesses and

1 restaurants who cannot compete because
2 of higher prices, will have to close.
3 We already have problems with high
4 commercial rent in the zone and many,
5 many vacant storefronts. Congestion
6 pricing will only aggravate the
7 problem.

8 In the zone, there are a lot of
9 elderly, disabled, low and
10 middle-class residents who are
11 struggling. They are struggling to
12 pay for basic necessities, like rent,
13 which you know a rent hike was
14 approved recently affecting millions
15 of residents.

16 Currently, the medium rent is
17 \$4,000 a month. I don't know who can
18 afford that, just the wealthy, I
19 guess, and people are struggling.
20 People are struggling to pay for food
21 as well. Because of the shortages and
22 inflation that we had during COVID,
23 prices of meat, and produce, and milk
24 have skyrocketed. And it's just going
25 to keep going up with congestion

1 pricing. Because again, businesses
2 with not take a loss. They will pass
3 on the prices to consumers.

4 Let's not forget that when the
5 decision was made a few years ago to
6 pass congestion pricing by politicians
7 who do not reside or represent
8 constituents of the zone there was no
9 COVID, there was no inflation which
10 rose to 9.1 percent and there was no
11 federal grant to the MTA at an amount
12 of six billion dollars.

13 The carve-out does not do enough
14 to leave -- leaving out many
15 struggling residents. If congestion
16 pricing was fair, then it should be
17 rolled out to all of Manhattan, and
18 include all of the boroughs --

19 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
20 your remarks.

21 ROSA REYES: -- Long Island and
22 Westchester since the railways are
23 getting some of this revenue.

24 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

25 ROSA REYES: Than you again.

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1 Thank you for the opportunity.

2 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

3 Our next speaker is Waheed
4 Habib, followed by John Seaborne.

5 Waheed, you may proceed.

6 WAHEED HABIB: Hi. My name is
7 Waheed Habib. I'm fellow taxi driver,
8 FHV. This is an unpractical idea
9 because affecting all taxi driver who
10 are already struggling.

11 During the COVID, the city need
12 us and we were there for them. And
13 this will cause us have less job that
14 affect our income. We are all
15 hard-working who are just trying to
16 provide for our family. Not all of us
17 are fortunate to become a big business
18 owner. It is also not fair to
19 passenger who also travel to work
20 as it will double -- it will be double
21 cost for them as well. About the --

22 I think that's it. Thank you.

23 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

24 Our next speaker is John
25 Seaborne, followed by Kyle Kamuta.

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1 Our next speaker is Kyle Kamuta,
2 followed by Peter Mazer.

3 KYLE KAMUTA: Hello. I would
4 like to see congestion pricing
5 instigated as soon as possible. The
6 negative community effects of vehicles
7 on the road and the traffic the cause
8 are diverse, well documented, and are
9 proven to be detrimental to the health
10 of most New Yorkers.

11 As a car owner living in
12 Brooklyn, who does drive into
13 Manhattan with some regularity, I
14 support this initiative. I'm also a
15 bike commuter and experienced the
16 dangers of cycling on overcrowded
17 streets in Manhattan on a weekly
18 basis.

19 I would like to see any
20 provision allowing commuters from New
21 Jersey and the outer boroughs to
22 deduct congestion fees from other
23 tolls to be eliminated. This
24 exception will diminish the intended
25 impacts of this program.

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1 I support incentivizing some
2 behaviors, like credits for carpoolers
3 or two-wheeled commuters and accepting
4 other shared transit like buses and
5 yellow cabs.

6 This program will be part of a
7 holistic plan to create better, more
8 affordable transportation by funding
9 expanded subway access, and should
10 fund dedicated bus lanes and protected
11 bike lanes as well.

12 But we need accountability and
13 transparency to ensure the funds
14 collected from this program are used
15 to expand public transportation,
16 access, and bike lanes. Otherwise,
17 there will be no trust from the
18 community and any program like this
19 again. I call for some kind of live
20 dashboard and hearings to communicate
21 how funds are appropriated.

22 Tax credits and stipends should
23 also be given to low-income New
24 Yorkers living in the outer boroughs
25 whose income is under a determined

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1 threshold and who live beyond easy
2 access of existing and future public
3 transportation hubs.

4 This needs to be done equitably
5 and it needs to be done soon.

6 Thank you.

7 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

8 Our next speaker, the 105th
9 person to sign up, is Peter Mazer,
10 followed by Jacob Hercules.

11 PETER MAZER: Good evening. My
12 name is Peter Mazer, General Council
13 to the Metropolitan Taxi Cab Board of
14 Trade. We are a 70 year-old
15 not-for-profit association
16 representing owners and operators of
17 licensed New York City medallion taxi
18 cabs, a license recognized and
19 protected by New York State law.

20 MTBOT will be more submitting
21 more extensive written comments to
22 demonstrate that a full EIS is needed
23 to analyze this program.

24 A stated goal of the tolling
25 program is the reduction in the number

1 of vehicles entering into the
2 congestion zone by at least ten
3 percent. In theory, this pricing
4 system is modeled after London, which
5 exempts taxi cabs. But the plan has a
6 number of scenarios that include taxi
7 cab service.

8 The tolling plan envisions that
9 if cabs have passengers, the charge
10 would be reflected on the taxi meter
11 and paid by the passenger. If the
12 taxi has no passenger, the charge
13 would be born by the driver upon entry
14 into the CBD.

15 The vast majority of taxi cabs
16 are either garaged outside of
17 Manhattan or owned or leased by
18 drivers residing in the other
19 boroughs. Most cabs enter the
20 congestion zone at the beginning of
21 the shift because that's where most
22 retail business is found.

23 Unlike 400 vehicles and TNCs
24 while rely on calls from passengers,
25 far fewer taxi cab trips original

1 outside the CBD. Hence, drivers are
2 not passengers are likely to bear the
3 burden of this toll, at least for the
4 initial entry into the zone. The net
5 effect will be to reduce the
6 willingness of taxi cab drivers to
7 serve mid and Lower Manhattan,
8 reducing service and depriving
9 passengers of this needed form of
10 transportation.

11 The Environmental Assessment
12 does not address this vacuum in taxi
13 cab service and it's impact on
14 congestion in the CBD. But without
15 such an analysis, these passengers
16 would now migrate to mass transit or
17 use alternatives such as biking and
18 walking.

19 It does not address the reality
20 that taxi cabs more large numbers of
21 passengers efficiently and that this
22 service -- if this service is reduced
23 and unavailable, the possibility
24 exists that these displaced passengers
25 will use private automobiles thereby

1 adding to congestion either in the CBD
2 or in areas directly adjacent to it.

3 In order to fully analyze the
4 impact the tolling system will have on
5 congestion, it is necessary to include
6 in any analysis the impact the tolling
7 plan will have on a number of
8 taxicabs, the number of trips, and the
9 likelihood that former taxi cab
10 passengers deprived of service will
11 use private automobiles thereby
12 increasing congestion.

13 Presently, there are more than
14 100,000 taxi trips a day, and this
15 number is increasing as the city
16 reopens to tourism and business. More
17 than 90 percent touch the Central
18 Business District.

19 That means some substantial
20 portion of 90,000 daily taxi cab users
21 will need to find other means of
22 transportation. If many of these use
23 private automobiles, the congestion
24 mitigation goals will not be achieved.
25 A full environmental analysis will

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1 determine what percentage of these
2 riders will now use private motor
3 vehicles and impact traffic congestion
4 in both Central Business --

5 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
6 your remarks.

7 PETER MAZER: -- District and
8 adjacent neighborhoods.

9 Thank you.

10 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

11 Our next speaker is Jacob
12 Hercules, followed by Carol Parker.

13 JACOB HERCULES: Hello. My name
14 is Jake. I am a car owner in
15 Brooklyn. I do love driving. I also
16 love and support anything that gets
17 cars off of the road.

18 When I see a bus or train go by,
19 I'm thankful that it means there's
20 dozens of cars that aren't clogging
21 the streets, clogging the air and the
22 odds that accidents, injuries for
23 other pedestrians, cyclists or even
24 people still in their cars all go
25 down.

1 I would love to see a city where
2 it isn't regularly faster to drive
3 across town than to take transit.

4 With that said, my support for
5 something like a congestion charge
6 comes with a caveat. In a lot of the
7 media coverage for this proposal,
8 these efforts are likened to cities
9 like London, who have already pulled
10 something like this off.

11 But what I feel gets overlooked
12 is that unlike Manhattan, those cities
13 are contiguous with their surrounding
14 areas. They aren't a collection of
15 islands that one has to cross to get
16 to the rest of the state or the rest
17 of the country.

18 There's some 2 million vehicles
19 registered in Long Island will pass
20 through Manhattan at one point or
21 another, simply because that's where
22 all of the connections to the mainland
23 are. Especially if you're trying to
24 access Newark Airport, where it could
25 take you an hour or more to cross from

1 the Manhattan Bridge to the entrance
2 of the Holland Tunnel.

3 As others have pointed out, in
4 London, different vehicles like
5 motorcycles, electric cars or hybrids
6 get reduced, even free passages
7 through those zones. And on top of
8 that, E-ZPass and tolling systems we
9 already have should be aware of what
10 make and model of a car passing
11 through the toll plazas are. So why
12 are we charging small efficient
13 vehicles, like a Honda Fit, the same
14 rate as a larger, more polluting
15 vehicle like a Cadillac Escalade,
16 Dodge Charger type-of-thing.

17 We spent decades enabling
18 commuter drivers to -- which means
19 that all of the bridges and tunnels in
20 or out of the city are located within
21 the proposed congestion zone. And
22 while the pricing will decrease
23 traffic in the core of Manhattan, I'm
24 still worried that New Jersey,
25 Brooklyn, Queens, Long Island drivers

1 unable or unwilling to give up their
2 cars will add distance to their
3 journeys just to circumvent these
4 charges.

5 And that traffic will divert to
6 your only two alternatives, Washington
7 Bridge, and like you said on slide 15,
8 that would require more vehicles to go
9 through Washington Heights, Upper
10 Manhattan, Harlem, or they go over the
11 already congested Verrazano Bridge,
12 clogging up the Brooklyn Belt Parkway,
13 BQE.

14 Even though you mentioned in
15 your slides and in your studies you
16 didn't believe it would add more
17 traffic or more noise or more
18 pollution, I just can't believe that
19 you wouldn't also increase accidents
20 and noise in those communities
21 affected disproportionately down
22 there.

23 I do support the idea of making
24 Manhattan's core a less car-saturated
25 place, but please place greater

1 consideration on the fact that we
2 don't have the same alternate route
3 options that London and/or Paris has.

4 As an extension of that,
5 congestion pricing should not be a way
6 to push the problem from one area onto
7 everyone else.

8 Thank you.

9 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

10 Our next speaker is Carol
11 Parker, followed by Joseph Liotta.

12 Our next speaker is Joseph
13 Liotta, followed by Bertha Lewis.

14 Joe, be sure to take yourself
15 off mute and then proceed with your
16 remarks.

17 Joe, if you're speaking, we
18 can't hear you.

19 Our next speaker, our 110th
20 person to sign up, is Bertha Lewis,
21 followed by Branch Worsham.

22 BERTHA LEWIS: Hello. My name
23 is Bertha Lewis, and I am the founder
24 and president of the Black Institute.
25 The Black Institute is a New York City

1 based racial justice action tank
2 dedicated to research and advocacy
3 that leads to racial equality and
4 fairness. I appreciate the
5 opportunity to comment on the
6 Environmental Assessment of the CBD
7 and their Tolling Program because
8 there is a lot to say.

9 The fact is that the congestion
10 pricing plan is none of the things
11 that we stand for, nor what
12 communities of color actually need.
13 It's not fair, it does no justice to
14 our communities, and, in fact, will
15 only lead to further racial inequality
16 in New York City and the metropolitan
17 area.

18 This Environmental Assessment
19 has grossly and inexcusably misread
20 the environment that any of the
21 proposed tolling scenarios would
22 affect. It will do significant
23 economic harm to New York's most
24 vulnerable and numerous community,
25 people of color living in the outer

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1 boroughs and above the 60th Street
2 boundary.

3 The EA has failed to do any more
4 than the bare minimum to address
5 potential justice concerns. And this
6 is the fine print that will ruin our
7 community. New York is a majority
8 minority city. A city that runs
9 because of an underpaid workforce
10 comprised largely of immigrants and
11 people of color.

12 New York would not run without
13 them and pays them next to nothing to
14 do so. We need every dollar to
15 survive. We live paycheck to
16 paycheck. And yet, this EA suggests
17 that all they would get is a tax
18 break.

19 What about the for-hire drivers
20 of the city, who are, surprise, by and
21 large immigrants and people of color.
22 You would take their money, steal
23 their jobs, thousand of them, and for
24 what? Buying new buses and fixing our
25 city's decaying public transit system

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1 is noble, but why are we taxing our
2 poor citizens to do so?

3 There are so many flaws in this
4 EA and the proposed tolling scenarios
5 to highlight, but I don't have the
6 time. So I'd like to use my remaining
7 time to completely and totally
8 denounce both this EA and these
9 hearings which are exclusionary and
10 rough.

11 The MTA has disenfranchised
12 communities of color, who are the most
13 impacted, by making these hearings
14 virtual and holding them all at once
15 only a few weeks after the EA's
16 release. It is crystal clear that
17 unlike its operations, the MTA's
18 desperation to push this half-baked
19 plan through is not to serve this
20 community. Rather, it is to deny our
21 community, people of color, the right
22 to oppose these innate plans for the
23 MTA's own self-interest.

24 Therefore, I demand that the MTA
25 publically retract this EA and

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1 investigate the economic impacts of
2 people of color.

3 Thank you.

4 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

5 Our next speaker is Branch
6 Worsham, followed by Lorraine Cupelli.

7 Our next speaker is Lorraine
8 Cupelli, followed by Sam Hecker.

9 Our next speaker is Sam Hecker,
10 to be followed by Joseph Liotta.

11 Our next speaker is Joseph
12 Liotta, followed by Paul Fridman.

13 Joe, you may proceed.

14 JOSEPH LIOTTA: Can you hear me?

15 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.

16 JOSEPH LIOTTA: I just wanted to
17 say that I think this program is a
18 mistake. It's really going to be a
19 tax on the outer boroughs. I think
20 most importantly it's going to raise
21 the cost of living because I work in
22 retail at the moment and I just know
23 how the pandemic and inflation has
24 really impacted small businesses.

25 I can tell you firsthand that if

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1 you start putting a tax on trucking
2 industries, it's going to increase the
3 cost of living throughout the Central
4 Business District area. This is
5 especially something that Manhattan
6 can't afford, especially considering
7 places like Soho. They haven't really
8 been able to attract business in,
9 let's say years. It's very difficult
10 living on pop-up shops.

11 Just beyond that, there is also
12 a lot of reasons why people do need to
13 take cars into these areas. People
14 for the most part are afraid of
15 subways, there's a lot of crime.
16 Mayor Adams is doing absolutely
17 nothing to do anything about the
18 crime, although it's what he
19 campaigned on. Crime has just gotten
20 worse.

21 If you talk to anybody who lives
22 outside of Manhattan, they will tell
23 you that traffic has increased
24 throughout the pandemic. Currently,
25 I'm living in Brooklyn in a subway

1 desert and the traffic here is ten
2 times worse than it was before the
3 pandemic. This is because people are
4 afraid to take the subways.

5 You can't be putting in a
6 congestion pricing plan with the idea
7 that more people are going to take
8 public transportation when people
9 aren't willing to access the subway,
10 when people can't even access a
11 subway. For me, it's way faster to
12 travel anywhere in the city by car
13 than by taking the subway. I'm 20
14 minutes away walking from the New York
15 subway, 15 minutes away driving.
16 That's how bad it is. And even then,
17 when I take the subway from Brooklyn
18 to Manhattan, it's an hour minimum.
19 Driving it can take me 45 minutes.

20 You have to address these things
21 first. Now, I know the congestion
22 pricing plan is designed to help to
23 pay for these programs. But frankly,
24 I think we need to look outside the
25 city.

1 (Technical difficulties.)

2 But -- but -- it's okay if
3 somebody, for example, is the only
4 possible subway in the world, it
5 actually doubles investments or on the
6 subway lines and they're so successful
7 with this, they got contracted to do
8 the Hanoi subway system in Vietnam.

9 We have to look outside the box
10 to really think of better options than
11 congestion pricing, which is really
12 going to make people avoid Manhattan
13 if anything. It could actually hollow
14 out the economy if we add it on. So I
15 don't think you're going to be making
16 as much money as you think.

17 As far as the environmental
18 idea, frankly what's going to be
19 happening is -- you're just going to
20 be moving the problem elsewhere.
21 People are still going to be driving
22 in the outer boroughs and the suburbs.
23 All you're doing is taking the
24 pollution and moving it to the
25 boroughs, nothing's going to be

1 solved.

2 I think our leaders, to be
3 honest, to put it bluntly, they're
4 schmucks. They don't really care
5 about poor people. They just pretend
6 to care about poor people. Think of
7 the people like the mayor, the public
8 advocate, all you doing is pretending
9 to care about poor people. This is
10 isn't going to help them, it's just
11 going to hurt them in the long run.

12 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

13 Our next speaker is Paul
14 Fridman, followed by L. Singer.

15 Our next speaker, the 115th
16 person to sign up, is L. Singer,
17 followed by Danny Sena.

18 L. Singer, be sure to take
19 yourself off mute and you may proceed.

20 Our next speaker is Danny Sena,
21 followed by Michael Huarachi.

22 DANNY SENA: Good evening.
23 Thank you for having me. My name is
24 Danny Sena. I'm Director of
25 Operations at Agape Transportation

1 Management.

2 We're a family-owned and
3 transportation company that
4 specializes in non-emergency
5 transportation. In ten years, we've
6 grown to become the largest provider
7 for Medicaid transportation in the
8 State of New York, something we're
9 very proud of. But something that is
10 also very concerning or that brings us
11 a lot of concern when considering the
12 new tolling.

13 Because we specialize in
14 non-emergency medical transportation,
15 it means we transport people who need
16 to be transported, who have no way of
17 reaching their hospital or medical
18 appointments without our service or
19 services like ours.

20 As well as our drivers, we
21 specifically and only work with
22 for-hire vehicles, black car, livery
23 vehicles throughout New York City, who
24 are primarily or generally
25 lower-income or middle-income New

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1 Yorkers, oftentimes immigrants, like
2 my father who started the company, who
3 moved here as an immigrant with no
4 college degree, with not even a high
5 school degree, I think, at the time.
6 I was able to build a business because
7 he started cabbing.

8 So this tolling program will be
9 extremely strenuous, not only to the
10 New York City cab drivers but also to
11 men and woman what are sickly or
12 older, who won't be able to reach
13 their medical appointments or would
14 have an even more difficult time
15 reaching their medical appointments.

16 So what I'd like to propose and
17 request is that a carve-out is made
18 similar to what is mentioned about
19 Access-A-Ride in the plan for
20 non-emergency medical transportation
21 providers.

22 Right now, it's relatively
23 simple, I think, to implement this as
24 all the New York City TLC bases have
25 to report their trips to TLC. Any

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1 driver associated with a company who
2 primarily does medical transportation
3 can be exempt from the tolls via just
4 putting that information together.

5 I think that should be strongly
6 considered specifically because,
7 again, these passengers can't be
8 transported, or can't reach any of
9 their appointments any other way. As
10 someone mentioned, they're elderly or
11 they're sickly and they can't take
12 public transportation and they can't
13 walk, they can't run, they can't take
14 bikes like others can.

15 Something should be done for
16 this population and for the taxi
17 drivers that move them as they did
18 throughout the pandemic.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

21 Our next speaker is Michael
22 Huarachi, followed by L. Singer.

23 MICHAEL HUARACHI: Hello?

24 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.

25 MICHAEL HUARACHI: Yes. I've

1 heard a lot of cash grabs, people of
2 color, lower income people, poor
3 people, blind people, people with
4 disabilities. Where are these people
5 going to travel when the city is under
6 water? Where are these people going
7 to go? Who are the first communities
8 impacted during climate crisis? I'll
9 pause. That's right, it's low-income
10 people of color.

11 We're so concerned about cash
12 grab, you want to know the biggest
13 scam in New York City, in American
14 society, is the police budget. Okay?
15 We're talking about 11 billion
16 dollars. Where's that going? Funnel
17 those funds back into our community.
18 We need to start funding public
19 education, public health care, public
20 transportation, public works all
21 around. This is just the beginning.

22 Hashtag, ban cars. I live right
23 outside the Lincoln Tunnel. I'm very
24 lucky to live in a low-income
25 building. I'm very lucky to be

1 surrounded by some very awesome
2 neighbors, lots of actors, lots of
3 people from different backgrounds.
4 There's non-stop traffic.

5 Department of Health and Human
6 Hygiene 2018 community health profile
7 noted that 9.5 percent, PM 2.5,
8 particulate matter, the highest in New
9 York City. The highest in the Central
10 Business District. Okay? You want to
11 talk about clean air, these funds that
12 we will generate from congestion
13 pricing will help clean the air.

14 You want to take it a step
15 further, let's ban cars. Let's put a
16 cap on how many cars can enter the
17 Central Business District. I will say
18 the biggest obstacles are, again,
19 going to be Port Authority Bus
20 Terminal of New York/New Jersey, Mayor
21 Adams who was just bullhorned for the
22 NYPD insatiable appetite for money,
23 and definitely Hochul and the mayor of
24 New Jersey.

25 We can talk about how this money

1 can also provide some circulation on
2 the platforms, I think that would
3 really help. I think platform doors
4 coming is a really great pilot
5 program. Let's not make that pilot
6 program last 15 years, because we know
7 that we need them.

8 Police do not combat safety,
9 let's knock that myth out of the
10 ballpark. I've been traveling on
11 these subways for over 20 years, I
12 know how I present, I'm very
13 fortunate. But I also know it's
14 probably one of the safest public
15 transportation systems I've ever
16 ridden on in a western industrialized
17 country.

18 I thank you for all that you do,
19 and I thank you for having me during
20 these meetings.

21 Thank you.

22 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

23 Our next speaker is L. Singer,
24 followed by Richard Weiss.

25 L. SINGER: Can you hear me?

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1 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.

2 Please proceed.

3 Could you speak louder?

4 L. SINGER: I am -- Josh

5 Gottheimer's remarks. I am an elderly

6 senior citizen with mobility issues.

7 Congestion pricing has not adequately

8 addressed the impact on the sick --

9 the financially disadvantaged, the

10 people of color, the blind people, the

11 deaf people. I am appealing to you to

12 roll back the plan and not to move

13 forward with it.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

16 Our next speaker is Richard

17 Weiss followed by Paul D'Antonio.

18 Our next speaker is Paul

19 D'Antonio, followed by Michelle

20 Grossman.

21 Our next speaker is Paul

22 D'Antonio, the 120th person to sign

23 up, is Michelle Grossman, followed by

24 Arya Sajedi.

25 MICHELLE GROSSMAN: Hi. I live

1 in the CBD. I am for the environment
2 and reducing congestion, but I am
3 against the current congestion pricing
4 plan. This is my last time speaking
5 here. I have already come before this
6 board to share concerns around the
7 timing of this process being late
8 August, reliability, accessibility,
9 and safety concerns, and the impact to
10 people who live in the CBD, people who
11 must drive into or out of the CBD for
12 work, and the impact to businesses in
13 the CBD.

14 In my calls and letters to
15 elected officials, I also included
16 concerns around accountability,
17 pandering to special interest groups,
18 and the current proposal not being a
19 fair and equitable plan. Many others
20 have spoken to all of these topics.

21 Look, I come before this board
22 really fighting for my community and
23 not myself as an individual. I am
24 really fortunate. I personally will
25 survive all of this. But I deeply

1 care about other people and my
2 community as a whole. Which doesn't
3 just mean a neighborhood I live in,
4 but it means all people this impacts.
5 And this impacts a lot of people.

6 Some final requests: In the
7 spirit of transparency, as opposed to
8 responding to people individually
9 about their concerns, make all
10 responses accessible to the public.
11 Like you, I have listened to all 25
12 hours of presentation and testimony so
13 far, except I'm not getting paid to
14 listen to this and it's on my own
15 time. A response to the public on all
16 the concerns raised is the only
17 respectful, fair, and transparent
18 route.

19 Two: A suggestion, please, fine
20 people for blocking the box and fine
21 people for unnecessary honking. That
22 alone would greatly help congestion,
23 generate revenue, and vastly improve
24 the quality of life for residents,
25 motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

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1 We all win that.

2 Three: Most importantly, please
3 have compassion and empathy as you
4 move through this process.

5 Of the 341 testimonies so far,
6 only 25 percent have been fully in
7 favor of this. Of the 243 people who
8 spoke against this, think of Paul
9 Rizzo who highlighted how this would
10 impact clubs in the CBD like The
11 Bitter End; Cindy Roberts, a senior on
12 a low fixed income who can't ride a
13 bike or walk; think of Beatrice Smith
14 who lives in a two-fare zone and would
15 need to spend a whole day getting to
16 and from doctors; and Daniel Buzzetta
17 who spoke to how this will impact the
18 few remaining funeral homes in the
19 CBD; and re-watch Jonathan Gibbs'
20 testimony who, as he understood
21 through media, was for congestion
22 pricing. And after listening to two
23 hours of testimony of how this will
24 impact real people, said to this board
25 "I couldn't be you and make the

1 decision to continue on with this."

2 Like Jonathan did, remember
3 there are real people impacted by
4 this. And remember, compassion,
5 empathy. fairness, and equity.

6 Thank you.

7 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

8 Our next speaker is Arya Sajedi,
9 followed by Jessica Lavoie.

10 Our next speaker is Jessica
11 Lavoie, followed by Clarence Tennell.

12 JESSICA LAVOIE: Hi there. Good
13 evening. I would like to speak to you
14 from own experience as a resident of
15 New York City for the last 25 years,
16 and all but two of them I've lived
17 below 60th Street and what will be
18 considered the congestion zone.

19 I live here with my family and I
20 work here and my husband works here.
21 Our son goes to school here. You can
22 find us at neighborhood events and
23 community get togethers, cleaning up
24 our local park, and planting flowers
25 with our older neighbors.

1 I'm telling you this because it
2 sounds like many people think that
3 Midtown and Lower Manhattan is just a
4 place for people to drive into work or
5 to come visit tourist attractions.
6 And as wonderful and as fun as those
7 things are, this isn't just a place
8 where people drive into work 9:00 to
9 5:00, Monday through Friday, this is
10 our home and the home of many others
11 who don't leave at 5 p.m. each week
12 night when the workday is over.

13 We are little league parents and
14 cub scout parents just like anyone
15 else who lives outside New York City.
16 We take public transportation and we
17 walk on a regular basis, and my
18 husband rides a bike to work and back.
19 We do drive to visit family several
20 hours away, maybe once a month. And
21 we go grocery shopping outside the
22 city with a car at times.

23 And I'm just wondering if
24 anybody thought at all about asking
25 the actual residents who live below

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1 60th Street how we would feel about
2 having a wall of cameras and tolls
3 surrounding our neighborhoods and for
4 being penalized for doing nothing
5 other than just living here. Why
6 wasn't it even a thought to consider
7 the actual people who live in what
8 will be the CBD.

9 This will change our lives
10 whether we are drivers or not. The
11 residents of the CBD are not the ones
12 driving around in the CBD. You will
13 not lose money on that exemption if it
14 were to be one. We are the ones who
15 are just trying to leave the CBD if
16 we're ever in a car.

17 Regardless of income, we deserve
18 a full waiver in the CBD. And if not,
19 a 90 percent waiver, like in London.
20 The residents living below 60th
21 Street, who call this place home,
22 should be able to leave their
23 neighborhood and come back home
24 without being charged such an enormous
25 and unfair tax, just like our

1 neighbors above 60th Street.

2 I ask you to think of the people
3 and not just the money this time.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

6 Our next speaker is Clarence
7 Tennell, followed by Carole
8 Maisonneuve.

9 Our next speaker is Carole
10 Maisonneuve, followed by Tracy
11 Annunziato.

12 CAROLE MALSONNEUVE: I thank you
13 for the opportunity to speak. My name
14 is Carole Malsonneuve. I am a mother
15 of three. I have been an NYC resident
16 for 13 years. And for the past ten
17 years, I have lived in Harlem, a
18 community which is disproportionately
19 affected by road violence and
20 environmental inequities.

21 I work Midtown in the congestion
22 pricing area. And yet, I wish to
23 convey my strong support for
24 congestion pricing. And I will
25 comment on the recently published

1 Environmental Assessment.

2 From my understanding, today's
3 meeting is supposed to be about the
4 recently published Environmental
5 Assessment of congestion pricing. It
6 is not supposed to be about the
7 opportunity to adopt congestion
8 pricing. The decision has already
9 been made and we must now bring it to
10 reality.

11 I'm here tonight not to discuss
12 whether we should have congestion
13 pricing, but to demand its full
14 implementation as soon as possible as
15 per the decision that have been made
16 by the legislature and because climate
17 change cannot wait.

18 Tonight's meeting is not
19 supposed to be about listening to
20 individual's complaints. Instead, we
21 should be assessing the plan's
22 expected impact on current and more
23 importantly, on future generations of
24 New Yorkers.

25 Tonight's discussion should not

1 be either about defending any
2 particular interests, any particular
3 interests of a small minority of car
4 users in particular. Instead, we
5 should be acting with the greater good
6 as our guiding principal. And we
7 should very much, that many voice say,
8 communities don't have the luxury to
9 make the time away from their busy
10 schedule to sit in this meeting and
11 voice their views.

12 With the issue of the
13 Environmental Assessment, it is
14 undeniable that congestion pricing
15 will meet its goals. It will reduce
16 traffic congestion not only in the
17 zone, but also outside the zone. Air
18 quality will improve, bus service will
19 become more reliable. Which is so
20 critical to people who depend on them,
21 especially the elderly and the persons
22 with disabilities.

23 Congestion pricing will benefit
24 public transit. This is all we want
25 to know to move the plan forward to

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1 the next step and to put an end to
2 delaying maneuvers orchestrated by
3 city interest.

4 I thank you. And on a related
5 note, I also want to add that the NYPD
6 and DOT must urgently address the
7 issue of defaced, missing, and fake
8 plates as it will be critical to
9 making congestion pricing effective.

10 Thank you.

11 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker, the 125th
13 person to sign up, is Tracy
14 Annunziato, followed by Allie Ryan.

15 Tracy, be sure to unmute and
16 then you may proceed.

17 Tracy, you're still on mute.

18 Tracy, we can't hear you.

19 Our next speaker is Allie Ryan,
20 followed by Sandra Lerner.

21 ALLIE RYAN: Hello. Can you
22 hear me?

23 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

24 ALLIE RYAN: Okay. Hello. My
25 name is Allie Ryan, and my family

1 lives in the Lower East Side. Today I
2 am testifying against congestion
3 pricing.

4 Last year, I ran to represent
5 City Council District 2, which is
6 within the Central Business District,
7 and met many residents who asked me to
8 oppose congestion pricing.

9 Specifically because they were
10 blue-collared workers who drove to the
11 outer boroughs for work located in
12 public transportation deserts at odd
13 hours of the day. They said that the
14 exemption for families who live in the
15 zone and earn less than 60,000 would
16 not apply to them even though they
17 lived paycheck to paycheck.

18 Data shows that lower-income and
19 middle-income families and individuals
20 live in the East Village and live in
21 the East Side, and this will be
22 adversely affected and limited if
23 required to pay congestion pricing to
24 use the FDR.

25 I find it laughable that the MTA

1 and our politicians want to tackle
2 congestion and pollution when the City
3 of New York has chopped down almost
4 600 mature 82-year-old trees in East
5 River Park that runs along the FDR in
6 the Lower East Side in the past seven
7 months.

8 Last year, city counsel members
9 approved over 6,000 new residential
10 units in Lower Manhattan. Traffic
11 Mobility Review Board member Kathryn
12 Wylde called for more affordable
13 housing to attract young people in a
14 recently published -- in AM New York.

15 However, no one mentions
16 increasing manufacturing and local
17 businesses outside of restaurants,
18 bars, legal marijuana smoke and puff
19 shops in Lower Manhattan to enable
20 current and future Lower Manhattan
21 residents to work and shop closer to
22 home. Only one small business owner
23 today has realistically explained how
24 the congestion pricing will impact his
25 business.

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1 We have a congestion in Lower
2 Manhattan. Why are politicians and
3 bureaucrats creating and passing
4 rezonings in development projects to
5 increase density, AKA more people
6 living in Lower Manhattan, which will
7 increase congestion as a byproduct.

8 The statistics that the MTA is
9 using to justify a congestion pricing
10 are obviously outdated due to COVID,
11 do not take into consideration open
12 streets and open restaurant programs.
13 Before Mayor Eric Adams started
14 cracking down on restaurant sheds a
15 couple of weeks ago, over 2,000
16 restaurant sheds were in Lower
17 Manhattan, which reduced the number of
18 parking spots. And for example,
19 Broadway is closed off to car traffic
20 between 42nd Street and 17th Street.

21 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
22 your remarks.

23 ALLIE RYAN: Thank you.

24 If you want to write --

25 MR. WOJNAR: The next speaker is

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1 Sandra Lerner, followed by Tracy
2 Annunziato.

3 Sandra, unmute and you may
4 proceed.

5 Sandra, you may proceed.

6 Sandra, we'll come back to you.

7 Our next speaker is Tracy --

8 SANDRA LERNER: Can you hear me
9 now?

10 Sandra, please proceed.

11 SANDRA LERNER: Okay. Thank
12 you.

13 My name is Sandra Lerner. I live
14 on the Upper East Side. The fact that
15 the city, state, and MTA are proposing
16 a congestion tax to make up for lost
17 revenue after they've received
18 billions in matching grants through
19 the federal infrastructure bill, it's
20 absurd and goes to show how mismanaged
21 the Authority is.

22 There should be legislature
23 requiring the Federal Department of
24 Transportation Office of Inspector
25 General, to conduct a full audit of

1 the MTA to see how the Authority
2 spends the billions, billions, it
3 received from the federal government.

4 Do not implement congestion
5 pricing until a thorough economic
6 impact analysis is completed. Also,
7 there should be a thorough analysis of
8 how congestion pricing will impact
9 commuters, tourists, and businesses.

10 Let's talk about commuters, you
11 are a nurse that lives in New Jersey
12 that pays \$16 to go over the GW
13 Bridge. You pay for parking and gas
14 and work at NYU Langone, and you're
15 going to pay an extra \$23 to go to
16 work every day. MTA looks at New
17 Jersey right now as their personal
18 ATM. It is time we audited the MTA.

19 Let's talk about businesses.
20 You have a small business, a bakery, a
21 florist, I know we heard from the
22 funeral director, that these
23 businesses have to go into the
24 congestion pricing zone in order to
25 make their deliveries. Who incurs the

1 burden of the \$23? Is it going to be
2 the consumer who cannot afford it or
3 the business who will eventually go
4 bankrupt?

5 This plan is not about the
6 environment. It's all about the
7 revenue, not about the environment.
8 When we talk about emissions, Governor
9 Hochul and environmental groups have
10 recently said most emissions come from
11 buildings. I checked today,
12 70 percent of our emissions in the
13 city come from buildings.

14 Building efficiency is critical
15 to achieving the city's carbon
16 neutrality goals, not eliminating
17 cars. It is absurd if you live in
18 Brooklyn, Bronx, Queens or Staten
19 Island, to have to pay \$23 to come
20 into the fifth borough of New York
21 City.

22 In London they have congestion
23 pricing from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday
24 through Friday, 12 to 6 Saturday and
25 Sunday, one price, \$17.50 U.S. money.

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1 Not 24 hours, not a floating scale.
2 People who don't drive into the zone
3 take taxis. It is barraged with Ubers
4 and taxis who don't pay the fee. The
5 same thing will happen in the city.
6 The Inspector General needs to audit
7 every federal dollar the MTA has
8 received. Enough is enough.

9 MTA, my message to you, get your
10 house in order.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

13 Our next speaker is Tracy
14 Annunziato, followed by Andrew Fine.

15 TRACY ANNUNZIATO: Can you hear
16 me fine?

17 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

18 TRACY ANNUNZIATO: Good evening.
19 My name is Tracy Annunziato, and I am
20 currently out on permanent disability
21 and I currently possess a New York
22 City handicap parking permit. I have
23 extremely limited mobility due to all
24 my back pain conditions. I can't tell
25 you the amount of doctors that I have

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1 with NYU as well as -- in Manhattan.
2 And every time now, I have to rely on
3 my car to take to Manhattan I will
4 have to pay.

5 I would gladly take the subways.
6 However, they don't have elevators,
7 every station does not have
8 escalators, and if you do have
9 elevators and escalators, they are not
10 always working. So I rely on my
11 personal car in order for me to get
12 around. And if I have to pay in
13 addition to come through the tunnel,
14 it's an extreme hardship for me.

15 So I just think you need to
16 consider that all of us that possess
17 this New York City permit have it for
18 a reason because we have -- we need it
19 for our cars in order to get around in
20 the city. I come from Brooklyn, we
21 need our cars. Without our cars, we
22 have no way of getting around.

23 So thank you for listening to me
24 and have a good night.

25 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

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1 Our next speaker is Andrew Fine,
2 followed by Margaret Lehman.

3 ANDREW FINE: Did I get here on
4 time? Can you hear me?

5 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.

6 ANDREW FINE: Can you hear me?

7 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can hear
8 you.

9 ANDREW FINE: I'm not sure you
10 can hear me because eight out of ten
11 people that are on this call are not
12 really being heard by the MTA.
13 Reality is, is that this is a bit of a
14 charade, that you guys are going
15 through the motions and 80 percent of
16 the people on this call are completely
17 against this boondoggle that the MTA
18 has cooked up to improve their budget.

19 And thank you, by the way, I
20 made the observation that the people
21 that are actually in favor of this,
22 either don't have a car or they're
23 under the delusion that this plan will
24 either improve transit or improve the
25 environment, of which neither is

1 really true.

2 I thank you for the opportunity
3 to speak. My name is Andre Fine, from
4 the East 86th Street Association of
5 Manhattan.

6 Congestion pricing is a
7 regressive tax, an MTA boondoggle that
8 is ableist, classist, anti-senior, and
9 anti-family. The MTA can't be trusted
10 to manage money. Currently, they run
11 a huge deficit and they are
12 approaching three billion dollars a
13 year in debt service, quickly burning
14 through, what was it, eight or ten or
15 15 billion dollars of federal money, a
16 windfall thanks to COVID. Yet, they
17 can't manage it, they can't manage
18 their finances. They are going to use
19 the congestion pricing for guess what,
20 to leverage more debt so they have
21 more debt service. It's ridiculous.

22 This organization cannot even
23 enforce the fares, people are walking
24 in the doors every single second and
25 the MTA assists them. Collect the

1 fares, don't collect it off of people
2 that actually have legitimate license
3 plates that drive around Manhattan on
4 occasion.

5 The bottom line here is border
6 areas like the Upper East Side are
7 going to have displaced traffic,
8 they're going to have noise,
9 pollution, congestion, demand for
10 transit that is off the chain, parking
11 wars, skyrocketing garage rates, more
12 pollution, more asthma.

13 You guys are taking it to the
14 Upper East Side and you're also taking
15 it to these environmental justice
16 zones. There's no justice. The
17 reality is the people in those zones
18 are not going to be able to drive in
19 Manhattan anymore because they don't
20 have the money for it. It's
21 ridiculous.

22 Not only that, they'll get more
23 traffic, more pollution. This thing
24 is a sham and it should be scrapped
25 immediately.

1 Thank you for your time.

2 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

3 Our next speaker is Margaret
4 Lehman, followed by B. Kumar.

5 MARGARET LEHMAN: Hello. Can
6 you hear me?

7 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

8 MARGARET LEHMAN: Thank you. I
9 am Margaret Lehman. Thank you for
10 your time. I oppose this congestion
11 tax, it's dollar impact on those who
12 live and work here is draconian. As
13 so many of your speakers said tonight
14 and in the prior testimony and prior
15 evenings and afternoons, this plan
16 needs refinement and change.

17 (Technical difficulties.)
18 Reflecting so many of the comments you
19 have heard so that the approach is
20 less of a club approach and more of a
21 scaffold approach. This plan simply
22 expands the congestion zone. It
23 expands the traffic congestion north.
24 As so many speakers have said, it
25 simply reroutes it.

1 The MTA needs to analyze the
2 ripple-down negative effect of this
3 plan. The damage is so broad-based.
4 Again, so many speakers have said
5 there needs to be a detailed economic
6 impact statement. We haven't seen
7 that. Where is the MTA analysis of
8 the actual money effect of the toll on
9 those will be most affected.

10 People who need to drive in for
11 jobs, people who have small
12 businesses, such as the funeral owner
13 of that funal home; and such as the
14 yellow taxi industry which just cannot
15 take another body blow. As one of the
16 most negatively affected groups, the
17 mitigation offered by your plan, such
18 as tax credits and offering MTA jobs
19 assumes an apples for apples solution,
20 which of course it isn't. And to say
21 that drivers won't pay the toll and
22 that riders will, ignores the fact
23 that there will be far fewer yellow
24 cab riders precisely because of this
25 toll.

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1 In addition, the amount of
2 monitoring required by the Department
3 of Transportation in your presentation
4 seems woefully unrealistic. The
5 frustration that New York City public
6 experiences now with the Department of
7 Transportation, suggests that such
8 ongoing and intense monitoring is
9 simply idealistic and won't happen.

10 Thank you for your time.

11 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker, the 130th
13 person to sign up, is B. Kumar,
14 followed by Brian Foster.

15 Our next speaker is Brian
16 Foster, followed by Walt Iwachiw.

17 BRYAN FOSTER: I work in the
18 Central Business District, and I'm
19 here to speak in favor of the --
20 Tolling Program.

21 As someone who works for an
22 agency contracted by the city to
23 provide services to you -- that a lot
24 of New Yorkers need, I do believe if
25 not an exemption, a budget line item

1 would be needed to account for the
2 toll-related expenses for services
3 like Meals-on-Wheels which does --
4 vehicles.

5 So I do want to express my hope
6 that the MTA and city will work
7 together to balance this -- to you may
8 proceed after. As someone who cycles
9 to work from Brooklyn to Manhattan,
10 I'm also looking forward to seeing a
11 smoother ride in Lower Manhattan as
12 well.

13 More importantly, I want to
14 express my support for this and any
15 effort by the MTA, the city and the
16 state to address climate change. We
17 have targets for emissions and fossil
18 fuel reduction at the state level by
19 the end of the decade that we know we
20 are not on track to meet, especially
21 without policies like congestion
22 tolling.

23 I want to state clearly that I
24 support any policy proposal to reduce
25 the number of vehicles on New York

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1 streets. And frankly, we need to be
2 thinking about a city with a million
3 fewer cars in it as soon as possible.

4 Knowing that our solutions need
5 to be equitable, knowing that our
6 transit system is currently
7 inadequate, we also know that we're
8 fighting for safer streets, we are
9 fighting for cleaner air, we are for
10 every tenth of a degree in global
11 warming that we can avoid and
12 mitigate. It is not too late to join
13 this fight.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. WOJNAR: Our next speaker is
16 Walt Iwachiw, followed by Ken
17 Wiederhorn.

18 Our next speaker is Ken
19 Wiederhorn, followed by Henri Falconi.

20 Our next speaker is Henri
21 Falconi, followed by Jane Lok.

22 Our next speaker is Jane Lok,
23 followed by Consuela Hooblal.

24 JANE LOK: Hello. So can
25 everybody hear me?

1 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.

2 JANE LOK: So I live in the CBD
3 district, I also rent a small business
4 in the CBD district and I want to
5 start with a couple of things because
6 I was looking up congestion pricing
7 schemes that have run around in
8 various parts of the world and I'm
9 going to start with this because this
10 keeps being brought up again and again
11 by people who are for congestion
12 pricing.

13 A 2011 independent study
14 published by the Health Effects
15 Institute from King's College London
16 found that there is little evidence
17 that congestion charge scheme has
18 improved air quality. The research
19 used modeling and actually compared
20 actual air pollutant measurements
21 within the congestion charge zone --
22 the investigators concluded that it is
23 difficult to identify significant air
24 quality improvements from a specific
25 program, especially one targeted small

1 area within a large city, the guest
2 backdrop of broader regional pollutant
3 and weather changes.

4 And this matches with what we've
5 already heard that, you know, it
6 reroutes traffic. And so, maybe
7 congestion -- you know, air quality is
8 slightly better inside Manhattan, but
9 across the river it's worse. And so,
10 are we really improving anything?

11 In fact, and noted that changes
12 due to improve vehicle technology does
13 way more to improve air quality than
14 this. And what I'm going to double
15 back that a previous speaker who noted
16 that most of the emissions that we're
17 talking about reducing, actually come
18 from buildings and not cars.

19 So the idea that this scheme is
20 something that's marketed as something
21 that improves air quality is very
22 questionable.

23 Secondly, I also looked at the
24 Singapore scheme and there is a very,
25 very big difference on that one, which

1 is that it is a very affordable
2 scheme. Charges on the congestion
3 zone pricing are anything from the
4 order of, you know, cents to dollars
5 in the single digit, not \$23 or double
6 that or no cap, which is what we're
7 talking about here.

8 Effectively, what we're talking
9 about in our scheme is building a wall
10 around Manhattan, and I don't see how
11 that is an effective way to manage a
12 city. I'm going to speak as a small
13 business owner who serves customers in
14 the Chinatown community, but also
15 various Chinatown communities
16 including the ones in Brooklyn,
17 Queens, even in New Jersey.

18 And so, it seems to me that
19 fracturing communities like this is
20 not the way to go about in our city.
21 Effectively, my customers -- I don't
22 just serve people in Manhattan, I
23 serve people in other places, and if
24 it's going to cost them \$23 to come
25 in, they're just not going to come.

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1 And it's going to be very, very
2 harmful for a lot of small businesses,
3 particularly in the Asian community,
4 in Chinatown. Especially since Asians
5 in particular have been the receiving
6 end of a lot of assaults and are very
7 fearful to take public transportation.

8 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
9 your remarks.

10 JANE LOK: So I think that's all
11 I have to say. But I speak for the
12 600,000 Chinese people who --

13 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

14 Our next speaker is Consuela
15 Hooblal, followed by Bob Carbo.

16 Please make sure you take
17 yourself off mute, then you can
18 proceed.

19 CONSUELA HOOBLAL: Hello. Can
20 you hear me now?

21 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

22 CONSUELA HOOBLAL: Hi. I
23 appreciate the opportunity. I would
24 like to address the buzz word that has
25 been in all the information presented

1 by the folks who are putting forth
2 this plan and this is equity.

3 The focus on congestion pricing,
4 to me, it's anything but equitable.
5 The focus is on the negative impact it
6 will have on low-income communities,
7 for which I feel compassion. But it
8 almost completely ignores it's
9 negative effects on middle-income
10 communities.

11 Like so many of these programs
12 and initiatives, it's seemed to design
13 to turn middle-income residents into
14 low-income residents. It is a burden
15 for a middle-class family of four or
16 five people to use mass transit to
17 enter Manhattan to enjoy the benefits
18 of this magnificent city for which we
19 pay very high taxes, very high fees.
20 Now, we'll have to pay another price
21 on top of everything else.

22 As seniors, due to the girth of
23 accessible stations, seniors often
24 have to drive in. You know, they've
25 worked hard all their lives, now

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1 they're retired. Maybe once a year
2 you want to go to a show, it would
3 be -- it just makes the cost
4 immeasurable.

5 I'm not even going to get into
6 the safety issue, but seniors can't
7 ride bikes, walk up and down steps,
8 run for buses, as has been detailed
9 before. But one of the benefits you
10 touted was improved travel time within
11 the CBD. But improve travel time for
12 who?

13 I believe somebody else touched
14 on this as well. But it may slightly
15 improve bus speeds but it's only going
16 to improve traffic for those who can
17 afford to pay \$23 a pop each time they
18 enter the district. So that's the
19 people who deliver goods and services
20 who will pass along that cost and also
21 well-to-do businessmen who can afford
22 it.

23 We all want a cleaner planet.
24 Make the subway safer, cleaner, more
25 efficient. New Yorkers pay enough

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1 taxes and fees already. In addition
2 to that, motorists already pay
3 additional taxes and fees. We pay
4 dearly for the privilege of owning a
5 car.

6 How about more traffic
7 enforcement agents not to write
8 tickets but to facilitate the flow of
9 traffic. The Manhattan grid is very
10 difficult. A lot of times people
11 block the streets despite their best
12 efforts. Use the money for that.

13 Also congestion pricing maybe
14 should be more of an HOV model where
15 people who come into the city with one
16 person have to pay. But right now,
17 this is just going to kill
18 middle-class people and we have very
19 little faith that the revenue realized
20 will be used appropriately or
21 properly. This will just continue and
22 they'll have to come up with another
23 scheme soon.

24 Thank you for this opportunity
25 and for all the work you've done on

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1 this.

2 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

3 Our next speaker is Bob Carbo,
4 followed by Ron Simoncini.

5 Our next speaker is Ron
6 Simoncini, followed Richard Sandano.

7 Our next speaker is Richard
8 Sandano, followed by Maria Gonzalez.

9 Our next speaker, the 140th to
10 sign up, is Maria Gonzalez, followed
11 by Nicole Murray.

12 Our next speaker is Nicole
13 Murray, followed by Newel Scoon.

14 NICOLE MURRAY: Hello.

15 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.

16 NICOLE MURRAY: Hi. My name is
17 Nicole Murray. I grew up in the
18 suburbs sharing a car with three
19 adults and to gain my independence, I
20 took a plunge to move into the city
21 where its public transportation system
22 could get me to school and work. For
23 that, it's been a complete lifeline
24 for me. It's my key to the city and
25 as it is for millions of other New

1 Yorkers.

2 As outlined, I largely support
3 scenario E. It raises the most money,
4 reduces the most trips and some of
5 exemptions are fair. One such
6 exemption is for taxis. Taxis and
7 members of the Taxi Workers Alliance
8 must cross bridges and tunnels by the
9 very nature of their work and should
10 largely be free to do so.

11 Taxi driving is one of the most
12 grueling and demanding jobs in the
13 city and I do stand in solidarity with
14 these workers who are asking for this
15 exemption. I also suggest potentially
16 exempting disability placards until
17 the MTA is at least 75 percent
18 accessible, instead of the miserable
19 25 percent like it currently is. I
20 would uncap for-hire vehicle trips
21 because as we know, the proliferation
22 of for-hire vehicles cannibalizing
23 both taxi and transit rides.

24 Driving is a full-time job. It
25 should be unionized work and

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1 accountable of the passengers through
2 municipal channels not Silicon Valley
3 apps that does who knows what with our
4 data.

5 Absolutely no credits for using
6 a tunnel. Last summer the M21 Bus was
7 suspended 87 out of 132 week days from
8 March to September due to traffic
9 around the Holland Tunnel. This
10 status quo is deeply regressive and
11 unfair to bus riders, pedestrians and
12 people who live and work Downtown.

13 I even know someone who quit
14 their job because the noise pollution
15 was too much the bear. The New York
16 Times last year printed stories from
17 workers who drive, like those for a
18 service that delivers food to the
19 elderly, and they have to haul their
20 equipment on the subway because the
21 roads were at a stand still.

22 When I first moved here, I
23 worked a night shift. I took the
24 train from Queens to Midtown, 11 p.m.
25 to 7 a.m. Standing on that platform,

1 as a 23 year-old woman, I felt safe
2 because there were other people on the
3 train with me.

4 These days there are fewer and
5 fewer people on the train. Ridership
6 needs to come back. That's what makes
7 transit safe, more riders.

8 If you do need to drive, how
9 much is it worth to not sit in
10 traffic, to not circle endlessly for
11 parking, to get back hours every day.
12 Isn't that worth something?

13 There is no one weird trick to
14 clearing up congestion or funding the
15 MTA but congestion pricing offers a
16 double whammy. While more reforms and
17 systemwide upgrades are absolutely
18 needed, like full station and stop
19 accessibility, real bus rapid transit
20 and six-minute headways, all day,
21 every day and funding public
22 transportation like a public service
23 with state and federal dollars and
24 value capture to get us all the way,
25 this is a step in the right direction.

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1 Finally, if and when enacted,
2 transit riders, drivers and the public
3 deserve clear and transparent data
4 from the MTA and DOT on the
5 effectiveness or potentially lack
6 thereof and swift adjustments proposed
7 by the legislature to deliberate on
8 and enact.

9 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
10 remarks.

11 NICOLE MURRAY: Thank you.

12 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

13 Our next speaker is Newel Scoon,
14 followed by Darren Goldner.

15 Newel, you may unmute yourself
16 and begin your remarks.

17 NEWEL SCOON: Thank you. Good
18 evening. My name is Newel Scoon, and
19 I'm Coach USA's regional vice
20 president responsible for the commuter
21 lines that service New York and New
22 Jersey.

23 As my colleague Danny Rodriguez
24 made mention in the previous hearing,
25 Coach USA removes over 25 million cars

1 off Manhattan streets every year.
2 We've been part of the solution for
3 some time, and take pride in having
4 lessened the carbon footprint.

5 By way of example, a regular car
6 or SUV releases 89 pounds of carbon
7 dioxide per hundred passenger miles.
8 Our bus at 12.1 pounds of carbon
9 dioxide per 100 passenger miles, and
10 with every passing year, that number
11 goes down.

12 For the past 30 years, Coach USA
13 has partnered with New Jersey Transit
14 and the MTA since the summer of hell
15 to provide critical commuter services
16 that bring in millions of commuters
17 into the area that will be designated
18 the Central Business District for
19 tolling.

20 During the pandemic, we proudly
21 provided commuter services to the
22 first responders and essential workers
23 who save lives. We continue doing so,
24 but in addition to those commuters, we
25 now provide transportation to

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1 employees of New York businesses, as
2 well as those going into the city for
3 health appointments, tourists taking
4 in Broadway shows, a Knicks or Rangers
5 game, or any of a number of shows and
6 museums the city offers.

7 We have close to 400 buses that
8 transport passengers every day into
9 Manhattan on weekdays, and almost 200
10 on weekends. This amounts to hundreds
11 of thousands every month, which
12 translates into many cars which are
13 not traversing streets throughout the
14 city.

15 Moreover, as I am the person or
16 drivers and -- who interface -- pardon
17 me.

18 Moreover, I'm the person or
19 driver and passengers interface with.
20 I've been told time and time again
21 that the passengers are delighted with
22 the economical and affordable option
23 we provide for them to get to their
24 Manhattan jobs or visit with families
25 and friends, as well as taking in a

1 Broadway show and concert.

2 From an operational perspective,
3 any additional charge to us will place
4 pressure on us to increase our fares.
5 We do not want that. Those who use
6 our services are individuals who are
7 financially insecure, and during
8 difficult financial times are
9 hard-pressed to meet any additional
10 cost.

11 I would like to repeat that what
12 was said earlier by my colleague and
13 others from our industry that we are
14 seeking to have what's already been
15 well established in London, Singapore,
16 Stockholm. These cities embrace bus
17 service as major way to address the
18 congestion issues, as well as a way of
19 lowering carbon emissions. A tolling
20 exemption should apply equally to all
21 buses, whether publicly or privately
22 owned, or whether operated for
23 intercity or other service.

24 Coach USA and its subsidiaries
25 operate some buses under arrangements

1 with public transportation agencies,
2 but some like Megabus are privately
3 owned. All services, whether
4 privately or publically funded,
5 benefit Manhattan and surrounding
6 communities, and all should be
7 exempted from tolling.

8 We do not believe that the MTA,
9 the Traffic Mobility Review Board, or
10 the Federal Highway Administration can
11 justify imposing tolls on certain
12 buses while exempting others.
13 Particularly in light of the
14 significant environmental, economic
15 and public benefits provided by all
16 bus services. I respectfully request
17 that --

18 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
19 remarks.

20 NEWEL SCOON -- that this board's
21 recommendations be a providing an
22 exemption to all bus operators.

23 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

24 Our next speaker is Darren
25 Goldner, followed by Rena Zager.

1 DARREN GOLDNER: Hi. My name is
2 Darren Goldner. I was born and raised
3 in Brooklyn. I've lived in Brooklyn
4 for almost the 40 years in Brooklyn
5 and the Central Business District.

6 Growing up, like the vast
7 majority of working-class New Yorkers,
8 my parents, my two brothers and I did
9 most of our commuting by mass transit.
10 My parents are older now, they're
11 disabled and they're on fixed incomes.

12 Like most non-wealthy New
13 Yorkers, they ride transit, for-hire
14 vehicles and Access-A-Ride. My mother
15 has been disabled for most of my life.
16 She's ridden the bus as long as I can
17 remember. I've never seen her drive a
18 car.

19 Congestion pricing is both a
20 carrot and a stick. It encourages
21 better transit by funding vital MTA
22 projects and it discourages the
23 driving behavior we know to be
24 unsustainable, exclusionary and
25 dangerous.

1 Congestion pricing should be
2 implemented as soon as possible and
3 with minimal exemptions. I believe
4 exemptions should be limited to taxi
5 drivers and buses, similarly to Plan
6 E. There should be no carve-outs for
7 tunnel use or for other for-hire
8 vehicles. Taxi drivers deserve direct
9 support and we should work toward
10 that, versus the exemptions, which are
11 effectively a rider discount. Buses
12 are the unsung heros of our
13 transportation system and we should be
14 encouraging bus service and ridership.

15 For the last 15 years, I've
16 worked in the Central Business
17 District. I commute any number of
18 ways by subway, by bus, bicycle and
19 even for-hire vehicles. Every day I'm
20 there, it's abundantly clear that our
21 roads are snarled with traffic. It's
22 clear that the majority of the
23 vehicles are private. The majority
24 just has one occupant, the driver.
25 The statistics this very group has

1 shared, back this up.

2 Again, the vast majority of New
3 Yorkers in the Central Business
4 District do not drive. The majority
5 of New Yorkers don't even drive. Cars
6 cost, on average, \$8,000 a year to own
7 in New York. That's unattainable for
8 many.

9 Wealthier drivers choose to
10 drive into the Central Business
11 District and park. Our existing
12 systems encourage and subsidize this
13 behavior. These drivers create
14 traffic, that doesn't just affect
15 them, it affects all of us. It
16 affects buses full of commuters that
17 can't move, it affects our air
18 quality. It affects our literal space
19 to move as pedestrians, bicyclist and
20 taxi drivers.

21 As a socialist, I believe we
22 just prioritize the good of the many.
23 We must take action quickly and
24 effectively to curb climate change,
25 transit injustices and exploitation.

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1 Congestion pricing is that type of
2 action. It's a first step.

3 Congestion pricing is an
4 effective way to discourage the
5 behaviors that we know to be damaging
6 and preferential to the wealthy. It's
7 an effective way to fund
8 transportation and -- that's both more
9 sustainable and more equitable.

10 We must implement this program
11 and then do more. We must be bold to
12 end systemically enforced, regressive,
13 unsustainable car dependency.

14 Thank you and let's do this
15 quickly.

16 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

17 Our next speaker is Rena Zager
18 followed by Nina Jody.

19 Our next speaker is Nina Jody,
20 followed by Seth Huse.

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

23 NINA JODY: Sorry, I'm starting
24 my video.

25 My name is Nina Jody. I'm a

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1 retired city worker living on a fixed
2 income in the East Village, New York.
3 I believe that this congestion pricing
4 is a misnomer. Those of you on this
5 panel and this hearing have visited
6 the East Village lately, you will see
7 that we are not congested. We are
8 practically a ghost town. We have
9 only vacant storefronts, homeless
10 encampments, crime-ridden streets, and
11 at my subway stop at the F Train, one
12 out of every two people are walking
13 through without paying their fare.

14 I think many people have illuded
15 to the fact that we don't have any
16 faith that the MTA can effectively
17 monitor this program or have told us
18 the truth about it.

19 I am somebody that rides a
20 bicycles, I walk, I always take public
21 transportation, but I do own a car.
22 Occasionally, I want to go and take my
23 granddaughter to the beach or I want
24 to go Upstate for a camping trip and I
25 do not earn less than \$60,000 a year

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1 but I am solidly in the middle-class.

2 I believe that there should be a
3 pause on this program while we recover
4 from the pandemic. We are absolutely
5 struggling here; the theater district
6 is failing, our movie theaters are
7 folding. There's not enough
8 commercial business to make for
9 commercial tolling.

10 We also need an exemption for
11 those of us who did not bargain to
12 live in a prison, where we would have
13 to pay to enter and leave just because
14 we happened to have found ourselves
15 here.

16 I'm a born and raised New
17 Yorker. I believe that my living here
18 has contributed to whatever is good in
19 this city and I don't feel that I
20 should have to pay \$23 or \$19 or \$15
21 to use my car, when people outside of
22 the borough are going to be able to
23 use their car to go and shop or do
24 whatever it is they want to do with
25 their car.

1 I think the entire plan needs to
2 be paused and revisited when and if
3 New York City ever regains its
4 footing, when and if the MTA ever gets
5 a hold on their payments to their own
6 employees, which is overtime, which is
7 misuse of federal funding, and this
8 needs to be revisited and those of us
9 in the congestion zone need a 90
10 percent exemption so that we can live
11 like human beings in our homes the way
12 the rest of the city will.

13 This regressive tax is a money
14 grab that is not going to serve the
15 purposes and it's not the right
16 timing. Government needs to learn to
17 pivot. Thank you.

18 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
19 Seth Huse, followed by Erik Marzolf.

20 SETH HUSE: Hi. I'm Seth Huse.
21 I live on the Upper East Side of
22 Manhattan and go to school at
23 Stuyvesant High School in Battery Park
24 City.

25 I would like to say that I am

1 very much in support of the congestion
2 pricing plan. It will reduce
3 congestion, make our street safer for
4 cyclists and pedestrians, while also
5 raising money for public transit. And
6 it's needed now more than ever because
7 of the financial crisis the MTA is
8 facing because of COVID-19.

9 It's absolutely absurd that
10 drivers can still even drive into the
11 Central Business District of Manhattan
12 for free. Cars, roads and high
13 highways are subsidized just as much,
14 if not more than public transit. Even
15 with rising crime factored in, taking
16 transit is still much safer than
17 driving. Very, very few low-income
18 New Yorkers drive into Manhattan's
19 Central Business District, so this
20 congestion pricing plan will help most
21 who take transit.

22 Since congestion pricing will
23 likely lead to less cars and more
24 pedestrians, it will increase foot
25 traffic for small businesses as well.

1 Congestion pricing has been successful
2 in many cities before, such as London
3 and Singapore. It is important that
4 we implement congestion pricing as
5 soon as possible to reduce the number
6 of cars on the road. With that being
7 said, I do have a few nitpicks.

8 We need to limit the number of
9 exemptions so we can keep the tolls
10 relatively low, especially for trucks.
11 High tolls would cause more traffic to
12 be diverted around Manhattan to the
13 outer boroughs, like the Bronx's Cross
14 Bronx Expressway.

15 Also my school is located across
16 the West Side Highway. We do have a
17 bridge to cross but sometimes we are a
18 few blocks north or south and are
19 forced to cross on street level. The
20 West Side Highway is not a highway.
21 It is a dangerous high-speed road that
22 pedestrians are forced to cross with
23 little time given at intersections.
24 I'm afraid that exempting it from the
25 congestion pricing plan will make this

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1 problem worse by diverting cars from
2 Central Manhattan around to the West
3 Side Highway.

4 Please consider not exempting
5 this road as it is not truly a highway
6 and pedestrians will have to deal with
7 those consequences.

8 Once again, I am very in favor
9 of this congestion pricing plan and it
10 should certainly be implemented
11 quickly so we can see the benefits of
12 reducing traffic and increasing
13 transit funding. Thank you.

14 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

15 Our next speaker is Erik
16 Marzolf, followed by Matthew Sullivan.

17 ERIK MARZOLF: Hi. Good
18 evening.

19 MS. FLAX: You may begin your
20 remarks.

21 ERIK MARZOLF: Thank you. Thank
22 you for the opportunity to speak
23 tonight. I'm a Central Island
24 resident working in Midtown, and I
25 strongly support congestion pricing.

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1 Though we have three kids, our family
2 lives car free as 80 percent of my
3 family is. We walk, bike, ride the
4 subway or the bus, take taxi or rent
5 cars, whatever is more convenient
6 depending on the situation.

7 As a biker, I observe firsthand
8 the conflicts created by too many
9 vehicles on our streets for
10 pedestrians, bus riders or cyclists.
11 I see sidewalks, crosswalks, bus
12 stops, bus lanes and bike lanes
13 blocked by motor vehicles every day.
14 I see buses and emergency vehicles
15 stuck in traffic.

16 I also directly experienced road
17 violence. We need to urgently shift
18 trips out of cars, improve public
19 transit options and reduce pollution.
20 We need to do so because we have a
21 climate crisis. But also because it
22 makes the city quieter and and safer.
23 Many before me have already
24 highlighted the price of road violence
25 and pollution. 1 in every 60 people

1 killed on our streets in 2022 alone,
2 while air pollution kills as many as
3 3,000 people a year, according the New
4 York City Health Department.

5 Congestion pricing is one
6 important tool we have to raise the
7 cost of driving while generating
8 revenues to fund alternatives for
9 everybody, including for those who
10 believe they have no such
11 alternatives. Fewer cars on the road
12 will help those who really need to
13 drive, including delivery trucks and
14 all the people delivering goods and
15 services. The time saved will be well
16 worth whatever fees are paid under the
17 scenarios. To enter CBD is note
18 vehicles. Despite congestion pricing
19 as quickly and effortlessly as
20 possible.

21 In light of the time already
22 lost, the program should be as strong
23 as possible. I support scenario E,
24 transit buses and taxis should be
25 exempt. Adding more exemptions will

1 weaken it and not create revenue we to
2 put it in transit.

3 Lastly, I agree with some
4 opposing congestion pricing, that
5 there are other ways to reduce
6 congestion.

7 They mentioned reducing parking
8 black cars and any free on-street
9 parking. Congestion pricing and those
10 policies are not exclusive, they're
11 complimentary. We must implement
12 congestion pricing and do more.

13 Thank you.

14 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

15 Our next speaker is Matthew
16 Sullivan, followed by Jorge Urena.

17 Our next speaker is Jorge Urena,
18 followed by Patrick Johnson.

19 Our next speaker and 150th on
20 the list, is Patrick Johnson, followed
21 by Maria Danzilo.

22 Our next speaker is Maria
23 Danzilo, followed by A. Patel.

24 MARIA DANZILO: Hi. Good
25 evening. My name is Maria Danzilo and

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1 I'm speaking for a grassroots group
2 called One City Rising, it's a five
3 borough advocacy group with the
4 mission of supporting laws and
5 programs that will unite our
6 neighborhoods by bringing diverse
7 communities together. We're all
8 volunteers.

9 I also want to mention I just
10 ran for New York State Senate in
11 District 47, which ran from West 10th
12 up to West 103rd, Park to River, and
13 West of 6th Avenue below 59th Street.
14 I spent over four months talking with
15 voters every day and listening to
16 their concerns and the overwhelming
17 issue is concern about the future of
18 New York, quality of life here in
19 Manhattan, including significant
20 public safety concerns especially
21 around the subway and cost of living.

22 I strongly oppose this
23 regressive tax. I do want to say I
24 garnered over 10,000 votes from
25 residents in the district, which was a

1 very low turnout year, over 25 percent
2 of the voters and while I lost to a
3 tenure incumbent, who spent 15 times
4 as much as I spent, my message of
5 restoring public safety in the economy
6 and giving hope to New Yorkers about
7 our future resonated strongly with the
8 voters.

9 The timing of this program could
10 not be worse. We have a Central
11 Business District that is a shell of
12 its former self. High inflation is
13 making life more and more expensive
14 and untenable. Our seniors -- well, I
15 live on the Upper West Side and one of
16 the areas on our West Side and one of
17 the areas on our West Side has seen a
18 300 percent increase in food
19 insecurity and cost of living.

20 We have an unemployment rate
21 that has doubled the national average,
22 that crime went up to its highest
23 amount in 12 years and more people
24 leaving New York than any other state
25 in the country and we have the highest

1 tax burden in the country.

2 A recent Siena College poll
3 found a majority of New Yorkers
4 believe we are headed in the wrong
5 direction. So why are we doing this
6 now and don't we need to give this
7 some time for New York to recover from
8 COVID. This seems like an
9 ill-conceived plan. I'm listening to
10 everyone speaking, the word regressive
11 tax keeps coming up, middle class,
12 hurting our middle-class neighborhoods
13 and hurting our small businesses.

14 This plan will not restore jobs,
15 will not enable growth and it will not
16 get people back to work. It will not
17 address public safety either as the
18 money is not earmarked for improving
19 public safety. Our business districts
20 need time to recover and then
21 government can evaluate what is
22 needed. Moving cars to other
23 neighborhoods is not a solution, will
24 not address the environmental concerns
25 that are great concerns to all of us.

1 Let's stop punishing car owners
2 and instead incentivize them to
3 transition to electric vehicles, like
4 California is doing. I also believe
5 we really need a permit parking
6 program for our neighborhoods,
7 regardless of whether this program
8 goes through. This will raise
9 additional revenues for the city.

10 As for environmental issues, in
11 my neighborhood we've got idling
12 vehicles, delivery trucks and car
13 shuffles twice a week for street
14 cleaning that never seems to happen.
15 We have to make sure that a plan that
16 we adopt is going to help not our
17 neighborhood --

18 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
19 remarks.

20 MARIA DANZILO: Well, yes. It
21 is also very concerning to me that
22 this plan includes exemptions for big
23 companies --

24 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

25 MARIA DANZILO: -- multibillion

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1 evaluations.

2 Our next speaker is A. Patel,
3 followed by Andrea McLeod.

4 Our next speaker is Andrea
5 McLeod, followed by George Pilieri.

6 Andrea McLeod.

7 ANDREA MCLEOD: I'm sorry. Can
8 you hear me?

9 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

10 ANDREA MCLEOD: Okay, excellent.
11 Thank you.

12 Good evening. My name is Andrea
13 McLeod. Thank you for listening to
14 all speakers. The CBDT Program from
15 all appearances looks as though it may
16 ease the congestion problem for
17 Manhattan and Manhattanites but it
18 will not do so for the Bronx,
19 specifically for those of us who are
20 asthmatics.

21 The Bronx already has the
22 unfortunate stigma of having the
23 highest incidences of asthma in
24 America, not just the five boroughs.
25 As mentioned on News 12, the MTA's

1 study on the effects of this program,
2 the Bronx sites receiving the brunt of
3 pollution and poor air quality. More
4 than 4,000 work vehicles and 704
5 trucks will enter at the McCombs Road
6 entrance of the Cross Bronx Expressway
7 daily to avoid paying the tolls into
8 Manhattan below 60th Street.

9 Now the word "diversions" was
10 used during the slide presentation. I
11 figure it regards trucks not being
12 able to enter that entrance. I beg to
13 differ. I have seen cabs and trucks
14 exit from an entrance ramp on a major
15 highway. Drivers will always find a
16 way.

17 According to Mr. Lieber, the
18 Chair of MTA, these problems will be
19 addressed. This line is often used as
20 filler word to lead one to believe a
21 solution is somewhere on the horizon,
22 when in actuality, it's quite contrary
23 to what the study shows. The study
24 clearly states there will be an
25 increase of pollutants, but there will

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1 be no mitigation needed and no adverse
2 effects; followed by Mr. Lieber
3 stating there may be localized impacts
4 and he has confidence these issues
5 will be addressed. Translation, we,
6 MTA, will do what's best for their
7 interest at the expense of Bronx and
8 any and all others. Why? Mr. Lieber
9 nor any other executives reside in the
10 Bronx.

11 Well, to the MTA and Mr. Lieber,
12 I say, not on this Bronx eye's watch.
13 Let us not forget that in the middle
14 of this pandemic between 2020 and
15 2021, the Bronx was the leading
16 borough to have increased ridership on
17 buses and trains. We helped the MTA.
18 Now, it's time to apply that same
19 standard of quid pro quo and not
20 saddle the Bronx with more pollution.

21 Your confidence, Mr. Lieber, is
22 not what the Bronx is looking for.
23 What Bronxites need and demand are
24 results.

25 Thank you.

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1 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

2 Our next speaker is George
3 Pilieri, followed by Bruno Bianchi.
4 George Pilieri.

5 Our next speaker is Bruno
6 Bianchi, followed by Michael O'Brien.

7 Our next speaker is Michael
8 O'Brien, followed by Alan Fernandez.

9 Our next speaker is Alan
10 Fernandez, followed by Philip
11 Kinscherf.

12 Our next speaker is Philip
13 Kinscherf, followed by Joan Goldberg.

14 Our next speaker is Joan
15 Goldberg, followed by our 160th
16 speaker on the list, Kian Betancourt.

17 Our next speaker is Kian
18 Betancourt, followed by Timothy
19 Watson.

20 KIAN BETANCOURT: Hello. Can
21 you all hear me?

22 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

23 KIAN BETANCOURT: Okay. Thank
24 you for all your time today. I'm here
25 to speak on behalf of the current

1 proposal to impose a congestion
2 surcharge on cars entering the Central
3 Business District of Manhattan, for
4 which I am in vehement support of.

5 The congestion charge which
6 proposes to go anywhere from \$9 to \$23
7 on cars entering the Central Business
8 District, would be a phenomenal
9 quality of life improvement for
10 countless New Yorkers and serves to
11 boost an already underfunded and
12 indebted MTA that is so vital to
13 travel for so many New Yorkers.

14 In my comments, I hope to
15 address the fact that this surcharge
16 would be an already fantastic boom to
17 an already struggling New York City
18 economy that has struggled to rebound
19 economically relative to other major
20 cities in the U.S.

21 Across New York City, only
22 27 percent of people drive to work and
23 it varies considerably across
24 boroughs. But the data's quite clear,
25 the median household income for those

1 who own cars is higher than those who
2 do not.

3 The congestion surcharge would
4 hardly be a tax on those that can
5 least afford it and while not all car
6 owners in Manhattan are wealthy, they
7 are assuredly wealthier on average
8 than the 85 percent who take transit
9 into Manhattan's CBD.

10 The other effect here is decline
11 in public transit. The MTA is facing
12 a 2.5 billion-dollar budget deficit by
13 2025. We have to acknowledge that
14 work has forever changed, that hybrid
15 work is here to stay. That means we
16 need new and innovative solutions to
17 ensure our transit system runs
18 efficiently and effectively.

19 This would be a tremendous
20 source of revenue to revitalize the
21 New York City subway system, and
22 utilize said funds to improve the
23 quality of life for most New Yorkers.

24 And after all, shouldn't revenue
25 dollars collected in a city be used

1 primarily to improve life for the most
2 amount of New Yorkers possible, should
3 that be 85 percent of people who
4 benefit commuting into Manhattan's CBD
5 via transit, or the remainder who use
6 cars.

7 This is also about safety for
8 non-commuters and residents. Traffic
9 related deaths have increased 44
10 percent in the first three months of
11 2022 and follows a larger trend of 251
12 New Yorkers who died due to motor
13 vehicle accidents last year. All of
14 these are preventable.

15 Lastly, I want to emphasize that
16 for this to be possible, the license
17 plate fraud that is rampant in New
18 York City must stop. Arrests
19 involving displayed temporary plates
20 have increased 300 percent since 2016
21 alone and that's simply those that are
22 actually caught.

23 For this to be the revenue
24 source, it has to be the enforcement
25 is essential and the cameras in their

1 current form cannot account for fake
2 plates. All New Yorkers must pay
3 their fair share who wish to drive
4 into the CBD and that includes those
5 who have engaged in rampant fraud to
6 avoid paying into the city with their
7 fair share.

8 My comments thus far have
9 focused on the most prominent issues,
10 but there are countless other
11 benefits; cleaner air, quieter
12 streets, safer bike lanes, faster
13 public buses and innumerable other
14 benefits by implementing the plan, I
15 simply don't have time to speak to on
16 the allotted time.

17 I want to thank you all for your
18 time and consideration and amazing
19 amount of analysis and sincerely hope
20 you'll commence with the proposal that
21 will benefit so many.

22 Thank you for your time.

23 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

24 Our next speaker is Timothy
25 Watson, followed by Frances O'Hanlon.

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1 Timothy, you may unmute yourself
2 and begin your remarks.

3 TIMOTHY WATSON: Thank you. Can
4 you hear me?

5 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

6 TIMOTHY WATSON: Okay. Good
7 evening. My name is Tim Watson. I
8 work for a charter bus company in
9 Upstate New York and although we don't
10 go there every day, we bring well over
11 hundred bus loads of visitors in the
12 Central Business District every year,
13 each bus replacing dozens of passenger
14 cars.

15 Please understand that we also
16 hate the congestion in the district
17 and we understand what you're trying
18 to accomplish and how. However, most
19 of your scenarios toll buses for every
20 entry into the district. We could
21 live with that if there were any
22 realistic expectation of parking a bus
23 in the district while our passengers
24 contribute to your economy. However,
25 the bus layover parking in Manhattan

1 has been steadily shrinking. More
2 than half of the already insufficient
3 bus parking in Midtown has disappeared
4 in the last ten years. So a large
5 percentage of buses go back across the
6 rivers to park, usually in New Jersey.

7 We're already paying that toll
8 twice, along with the fuel and time it
9 eats up to complete the circuit. We
10 don't want to, we have to. A
11 significant increase in that cost, and
12 remember that you would have us pay it
13 at least twice, would have the effect
14 of incentivizing having buses remain
15 in the CBD either circulating or
16 parking illegally, thereby increasing
17 congestion, exacerbating parking and
18 idling problems, the very issues the
19 plan hopes to address.

20 Without a cap or exemption,
21 risking a parking ticket starts to
22 look like the lesser of the evils.

23 Crossing credits could be a step
24 in the right direction, but it
25 entirely depends on what the net

1 additional costs turns out to be. We
2 have no insight in that because the
3 toll for buses is never addressed in
4 your definition of tolling scenarios.
5 Yet again, when it comes to planning,
6 the city pretends the buses don't
7 exist.

8 Our alternatives under these
9 scenarios are limited, to dropoff in
10 New Jersey and have passengers take
11 PATH into the district is an often
12 touted alternative. But do you
13 seriously imagine that PATH can add
14 and maintain the capacity to replace
15 all those buses? Only two buses would
16 overwhelm an entire PATH car.
17 Replacing nine buses would require
18 additional trains, which would never
19 happen. Imagine taking PATH on
20 matinee days, how many buses could you
21 hope to replace with PATH.

22 Or we can take the northern
23 bridges and drop off Uptown having
24 passengers take public transit into
25 the district, but dropoff where? And

1 doesn't this just move the congestion
2 and parking problems to the Hudson
3 Heights, Washington Heights, Upper
4 West Side area.

5 Next time you're riding the A or
6 1 Train, just imagine adding over a
7 hundred people to the train that
8 you're on. That's just two buses.
9 Either alternative creates a
10 complication for visitors. The larger
11 the hassle, the fewer the visitors.
12 You just spent over a year without
13 tourism. How did that affect your
14 economy?

15 Discouraging tourism will ease
16 congestion in the CBD but of what cost
17 to your economy.

18 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

19 Our next speaker is Frances
20 O'Hanlon, followed by Conrad Stoddard.

21 Our next speaker is Conrad
22 Stoddard, followed by Henry Shilling.

23 CONRAD STODDARD: Hello. Can you
24 hear me?

25 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

1 CONRAD STODDARD: My name is
2 Conrad Stoddard. I'm a life-long
3 Queens, New York City resident.

4 This is more about a revenue
5 stream than limiting traffic. The
6 London plan, which has been in effect
7 for 20 years, has had little positive
8 impact on traffic.

9 It is a regressive tax against
10 poor, working and middle-class New
11 Yorkers. Politicians on both sides
12 are afraid of real estate developers
13 who besot our skylines with Swiss bank
14 account, billionaire buyers for the
15 few. Charge a ten percent transfer
16 tax for all those buildings, plus a \$1
17 fee on Wall Street stock buys and
18 sales and these funds can go to
19 transit without taxing average New
20 Yorkers.

21 If you must do this regressive
22 tax scheme, these are the following
23 exemptions you must apply:

24 For New Yorkers who live in the
25 outer boroughs, off the subway grid

1 and have to take a bus and subway,
2 there should be a discount. Fees
3 should be permanently waived for New
4 Yorkers with handicap plates and tags,
5 New Yorkers over 65 years old, New
6 Yorkers of limited income, New Yorkers
7 who own electric cars and discounts
8 for New Yorkers who own hybrid cars.

9 A 24/7 scheme is outrageous and
10 limits many New Yorkers on a budget
11 from enjoying the best our city has to
12 offer and will negatively affect
13 restaurants and other entertainment
14 venues when many of the New Yorkers
15 just stay away from Manhattan
16 permanently.

17 This scheme should be turned off
18 in the evenings so people can come in
19 and enjoy New York City, and on the
20 weekends, definitely all Sundays
21 should be exempt.

22 When Mayor Bloomberg kept
23 parking meters on all week, the City
24 Council overruled him with an idea
25 that New Yorkers deserve at least one

1 day off from fees. This
2 forward-thinking should be definitely
3 applied to this scheme if it goes into
4 effect.

5 Also remember, people coming
6 into the city to enjoy what it has to
7 offer will be going mostly to the
8 Village and the West Side and not
9 Midtown, Wall Street, which are the
10 areas of congestion.

11 I am 100 percent against this
12 scheme and I think it will do more
13 harm than good and hope my comments
14 and suggestions are taken seriously in
15 any capacity.

16 I thank you for your time.

17 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker is Henry
19 Shilling, followed by George Pilieri.

20 HENRY SHILLING: Hi. My name is
21 Henry Shilling. Thanks for the
22 opportunity to offer need feedback and
23 I appreciate your perseverance. It's
24 a long evening.

25 I'm a resident of Lower

1 Manhattan, as well as a car owner.
2 With that said, I don't drive much at
3 all in the city and both I and my wife
4 use public transportation or in my
5 case from time to time, I use my bike
6 as well.

7 I support efforts to reduce
8 traffic and traffic congestion in the
9 Central Business District but would
10 like to offer two recommendations for
11 consideration. The project's purpose
12 is to reduce traffic congestion in the
13 Manhattan Central Business District in
14 a manner that would generate about
15 15 billion in revenue for future
16 transportation improvements.

17 The beneficial effects on air
18 quality and quality of life
19 improvements are, it seems, secondary
20 considerations and there does not
21 appear to be focus on greenhouse gas
22 emission reduction.

23 Yet, as we address climate
24 change as a nation, as a state and as
25 a city more broadly, there is an

1 opportunity for the MTA to consider
2 evaluating ways to craft the tolling
3 plan so that it might have the maximum
4 impact on CO2 emission reduction.

5 For example, the MTA might, at
6 the very least, consider the following
7 action plans:

8 First, to incentivize the use of
9 low emission vehicles such as EVs and
10 other low emission vehicles with a
11 particular emphasis on the 23 million
12 freight trucks that the MTA estimates
13 use MTA bridges by offering toll
14 reductions or credits or some other
15 means.

16 Secondly, incentivized
17 drivers who come into the city via car
18 to use public transportation once
19 they're in the city by calibrating
20 tolls based on the number of miles or
21 hours driven in the Central Business
22 District.

23 Also, as one of the capital
24 program's tenants, the MTA expects to
25 use capital raised via the congestion

1 pricing program to improve safety and
2 customer service through technology;
3 this means positive train controls,
4 electric buses, and OMNY.

5 The MTA should study ways to
6 employ technology to reduce loss of
7 revenue due to fare avoidance, that
8 based on published accounts runs
9 through about five hundred million, a
10 year, which translates to about six
11 percent per year per proposed
12 2020/2024 capital program --

13 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
14 remarks.

15 HENRY SHILLING: -- and an even
16 higher percent of the MTA's budget
17 deficit.

18 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

19 Our next speaker is George
20 Pilieri, followed by Lourdes Aquino.

21 George Pilieri.

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

24 GEORGE PILIERI: Can you hear
25 me?

1 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

2 GEORGE PILIERI: Okay.

3 Congestion pricing is just a fancy
4 name for a tax. There's so much wrong
5 with this, I don't know where to
6 begin. Is it about reducing traffic
7 or money for the MTA?

8 We'll start with the traffic
9 aspect. There's been traffic in New
10 York City for a long time. I'm sure
11 it has gotten worse especially since
12 the pandemic. There are more cars and
13 more traffic. Let's explore some of
14 the reasons and how the city itself
15 helped create the traffic and the
16 problems.

17 How many new high-end highrise
18 luxury buildings have they approved in
19 Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, and
20 Staten Island and most people have to
21 work in the city. An increase in the
22 population will increase the traffic.

23 Over the years, the city has
24 impeded the traffic by creating green
25 sitting areas which interrupt the flow

1 of traffic and force it to be diverted
2 to another path. More recently, the
3 creation of lanes for bicycle riding,
4 parking and outdoor dining structures
5 have taken up space and useable
6 driving lanes.

7 After years of promoting and
8 encouraging and investing in the
9 public transportation system, the city
10 scared off many riders with the fear
11 of COVID during the pandemic and with
12 that, fewer working people are riding
13 and crime went up causing less --
14 causing more people to abandon the
15 subways.

16 Fewer riders mean less revenue
17 in theory. For years, the MTA has
18 subsidized public transportation,
19 buses and trains, with revenue from
20 Bridges and Tunnels, their cash cows.
21 So for a little over a year when
22 people stayed home from work, revenue
23 is down. But now more people are
24 driving and taking to their cars and
25 the toll revenue at the bridges and

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1 tunnels should be up, funding, being
2 able to fund mass transit much more
3 than the farebox.

4 The other aspect is where the
5 MTA spends its money. I mean, I would
6 like to see it spent on police
7 maintenance and equipment. Most
8 recent announcements have the MTA
9 spending money on Wi-Fi services for
10 trains and some sort of barriers,
11 which really aren't necessary.

12 This is a tax and it's an
13 oppressive tax at that. Over 200
14 years ago, there was a tea party in
15 Boston for far less for a fraction of
16 what you people are requesting that
17 you pay. I'm not here for myself
18 because this will affect me very
19 little, as I'm going to retire
20 probably by the time it goes in, but
21 for all the hardworking people that
22 have to suffer under this.

23 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
24 remarks.

25 GEORGE PILIERI: Thank you.

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1 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

2 Our next speaker is Lourdes
3 Aquino, followed by Ruth Fasoldt.

4 LOURDES AQUINO: Good evening.
5 Can you hear me?

6 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

7 LOURDES AQUINO: All right.

8 Thank you so much. I'm sorry. My
9 video -- my camera is not working on
10 my laptop, but I'll just begin.

11 Thanks for allowing me to share
12 with all of you again. I'm the
13 third-generation New Yorker who, you
14 know, spoke last week, who grew up in
15 Manhattan for 40 years and understand
16 the need for reduction of traffic.
17 However, I'm also the mom that had to
18 move because my neighborhood wasn't
19 safe. It was worse now than it was in
20 the 80s. I have to go into Manhattan
21 every day to drop my kid off and go to
22 work, you know. My husband takes the
23 MTA, I worry for his safety daily, as
24 I'm sure many of other New Yorkers do
25 and have expressed.

1 Also, while I drive in, I don't
2 park in the street so residents can
3 have a spot. I've lived there all my
4 life, so I get it. After listening to
5 everyone's comments and New Yorkers'
6 opinions, some are pro congestion
7 pricing, right, but many, many New
8 Yorkers are against this plan.

9 If it truly benefits the
10 environment then, yes, let's unite and
11 implement. But financially you're
12 going to put many constituents and
13 customers in such a financial
14 hardship, that we may not be able to
15 deal with.

16 Many who are facing financial
17 struggles that aren't -- none of us
18 are aware of. Also everyone's talking
19 about exemption for big businesses,
20 low-income, taxi, residents, what
21 about those people who come into
22 Manhattan, like myself and other
23 people; doctors -- on a doctor's
24 appointment.

25 You know, so I was thinking, you

1 know, propose -- I propose that you
2 create an exemption, right, where we
3 provide proof of work, parking spots,
4 doctor's notes or school letter, to
5 qualify for something. You know to
6 truly change the circumstances we're
7 all in, we have to really value money
8 again because the value of money is
9 lost.

10 We must empathize and consider
11 each other's situations and work with
12 one another, not disregard a regular
13 person who doesn't own a business or
14 make under \$60,000. This isn't a win
15 for the quality of life for all
16 people, if you truly think about it.

17 And for those people who think
18 that people who make over \$60,000 have
19 the money, no, you don't because you
20 get taxed. Everybody needs to wake up
21 and know that there are different tax
22 brackets.

23 What process excluded the
24 regular worker or patient from these
25 exemptions. It's going to cost my

1 family \$460 extra a month just to have
2 this handled. So to fix financial
3 problems, we don't continue to create
4 financial problems. That's not where
5 we're at.

6 So, you know, I just want to
7 leave everybody off with this. This
8 is the last time I'm going to see you
9 all. And there is a quote that my
10 mentor in life shared and I'd like to
11 share with every single one of you.

12 You know, Dr. Daisaku Ikeda
13 says, "Each form of life supports all
14 others. Together they weave the grand
15 web of life. Thus, there really is no
16 happiness in one's self alone, no
17 suffering that afflicts only others."

18 So please rethink this plan,
19 most of the people don't want this.
20 Have a good night and thank you so
21 much for staying on this call with all
22 of us.

23 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

24 Our next speaker is Ruth
25 Fasoldt, followed by Prasad Chalasani.

1 RUTH FASOLDT: Good evening. My
2 name is Ruth Fasoldt and I am the
3 Senior Policy Manager for New York at
4 Lyft and also a New Yorker whose lived
5 in Manhattan for over a decade.

6 Lyft has been a long time
7 supporter of universal congestion
8 pricing, as we would believe the only
9 way to truly change the traffic volume
10 in Midtown Manhattan, is have all cars
11 pay their fair share.

12 With that said, Lyft was very
13 concerned when the MTA released their
14 recent EA, Environmental Assessment,
15 and how they accounted for for-hire
16 vehicles. The fact is FHV's, such as
17 those on the Lyft platform, have been
18 paying a congestion fee to the MTA
19 since early 2019, a fee that has
20 provided over a billion dollars in
21 revenue to the MTA that was not
22 acknowledged at all in the EA.

23 This fee is the only congestion
24 fee that has been paid to the MTA over
25 the last three years and will continue

1 to be the only congestion fee paid
2 until phase two of congestion pricing
3 goes into effect.

4 The fee Ride-Share pays today
5 was also set up to work how our works.
6 The fee charges all TLC licensed
7 vehicles that start, pass through or
8 end a trip south of 96th Street, which
9 is 36 blocks larger than the current
10 rollout of congestion pricing will
11 account for. Additionally, the
12 congestion fee built for ride-share
13 accounts for shared rides offering a
14 reduced fee for separate parties that
15 choose to take one car.

16 This system rewards reduced car
17 usage, where the second congestion fee
18 and scenarios presented in the MTA EA
19 we're discussing right now, make no
20 consideration of that fact.

21 All the MTA's highlighted
22 scenarios include double congestion
23 fee for FHV's and unlike personal
24 vehicles, these fees are on top of a
25 per-ride fare, black car fund fee and

1 New York City sales tax charge.

2 At the end of the day,
3 congestion pricing is about reducing
4 the number of vehicles on the road.
5 And while our industry does pay the
6 above-mentioned fee to the MTA, the
7 number of TLC licenses on the road is
8 already going down separately from
9 congestion pricing, due to the TLC
10 regulation.

11 Unlike any other type of vehicle
12 out on the Manhattan streets today,
13 new FHV cars are not added to the road
14 due to the cap the TLC instituted back
15 in 2018. As the EA says, the number
16 of FHVs making trips fell by nearly
17 50 percent from 2019 to 2022, from
18 120,000 between 2010 and 2019, to
19 70,000 in April 2022.

20 We respectfully request that
21 Ride-Share should not shoulder the
22 responsibility of paying a double
23 congestion fee and that the Traffic
24 Mobility Review Board acknowledges the
25 congestion fee already paid to the MTA

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1 when making their recommendations. A
2 double congestion fee will reduce the
3 number of options for New Yorkers, who
4 already do not have a personal vehicle
5 and particularly for those who rely on
6 Ride-Share as a key service option
7 from transit deserts.

8 Thank you very much.

9 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

10 Our next speaker is Prasad
11 Chalasani, followed by Warren Green.

12 Our next speaker is Warren
13 Green, followed by Larry Rubinstein.

14 Our next speaker is Larry
15 Rubinstein, followed by our 170th
16 speaker on the list, Otto Angulo.

17 LARRY RUBINSTEIN: Hello, can
18 you hear me?

19 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

20 LARRY RUBINSTEIN: Good evening.
21 My name is Larry Rubinstein and I'm
22 Vice Chair of the Long Island Rail
23 Road Commuter Council and a member of
24 the Permanent Citizen Advisory
25 Committee to MTA, the PCAC.

1 I'm here tonight to speak in
2 support of congestion pricing on
3 behalf of the Long Island Rail Road
4 commuters. Love it or hate it, we
5 need congestion pricing.

6 As both a frequent driver and a
7 regular rider of the Long Island Rail
8 Road, I understand both sides. But I
9 know that the Long Island Rail Road
10 needs the funding brought in by
11 congestion pricing to pay for its
12 critical repairs and improvements that
13 will help make transit the best option
14 for even more Long Islanders.

15 Many transit improvements are
16 already on the way, including East
17 Side access, Third Track and this
18 shows the MTA's commitment to
19 improving transit to Long Island,
20 including making it easier for reverse
21 commuters traveling East Bound for
22 work, which will revitalize the Long
23 Island community and economy.

24 Congestion pricing is going to
25 raise billions of dollars for critical

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1 Long Island Rail Road projects, like
2 upgrading the signals that keep our
3 trains moving from Babylon to
4 Patchogue, platforms and station
5 repairs and accessibility projects to
6 the system to make sure that all the
7 disability and elderly can rely on
8 transit, new and more train cars, like
9 more M9 unit cars to replace M3
10 dinosaurs that are back from
11 retirement, state-of-the-art good
12 repair projects, will end up meaning
13 faster, more reliable rides with fewer
14 delays.

15 Without this critical funding
16 and congestion pricing, we risk
17 delaying important repairs. Long
18 Island has seen its fair share of
19 storms and extreme weather over the
20 last decade leading to service outages
21 on many lines. And we have to prepare
22 for the worse. This capital funding
23 will also help protect the Long Island
24 from damage caused by rain, flood,
25 winds and snow.

1 All the improvements will make
2 the Long Island Rail Road more
3 reliable, accessible and enjoyable.
4 For those of you who do not end our
5 trips at Penn Station or Atlantic
6 Terminal and soon Grand Central, it's
7 clear that the city's subways and
8 buses desperately need more
9 maintenance and upgrades. This
10 funding will help the majority Long
11 Islanders who take transit into the
12 city by speeding up trains and buses,
13 improving our transit system as a
14 whole.

15 Investing in our transit system,
16 means investing in our economy and our
17 entire region and the funds brought by
18 congestion pricing are more important
19 now than ever.

20 Thank you.

21 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

22 Our next speaker is Otto Angulo,
23 followed by Adam Cohen.

24 Our next speaker is Adam Cohen,
25 followed by Magdamary Marcano.

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1 Our next speaker is Magdamary
2 Marcano, followed by Kim Lawyer.

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

5 Magdamary, you may unmute
6 yourself --

7 MAGDAMARY MARCANO: Okay. Here
8 I go.

9 MS. FLAX: You may begin your
10 remarks.

11 MAGDAMARY MARCANO: Okay. Thank
12 you.

13 MS. FLAX: Your time has
14 started. Please begin your remarks.

15 MAGDAMARY MARCANO: Okay. I
16 can't -- good evening, ladies and
17 gentlemen. Thank you for the
18 opportunity to speak to you today. As
19 a resident of the Bronx, I have
20 several concerns about the Central
21 Business District Tolling effort put
22 forth for any one traveling to go to
23 60th Street in Manhattan.

24 Firstly, there are many disabled
25 residents in my borough that have

1 medical appointments at hospitals and
2 doctors. Has anyone thought about how
3 they would go to those appointments?
4 If they're traveling by cab service,
5 the cost of the taxpayer will grow
6 exponentially. They will also impact
7 the cost of fast commutes within the
8 Bronx.

9 As we are all aware, the Bronx
10 is one of the poorest counties in the
11 United States and it is always bearing
12 the cost of the many unplanned the
13 poorly proposed projects in New York
14 City.

15 That brings me to my second
16 concern, commuters from other counties
17 can drive into the city -- the already
18 critical parking situation in the
19 Bronx. Many Bronx residents drive as
20 a necessity and have limiting parking
21 available due to the excessive amount
22 of unregistered and -- that are not
23 being towed from our streets -- to
24 avoid the toll, citizens of this
25 borough or city suffer the

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1 consequences of excessive tolling
2 brought on by the elective officials
3 of the City of New York.

4 Which brings me to the
5 environmental impact that this will
6 have on our already medically
7 overburdened communities in this
8 borough to tolling increase the
9 process, this was already -- without
10 this was already voted into law
11 unfair.

12 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
13 remarks.

14 MAGDAMARY MARCANO: One solution
15 is to have New York City MTA, law
16 enforcement --

17 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker is Kim Lawyer,
19 followed by Barbara Caporale.

20 Our next speaker is Barbara
21 Caporale, followed by Jack McCloy.

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

24 BARBARA CAPORALE: Did I unmute?
25 Can you hear me?

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1 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

2 BARBARA CAPORALE: Hi. How are
3 you doing? Thank you to everybody
4 who's contributing comments and who
5 has stayed on to hear other people's
6 comments. And I also want to thank
7 the representatives on screen.

8 If you would please humor me,
9 Alison, Lou, Patrick, Rick and
10 Richard, can you show me your hands if
11 you live in what is called the CBD or
12 grew up in this district?

13 By a show of hands, any of you?

14 No, okay. All right. No
15 reflection on you, but I will say that
16 a lot of people come and study urban
17 planning and then they come to our
18 city and they decide how we are going
19 to live. Let me just say, CBD,
20 Central Business District, everyone
21 knows that's from 30th Street to 59th
22 Street. 30th Street to 59th Street.

23 I live in Community Board 3.
24 This is a residential district, as the
25 other representative from CB2 told you

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1 and most of CB1. This is a
2 neighborhood, a residential district
3 where we patronize our local
4 businesses and there's some
5 educational and vital medical services
6 here. But we are not a business
7 district. If you call us CBD again,
8 we're going to need to take some CBD
9 gummies to chill out, seriously.

10 Just like the Supreme Court is
11 trying to control how we use our
12 bodies, this big brother telling us,
13 watching us, how we move, is subject
14 to a lawsuit of invasion of privacy.
15 I am sorry.

16 There was no such thing as
17 congestion until the carpetbagger
18 billionaire from Boston, Bloomberg,
19 came here and started dropping chairs
20 and tables in the middle of the street
21 and closing streets, making traffic
22 congested and then put in all these
23 Ride-Shares, which is literally
24 killing the taxicab drivers.

25 I live in the neighborhood where

1 most immigrants came, Lower East Side,
2 to start their lives. We still
3 struggle to survive in our tenement
4 buildings. We should not be charged
5 if we have a car. We should not be
6 spied on and this is a big sucking
7 sound because you're spending money on
8 studying escalators at Union Square
9 crosswalks, infrared cameras -- there
10 should be no congestion pricing at
11 night.

12 And we are not in the CBD. We
13 are not in the business district. We
14 are a residential neighborhood, so get
15 that straight, okay.

16 Spend the money on the subway,
17 potholes and fixing our bridges, which
18 should remain free and don't tax the
19 taxis.

20 Thank you very much.

21 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

22 MR. OLIVA: I would just like to
23 remind the speakers that this is the
24 hearing opportunity for members of the
25 public to comment on the Environmental

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1 Assessment for the Central Business
2 District Tolling Program.

3 Your comments will be recorded,
4 indexed and responded to as part of
5 the Environmental Assessment process.
6 Responses, verbal or otherwise, will
7 not be provided during today's
8 hearing.

9 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
10 Jack McCloy, followed by Mamadou
11 Diallo.

12 JACK MCCLOY: Can you hear me?

13 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

14 JACK MCCLOY: Okay. My name is
15 Jack McCloy and I'm a Long Island
16 resident.

17 Something needs to be done to
18 reduce the traffic congestion in Lower
19 Manhattan. Something needs to be done
20 to improve air quality in Downtown New
21 York City and something needs to be
22 done to raise much-needed revenue to
23 maintain infrastructure. But
24 congestion pricing is not the answer.

25 Please consider an alternative,

1 which I call the Safer New York Roads
2 Proposal. Before I explain how it
3 would work, let me mention that the
4 Milliman Report of March 11, 2019, for
5 the Insurance Research Council, states
6 that the number of uninsured motorists
7 ranges between six percent and 25
8 percent of all drivers on the road.
9 Even you believe that New York City
10 may have a lower level of uninsured
11 motorists, if you factored in
12 unlicensed drivers, uninspected and
13 unregistered vehicles, it is
14 reasonable to estimate that about one
15 in 4,000 cars on the road shouldn't be
16 there.

17 The technology exists to
18 identify and remove from our streets
19 those who shouldn't be there. We
20 could reduce traffic congestion,
21 improve air quality and increase state
22 revenue without creating additional
23 hardships for legal insured,
24 registered and properly licensed
25 drivers.

1 I have studied automotive
2 congestion, injury and fatality
3 statistics, especially those within
4 New York State, since the mid 1980s
5 and there is one truth that no one can
6 argue about. The worse drivers cause
7 a disproportionately higher percentage
8 of problems on the roads. My plan
9 would drastically reduce the ability
10 of these people to continue to drive.

11 There is one other correlation
12 that cannot be argued, remove
13 unregistered, uninsured and unlicensed
14 vehicles from the roads and road
15 congestion will be reduced. My plan
16 addresses this issue also by using
17 advanced technology that is available
18 now. With the exception of those
19 currently holding elective office,
20 I've contacted legislatives,
21 legislators, state senators, governors
22 and mayors about implementation of
23 such a program and maybe it was too
24 early to consider it at that time, but
25 the time is now.

1 By using technology, which would
2 be similar to an enhanced E-ZPass
3 system and by tying it to a real-time
4 database, which would verify proper
5 insurance, inspection, vehicle and
6 operator license validity, the bad
7 apples would be removed from the
8 roadways.

9 Traffic will be reduced,
10 roadways will be safer, insurance
11 rates will come down and those
12 willfully flaunting our laws can be
13 held responsible.

14 Let's not penalize New York City
15 residents, theaters, entertainment,
16 businesses and all that makes the city
17 special by implementing congestion
18 pricing. There is a better way.
19 Please do not implement congestion
20 pricing.

21 Thank you.

22 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

23 Our next speaker is Mamadou
24 Diallo, followed by Cristina Ponsell.

25 Our next speaker is Cristina

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1 Ponsell, followed by Gordon Lee.

2 Our next speaker is Gordon Lee,
3 followed by Quintus Murray.

4 Our next speaker is Quintus
5 Murray, followed by our 180th speaker
6 on the list, Keala Montgomery.

7 QUINTUS MURRAY. Hello. Can you
8 hear me?

9 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

10 QUINTUS MURRAY: Yes. If you're
11 going to implement congestion pricing,
12 which will affect a long broad region
13 of commuters coming not just through
14 the CBD, but from many areas
15 throughout the city. I suggest
16 maximizing the revenue generated to
17 improve not just the MTA, but also
18 other public transit agencies that
19 funnel travelers and riders into the
20 CBD as well. That also includes New
21 Jersey Transit PATH, as well as the
22 Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North
23 Railroad.

24 If you implement ways to allow
25 people to avoid driving altogether by

1 integrating the fares and having fares
2 within the five boroughs being equal,
3 people who would normally just drive
4 into the city would no longer have to
5 pay a second fare if they're coming in
6 from New Jersey or Long Island in
7 order to get into different areas of
8 Manhattan.

9 One way to do this will be to
10 offer a combination fare structure
11 between the agencies. So when
12 congestion pricing is implemented,
13 people would also have a different
14 option to use existing transit
15 services. Also, one way to implement
16 bus service would be microtransit
17 services, which would actually be more
18 efficient use of resources in parts of
19 Manhattan since several buses
20 duplicate the subway and do not serve
21 many riders compared to taxis.

22 Also, with new investments for
23 the MTA, you should also consider
24 investments into regional express rail
25 that would not just improve New York

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1 City subways, but also create new
2 paths and entry ways for trains on
3 Long Island Rail Road, Metro-North
4 Rail Road, New Jersey Transit, to
5 serve different areas within the city
6 through new RVR corridors.

7 Also that -- you should also
8 look into repairing the subway
9 stations and reducing the impact of
10 weekend service changes, which also
11 discourages ridership during the
12 weekends. Due to several disruptions
13 on weekends, most people are unable to
14 use the subways properly and one way
15 to mitigate this, would be to end
16 weekend disruptions or change the
17 disruptions to late-night hours.

18 Goodbye.

19 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Keala
21 Montgomery, followed by Jeff Friedman.

22 KEALA MONTGOMERY: Can you hear
23 me?

24 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

25 KEALA MONTGOMERY: Yes. Good

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1 evening, the panel. I've been waiting
2 a long time this week, and thank you
3 for having patience. I've been living
4 --

5 MS. FLAX: Keala, you're muted.
6 If you could unmute yourself.

7 KEALA MONTGOMERY: Hello. Can
8 you hear me?

9 MS. FLAX: Yes. We can hear
10 you.

11 KEALA MONTGOMERY: Hello, hello,
12 hello. Can you hear me?

13 MS. FLAX: We can hear you.

14 KEALA MONTGOMERY: Okay. Should
15 I start over again or continue where I
16 left off?

17 MS. FLAX: Continue where you
18 left off. Thank you.

19 KEALA MONTGOMERY: You know
20 what, I would think maybe I should
21 just write a letter to you and better
22 yet continue because I'm losing
23 minutes on my conversation that I
24 would like to speak and I feel like
25 I'm not even getting an opportunity to

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1 speak. I'm losing minutes on this
2 conversation and being able to speak
3 in front of this board of the DOT and
4 MTA.

5 Would I be able to get a couple
6 of more minutes in?

7 MS. FLAX: Please continue your
8 remarks.

9 KEALA MONTGOMERY: I've been
10 living in New York most of my life and
11 have felt these draconian measures
12 from the MTA since the first
13 recession, since 2008.

14 I have not recovered and I'm
15 sure a lot of New Yorkers, like
16 myself, who are working-class, have
17 been dealing with trying to keep up
18 with rent and keep up with basic
19 necessities. And with these draconian
20 measures that you have been mentioning
21 earlier about more pricing and more
22 fare increases, is really burdening
23 New Yorkers at its worst.

24 I think at a time of recession,
25 we should think about helping New

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1 Yorkers and doing more to improve
2 these capital projects that you have
3 with MTA. We already have -- we've
4 been talking about building
5 sustainable communities but, you know,
6 some communities have been left out.
7 When you get on MTA subway stations,
8 they are mostly, you know, some of
9 them are not as standard as other
10 places that I see in other stations
11 and in other countries. We need to
12 improve our service where we are
13 meeting the standards of the 21st
14 century like other places that I've
15 seen within the United States.

16 We need discounts for low income
17 and minority communities in particular
18 because they are mostly impacted due
19 to economic inequity. I think there
20 should be an incorporated fee if
21 you're going to do the pricing. It
22 should be fair for people who live in
23 a two-fare zone where they don't have
24 to pay so much money. There should be
25 a discount who live on fixed incomes

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1 and that -- they should be mindful
2 when these decisions are being made.

3 As far as fare evasion, I'm a
4 New Yorker that I have -- okay.

5 Hello, am I still here?

6 Okay. As far as fare evasion,
7 you know, I have tried to stick within
8 the parameters of following the law
9 but there are times I've had tickets
10 because I was a victim of
11 circumstances and couldn't pay my
12 MetroCard fare to get on a subway.

13 And I'm a person who is now
14 disabled because I cannot get to my
15 doctors' appointments and it's unfair
16 to a person like me whose been paying
17 taxes most of her life and feel like,
18 you know, I'm not getting any type of
19 help from the city. So what are we to
20 do with people who have limitations or
21 who have less income than those who
22 can afford it?

23 Thank you for your time and you
24 have a great evening.

25 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

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1 Our next speaker is Jeff
2 Friedman, followed by Mamadou Diallo.

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

5 JEFF FRIEDMAN: Okay. Can you
6 hear me now?

7 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

8 JEFF FRIEDMAN: Thank you. I
9 want to thank everybody for allowing
10 me this time this evening and thank
11 you for your patience. I know it's
12 been a long evening.

13 My name is Jeff Friedman. I'm
14 the owner of a company called Let
15 There Be Neon in Lower Manhattan.
16 We're a very small business. We
17 currently employ twelve people and we
18 have one small transit van.

19 We've been in business 50 years
20 this year, we're very proud of that.
21 But I must say it's getting more and
22 more difficult, thanks to the City of
23 New York imposing taxes and fees on
24 small businesses.

25 I'd like to go on record for

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1 myself and I'm sure for many other
2 small business owners that I oppose
3 this program. I just don't think it's
4 fair that we're being penalized for
5 paying very, very high rent in Lower
6 Manhattan. And I'd like to give a few
7 very brief examples of what my
8 immediate concerns are.

9 We keep our one vehicle safely
10 parked outside of the city in a
11 garage, which costs us money and we
12 come in everyday and what happens on a
13 typical morning when we would load up
14 the van, once we enter the city,
15 because we are located in Lower
16 Manhattan, and take the tools and the
17 technicians and go into Brooklyn and
18 spend the day there and the technician
19 and the driver go home from there. So
20 we're being charged a fee just to come
21 into the city to visit our own
22 business to load up the projects for
23 that day and that's just not fair on
24 any level.

25 Another quick example is what if

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1 we're loading up in the morning and
2 we're doing a few projects within the
3 business district and what if we go
4 outside of the district into Brooklyn
5 for another job or above 96th Street
6 and then come back at the end of the
7 day to the city, are we going to be
8 charged twice?

9 And I'm very concerned about
10 this. I'm wondering if that's
11 something that has been thought about
12 for small business owners. This is
13 going to hurt us a lot and we're going
14 to pass the cost on to our clients and
15 nobody's going to be happy.

16 Finally, again, I just want to
17 repeat that I don't understand why
18 we're going to be penalized for having
19 a business that's paying extremely
20 high rents, probably the highest in
21 the country, if not, the world, in
22 Lower Manhattan. We're here because
23 we want to be here. We've been here
24 for 50 years and I hate to say it but
25 we're being pushed out.

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1 So those are my comments and
2 thank you again for your time.

3 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

4 Our next speaker is Mamadou
5 Diallo, followed by A. Patel.

6 MAMADOU DIALLO: Good evening,
7 guys. Can you hear me, please?

8 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

9 MAMADOU DIALLO: All right,
10 perfect. So my name is Mamadou. So
11 I'm here speaking -- okay. This
12 congestion pricing, I think it's not
13 fair, all right. Hey, I'm a Muslim, I
14 don't mind revealing my faith. But we
15 know that the Jewish community are one
16 of the most -- they face a lot of
17 antisemitic out there, all right.

18 What are you going to tell a
19 Rabbi, you know, and you know, there's
20 a lot of white supremacists out there
21 coming from Long Island, always want
22 to hurt them. Do you want to force
23 those elderly to get on the subway and
24 get punched, beat up in the name of
25 pollution? Come on MTA, you guys

1 should know better.

2 These people getting beat up.
3 They facing antisemitic everyday, now
4 you want to force some of those people
5 to get on the subway. And you know
6 damn well -- sorry, excuse my french.
7 You know very well they will get -- a
8 lot of -- some people don't like them
9 just because -- which I think is not a
10 good thing.

11 Plus your panel it is still not
12 diverse. Your panel is all focused on
13 one particular demographic, which I
14 think is, once again, MTA speaking
15 again.

16 So please reconsider your plan.
17 I think your plan is not fair and most
18 of the people that live in this
19 congestion area, they're not
20 congestion area. The business area
21 should be from, like the lady earlier
22 mentioned, from 34th Street to 59th
23 Street; that's the business area.

24 How you going to say 60th Street
25 all the way down to below? Come on,

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1 now. Let's be serious.

2 Please revisit your plan. Your
3 plan is hurting everybody. People
4 don't have the money for it. You know
5 what, if you guys cannot handle the
6 MTA, give it to Elon Musk, give it
7 Jeff Bezos, Amazon. They would do a
8 better job. Privatize them, maybe
9 that would help, okay. Give it to
10 somebody else, let them run it.

11 That's about it. I think the
12 MTA should just give it up, give it to
13 a private company and let them run it
14 if you guys don't know how to handle
15 all that money. Believe it or not,
16 they know how to handle the money
17 and-- I mean, come on now.

18 Once again, think about the
19 safety for people. If you disabled,
20 you're not going to think about the
21 MTA. You're thinking about getting a
22 cab, getting a personal car, right.
23 But once again, this is nothing but a
24 money grab. They just want to steel
25 money from your pocket because MTA

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1 always need money.

2 Give it up. Give it to Amazon,
3 give it to Jeff Bezos, give it to Elon
4 Musk, they would make sure they would
5 do a better job.

6 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
7 remarks.

8 MAMADOU DIALLO: Thank you so
9 much. I really appreciate you for
10 giving me this opportunity. God bless
11 America.

12 MS. FLAX: The next speaker is
13 A. Patel, followed by Nicholas
14 Berkowitz.

15 A. Patel: Hi. Can you hear me?

16 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

17 A. Patel: It's a sad state of
18 affairs when at 10:30 on a Tuesday
19 evening, I have to express my
20 disappointment, once again, with the
21 MTA and this not-nourishing project
22 that you all are undertaking.

23 When the pandemic -- I grew up
24 in the city. When the pandemic
25 started I had to stop taking the

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1 subway for my safety. I'm an
2 essential worker. I am now driving to
3 work every day, it's exhausting. I do
4 not feel safe returning back to public
5 transportation on the subway. I've
6 had coworkers who have been assaulted
7 and I am now driving everyday and I
8 don't see why I have to pay \$23 and
9 counting -- it will probably go up
10 because it will always be an increase
11 the next year and the year after that.
12 We need money for this, we need money
13 for that and that and this and it just
14 doesn't end.

15 So I think that there should be
16 a -- you know, if this unfortunate
17 congestion pricing passes, I think
18 there should be real consideration for
19 either very deep discounts or total
20 waivers and exemptions for individuals
21 who live in the area, like myself,
22 like my elderly parents who I drive
23 around, you know, to medical
24 appointments and such. And
25 referencing what somebody else said

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1 earlier to have, you know, at least a
2 dashboard presenting where all of the
3 money is right down to the last penny
4 of the collections that you will be
5 doing so that everybody can see where
6 the money is going and how it is being
7 expended.

8 I also think that there should
9 have been a vote, I think people
10 should have voted, should have been
11 given the option to vote for this and
12 I think it's very unfair to working
13 people. It's underhanded. It's using
14 the pandemic to justify something
15 else, which was mismanagement all
16 along. Thank you.

17 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker is Nicholas
19 Berkowitz, followed by Diallo
20 McKnight.

21 Our next speaker is Diallo
22 McKnight, followed by Matthew Quezada.

23 DIALLO MCKNIGHT: Good evening.
24 Can you hear me?

25 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

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1 DIALLO MCKNIGHT: Okay. I'd
2 like to say thank you for allowing me
3 this opportunity to speak.

4 I've been listening since 5
5 o'clock and I heard some very good
6 points brought up. And I must say
7 that I am also against this congestion
8 pricing proposal or this congestion
9 pricing plan.

10 I am a resident of New York
11 City. I do live in Manhattan, I live
12 in Lower Manhattan. And the very
13 first thought that came into my mind
14 when I heard about this was, why am I
15 being charged to leave my home, why am
16 I being charged to return home. I'm
17 also a city worker, I work for the
18 City of New York and I spend my day, 8
19 hours a day, being of service to the
20 people of New York City. So I find it
21 very unfair that I'm being told that
22 in order for me to leave my house or
23 leave Manhattan, leave the island of
24 Manhattan, I must now pay an
25 additional \$23 in addition to the

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1 tolls that I'm already going to be
2 paying.

3 I'm hearing a lot of comments
4 pertaining to the environment and
5 pertaining to safety when, in fact,
6 this is not about safety at all.
7 Roads are made for cars and as long as
8 there are roads, there will be cars.
9 So the idea that this will make the
10 city or make the streets safer for
11 pedestrians or cyclists, it absolutely
12 makes no sense because there will
13 always be cars on the road and for the
14 people who can afford it, this won't
15 stop them at all. But for the people
16 who are facing financial challenges,
17 they will feel the brunt of this most.

18 There is always going to be
19 someone who's going to say well, just
20 get on the subway or take the bus and
21 I get on the subways and bus all the
22 time. In fact, I take the train every
23 single day but quite frankly, it's
24 unsafe. I also have young children, I
25 have a one year-old and I have a four

1 year-old. Now, can you imagine me
2 trying to get on the train with a
3 folded stroller and two kids at a
4 subway station where there no
5 elevators, the escalators are not
6 working. You might get attacked by
7 someone on the train, you might get
8 attacked by rats, you sit on the train
9 and there are people doing acrobatic
10 tricks, you know, riding the trains
11 aren't fun. The safer option for me
12 and my family is driving.

13 Once again, I would like to say
14 that I am definitely against this
15 congestion pricing and I suggest you
16 guys find another way to fund the MTA
17 projects. And that's all I have to
18 add. Thank you.

19 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Matthew
21 Quezada, followed by Gina Wright.

22 Our next speaker is Gina Wright,
23 followed by Bee Dorsey.

24 Our next speaker is Bee Dorsey,
25 followed by Lucy Garnett.

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1 Our next speaker is Lucy
2 Garnett, followed by Laura Hogan.

3 Our next speaker is Laura Hogan,
4 followed by Stacey Shub.

5 Our next speaker is Stacey Shub,
6 followed by our 190th speaker,
7 Alexander Samaha.

8 Our next speaker is Alexander
9 Samaha, followed by Manirul Islam.

10 Our next speaker is Manirul
11 Islam, followed by Regina Cornwell.

12 Our next speaker is Regina
13 Cornwell, followed by A. Medina.

14 Our next speaker is A. Medina,
15 followed by Laura Timoney.

16 Our next speaker is Laura
17 Timoney, followed by Amanda Levine.

18 Laura, you may begin your
19 remarks.

20 LAURA TIMONEY: Okay, thank you.
21 I know it's been a long night.

22 I am a life-long New York City
23 resident. I've lived in Brooklyn,
24 Queens and I currently live in Staten
25 Island. I worked in New York City for

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1 decades.

2 I want to state I am against
3 congestion pricing, but I'm all in
4 favor of reducing congestion,
5 increasing the use of mass transit and
6 addressing environmental concerns, and
7 I think pretty much everybody was here
8 tonight. But it seems the only answer
9 we've been able to come up with is by
10 raising a tax on this, making a
11 congestion pricing. And that's always
12 the answer, right. We raise property
13 taxes, we raise tolls. I live in
14 Staten Island, the Verrazano Bridge
15 is, I think, the highest toll-bridge
16 in the country. It's just not listed
17 that way because now we do two-way
18 pricing. I think for now, you know,
19 this needs to be put on hold because
20 clearly things have not been thought
21 through to the level that need to be
22 thought through, on all levels,
23 whether it's crime, safety, economic
24 consequences, residents, seniors,
25 disabled, the deaf, the blind that we

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1 really need to put a little bit more
2 thought into this.

3 What I haven't heard tonight,
4 because we've all heard some of the
5 reasons why, you know, what's causing
6 this. But I haven't heard the
7 connection between rush hour, single
8 occupancy vehicles, those commuters.
9 And I remember after the 9/11 terror
10 attacks, what happened was they band
11 single occupancy cars from coming into
12 Manhattan between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m.
13 and congestion went down significantly
14 and ridership in mass transit went up
15 significantly.

16 So can we try things at no cost,
17 you know, while we're figuring this
18 all out to see if that will really
19 address this environmental concern,
20 this congestion concern and the
21 ridership. I also agree
22 wholeheartedly, we have the best --
23 one of the best, if not the best in
24 the world medical institutions in
25 Manhattan that are going to be

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1 affected by this. People come in
2 every -- we heard about the seniors.
3 We heard about the disabled. My
4 husband is a former first responder
5 who is in need of a lung and kidney
6 transplant. We have to go to
7 Manhattan once a week every week for
8 at least a year post-transplant. You
9 know, we're at NYU Langone. That is
10 in the CBD.

11 Other hospitals, Columbia
12 Presbyterian, Mount Sinai, Memorial
13 Sloan Kettering, they are above 60th
14 Street. They won't be affected.

15 This really needs to be thought
16 through. I am all for reducing
17 congestion. We would love to be able
18 to take mass transit. We can't
19 because he's immunocompromised. We
20 won't be able to do this, so please, I
21 ask you to take your time.

22 You know, these are lifesaving
23 measures. We really need to think
24 this through and get it done right and
25 maybe do something like the ban for

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1 single occupancy vehicles in the
2 meantime and don't charge people.
3 Then, you don't have to worry about
4 all the other exemptions and issues.
5 Thank you.

6 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Amanda
8 Levine, followed by Richard Barr.

9 Our next speaker is Richard Bar,
10 followed by Kathryn Manfredonia.

11 Richard, you may unmute yourself
12 and begin your remarks.

13 RICHARD BAR: Okay. Can you
14 hear me now?

15 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

16 RICHARD BAR: Thank you.

17 So I live a little bit north of
18 the entry to the proposed congestion
19 pricing zone, West 80s. And well, I'm
20 expecting that if this happens,
21 parking will become even more
22 impossible, as cars heading south look
23 to park before crossing into 60th
24 Street. But even beyond that, at this
25 point, it's become impossible, between

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1 bike lanes and bike racks and now
2 block after block of outdoor dining
3 sheds and West End Avenue, I realize
4 there are many ways to look at this.
5 I'm trying to give a very narrow local
6 perspective on this. And many, many
7 streets on West End Avenue have had
8 spots taken away because they created
9 all kinds of turning lanes and it will
10 be even more impossible once this
11 takes effect.

12 It used to be that you could
13 park on the street if you were willing
14 to cope with the four days a week of
15 alternate side parking. But with so
16 many spots having been taken away, you
17 can go an hour back and forth, up and
18 down, looking for a spot, any spot, on
19 the good side to the next day or the
20 bad side and get nothing. So as a
21 result, I have a garage that I had to
22 take which costs me \$513 a month.

23 If people give up on a given
24 night and don't have a garage, they
25 can put it overnight into a garage and

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1 maybe pay \$40 or \$60 or \$80. It's
2 really impossible and it will get
3 worse. It will get worse once this
4 happens.

5 So do I really have to pay \$23
6 or \$27 if my daughter on the Lower
7 East Side needs help carrying a big
8 package to her apartment or from her
9 apartment? It's something to think
10 about.

11 And one way of dealing with this
12 could be if the city would find more
13 municipal parking garages or parking
14 lots. For example, at 125th Street
15 under the West Side Highway, where
16 Fairway used to be, there's an
17 enormous outdoor lot that's not being
18 used and it's just locked up now
19 behind a fence. Why doesn't the city
20 take it over and provide reasonably
21 priced municipal parking and at least
22 that would be some way of coping with
23 this disaster that we're dealing with.
24 Thank you.

25 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

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1 Our next speaker is Kathryn
2 Manfredonia, followed by Derek Smith.

3 Our next speaker is Derek Smith,
4 followed by Elizabeth Caputo.

5 Our next speaker is Elizabeth
6 Caputo, followed by Gary Niel.

7 Our next speaker is Gary Niel,
8 followed by Shannon Phipps.

9 Our next speaker is Shannon
10 Phipps, followed by Brian Tomlinson.

11 Our next speaker is Brian
12 Tomlinson, followed by Steve Azor.

13 Our next speaker is Steve Azor,
14 followed by Brian Hess.

15 STEVE AZOR: Hello. Good
16 evening. I'm not here to complain
17 about anything. I'd just like to say
18 thank you for allowing me to speak
19 again.

20 I think this congestion pricing
21 is a great, great, great idea.

22 Yes. Hello -- hi. I think this
23 congestion pricing is a great idea and
24 unfortunately it's not going to work.

25 It's not going to help with the

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1 traffic. I don't care how many tests
2 and analysts say this and that.
3 There's just as many that's saying
4 it's not going to work.

5 In regards to reducing traffic,
6 no. In regards to the environment,
7 no, it's not going to do anything.
8 It's not going to help. This is about
9 money, raising money to be divided up
10 and get tapped into for everything
11 else and it's going to grow again.

12 The MTA is going to have an
13 unlimited amount of money that they
14 can always raise and still get nothing
15 done and cry that they didn't get
16 enough money.

17 All that's going to happen now
18 is you're going to pay \$23 to sit in
19 traffic. It's going to be now a
20 higher cost of sitting in traffic.
21 It's not going to reduce traffic
22 because somehow, some way, everybody's
23 going to find the money that they're
24 crying they don't have to still get
25 into a car because they're not going

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1 to get into this death trap called the
2 MTA. You're not going to do it.
3 You're going to find a way to get the
4 money, whether it's through spending
5 less when you get to Manhattan or just
6 not coming, you know, just maybe
7 putting less gas in your car --
8 whatever it is.

9 If it actually did work then
10 that means that there's going to be
11 less people, less cars on the road,
12 which means less money for the
13 businesses. And these are an opinion,
14 this isn't me, you know, disagreeing.
15 These are facts, this is what's going
16 to happen. Less people means less
17 money.

18 Just like during the pandemic,
19 the streets was nice and clean, there
20 was nobody here. And a lot of the
21 people in Manhattan didn't like that.
22 They liked the fact that nobody was
23 able to come to their little
24 neighborhood, all right, but how did
25 the businesses turn out. A lot of

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1 them still never opened up. So that's
2 what's going to happen.

3 In regards to the hatred that
4 goes on for the Ubers and for the
5 Lyfts, be careful what you wish for
6 because if you weren't around when the
7 train breaks down, which is every day
8 when the train breaks down, we won't
9 be there to pick you up and take you
10 home.

11 I love working in the city. I
12 love driving, all right. I love
13 driving to the outer boroughs. If I
14 never had to come to Manhattan, I
15 would love it but unfortunately, a lot
16 of the working-class people that need
17 a ride at home, whether it's because
18 they're scared to get on the train or
19 maybe they just want to treat
20 themselves to a ride, I'm there. And
21 I hope that I could stay there to help
22 them. Thank you.

23 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

24 Our next speaker is Brian Hess,
25 followed by John Trantos.

1 Our next speaker is John
2 Trantos, followed by Faith Zuckerman.

3 Our next speaker is Faith
4 Zuckerman, followed by Toby Pannone.

5 FAITH ZUCKERMAN: Hi. I think
6 I'm live.

7 Hi. I've heard a lot tonight
8 and by the way, I know it's almost 11
9 o'clock. Thanks, everybody. I know
10 everybody's getting a little
11 glassy-eyed, so I appreciate this, and
12 thank you so much.

13 I've heard a lot tonight about
14 people commuting and the different
15 impact it's going to have on
16 commuters. However, not everybody who
17 uses a car in Manhattan is a commuter.
18 I am a big advocate of public
19 transportation. I mostly take the
20 bus, I take the subways. I don't take
21 the subways after business hours
22 because quite frankly, I just don't
23 feel safe on them.

24 I have a vehicle that I use only
25 to travel upstate. I have an elderly

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1 mother who lives upstate. She's not
2 accessible by any kind of public
3 transportation. The only way I could
4 really get to her is by car.

5 I use my car to go upstate and
6 back. I don't drive it around here.
7 I park it in a garage that I pay a lot
8 for. I haven't heard anything about
9 how is it going to account for people
10 who are paying to park their cars in
11 the garage who aren't using them daily
12 and yet, we're going to be charged a
13 daily fee for a car sitting in a
14 garage.

15 Also, I work a job that
16 sometimes takes me out of the town for
17 months on end, which my car sits in a
18 parking garage unused. And yet, I'll
19 be paying a daily fee just strictly
20 because I live below 60th Street.

21 I've been a long-time resident
22 of the East Village, specifically
23 Alphabet City. I had no idea that we
24 were a Central Business District, who
25 would have thought? I do agree with

1 our previous community board member
2 who said that she felt that the
3 Central Business District was between
4 30th Street and 60th Street. So I
5 would strongly advise that you look at
6 the parameters of the blocks you're
7 taking into account and literally keep
8 it to a business district.

9 Also resident exemptions, will
10 there be any kind of exemptions for
11 residents who live here? I feel if I
12 lived above 60th Street, if I've lived
13 on the Upper West or the Upper East
14 Side, I could come and go with my
15 vehicle and not be penalized. This
16 feels very punitive for living below
17 60th Street.

18 I don't think it's going to help
19 congestion at all and would love to
20 see cleaner air, but I don't really
21 think the vehicles are the problem.
22 There's a lot of other contributing
23 factors and I really sincerely hope
24 that you guys take these comments into
25 account. I'm skeptical that they will

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1 be taken into account, but I sincerely
2 hope that they are and I thank you for
3 your time and your kind consideration.

4 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

5 Our next speaker is Toby
6 Pannone, followed by NY Resident 1.

7 TOBY PANNONE. Good evening,
8 everybody. Audible?

9 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can hear
10 you.

11 TOBY PANNONE: Thank you so
12 much. I am Toby Pannone. I am 19
13 years-old and born and raised in New
14 York and I just want to be sort of
15 upfront and say I am a very strong
16 supporter of the congestion pricing
17 charge.

18 Maybe I'm a little bias, I do
19 run a YouTube channel about the MTA
20 and all the really interesting quirks
21 of the system that's been around for
22 over a century. But I also work in
23 the city and have yet to ever drive a
24 car or get my license or permit
25 because I take the subway.

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1 I take New Jersey Transit when I
2 want to go on hikes with my friends.
3 I visit my parents who live out at the
4 end of Long Island, in Shelter Island
5 and I take Long Island Rail Road and
6 then the North Fork Ferry.

7 It is such a well-developed area
8 that we live in when it comes to
9 public transportation, that asking
10 people to leave their cars and
11 preserve the environment, preserve the
12 quality of our city when it comes to
13 the noise that cars make and our wants
14 as pedestrian, as people, to be able
15 to live on a human scale, to be able
16 to cross streets without panicking
17 that we don't have enough time to get
18 across, with all of these issues.

19 The city should be made for the
20 people who live in it and not the cars
21 that they own. And you know, as much
22 as I love to hear all this feedback
23 that everybody is providing tonight,
24 some of which I never would have
25 thought of, I think the end-all be-all

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1 is that, there are cities across the
2 globe, London, Milan, Stockholm,
3 Gothenburg, Singapore, they've been
4 mentioned.

5 And I think what really needs to
6 be emphasized is we're not going to
7 enact congestion pricing and all of a
8 sudden the city falls into anarchy
9 shuts down, your life is ruined.

10 Because if that's what happens, if we
11 were that exceptional then, why has
12 that not happened in any other city?
13 Why has no other city had any severe
14 difficulty with it. Yes, they're
15 going to be growing pains, but no
16 action is picking a side on making our
17 city less livable for the people that
18 live in it, that walk on the
19 day-to-day basis, that walk to school,
20 that get hot dogs from the vendor
21 cart, that experience the world on a
22 human scale. Not doing anything is
23 choosing to say that the environment
24 is less important, that the people who
25 send their time in the city are less

1 important and this seems like the
2 absolute best way in my mind to make
3 it clear to people that if you do not
4 absolutely need to drive -- and yes,
5 there are people who need to do that.
6 But if you don't absolutely need to
7 drive, it's not a necessity for you to
8 own a vehicle for you to use it on a
9 regular basis because it is truly one
10 of the worse things for the
11 environment and for our day-to-day
12 lives.

13 So I truly hope that with some
14 adjustments, with some preparation
15 essentially to give a trial period to
16 take feedback that this will
17 accomplish.

18 Thank you all so much and
19 especially thank you to the
20 stenographers and the ASL interpreters
21 tonight, as some are hard of hearing.
22 It's really incredible. So thank you
23 so much. Have a good evening.

24 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

25 Our next speaker is NY Resident

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1 1, followed by Arlene Rubenstein.

2 NY RESIDENT 1: Can you hear me?

3 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

4 NY RESIDENT 1: Four stabbings
5 and one track death jolt New York City
6 Subway System on Saturday; Man shot
7 and killed on New York subway in
8 latest unprovoked attack -- titles of
9 recent articles.

10 I understand that the state
11 budget authorized congestion tolling
12 with an expectation of a billion
13 dollars annually out of the pockets of
14 drivers. Regardless of that approval,
15 the plan does not need to move
16 forward.

17 If people face more economic
18 woes from congestion pricing out of
19 financial necessity, crime may
20 increase. You have not addressed the
21 potential unintended affect of
22 increasing crime. During the
23 pandemic, domestic violence
24 skyrocketed. Someone I know was a
25 victim of domestic violence by a man

1 who went to jail for attempted murder.
2 The domestic violence victim was
3 stalked and followed in her car. That
4 domestic violence victim, like so many
5 victims like her, could not possibly
6 take the subway or she would have been
7 targeted and murdered.

8 Domestic violence victims who
9 fear for their safety must drive.
10 Like so many others and all who must
11 drive, should not have to be taxed to
12 support the unsafe MTA. That domestic
13 violence victim, like so many victims
14 experience hunger yet, they must drive
15 to stay alive.

16 Per your own acknowledgement,
17 the plan shifts congestion elsewhere
18 and therefore will adversely affect
19 the environment elsewhere.

20 Privacy issues exist as you
21 mentioned a third-party may access the
22 tolling data. Sixteen states have
23 lost controlling the use and access of
24 data from automatic license plate
25 readers. New York needs laws

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1 controlling access and use of E-ZPass
2 data and the data from license plate
3 readers.

4 The Brennan Center for Social
5 Justice has policy recommendations.
6 The tax credit is absurd, as it may
7 offer no benefit to those who do not
8 make enough to pay taxes. The timing
9 is terrible on the heels of the
10 pandemic. Congestion pricing will
11 cause more pain and harm to every day
12 New Yorkers than it will help.

13 I hope you and the politicians
14 are not heartless and have heard the
15 pain of the people your plan will
16 adversely affect. You should not
17 punish drivers unfairly to subsidize
18 New York's mass transit and take food
19 out of people's mouths. You are
20 literally stealing money from drivers
21 to pay for the MTA, highway robbery.

22 On Twitter, let's use hashtag
23 #NoCongestionPricing and consider a
24 change.org petition in opposition.
25 Have humanity, compassion,

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1 consideration for those who will be
2 adversely affected, as many New
3 Yorkers are feeling deep economic pain
4 and now, you want to unfairly burden
5 and tax them.

6 It is an insensitive and an
7 inhuman, selfish money grab for the
8 MTA and disproportionately affects the
9 financially disadvantaged,
10 marginalized, aged, disabled,
11 immunocompromised, outer boroughs,
12 residents of NJ, tourists, livery
13 drivers and entertainment industry.

14 Please stop moving forward with
15 this inhumane plan. Please find a
16 different way to fund your MTA, rather
17 than stealing money from drivers.
18 Thank you.

19 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Arlene
21 Rubenstein, followed by Deanna
22 Douglas.

23 Our next speaker, the 210th
24 person to sign up, is Deanna Douglass,
25 followed by George Ntim.

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1 DEANNA DOUGLASS: Hello. Can
2 you hear me?

3 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

4 DEANNA DOUGLASS: Hi. My name
5 is Deanna and I live in the CBD
6 district and I highly disagree with
7 congestion pricing.

8 It's going to cause businesses
9 to pass the added cost to customers
10 and there's not enough debate about
11 people who live in the district. If
12 someone lives in the zone and works
13 outside the city, they would have to
14 pay sometimes over \$20 in order to
15 come in and out, in order to make a
16 living.

17 People who live in areas that
18 are required toll, for example, Staten
19 Island, at least get a resident
20 discount regardless of income. What
21 this plan is going to do is cause
22 people to not want to live or work in
23 not only the zone, but in the New York
24 City area. And this will cause a loss
25 of potential MTA customers as they're

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1 leaving for different parts of the
2 country for better affordability,
3 which in turn will reduce cash
4 revenue.

5 In addition, riding the subway
6 currently is very dangerous. This
7 plan is basically saying, it's okay if
8 people are in harm's way on the
9 subway, as long as the MTA gets more
10 money.

11 All I'm saying is, I'm not
12 saying you have to scrap the plan
13 altogether, but there should at least
14 be discounts for people who live in
15 the zone. And that's what I came to
16 say today.

17 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker is George Ntim,
19 followed by Michael Wilbekin.

20 Our next speaker is Michael
21 Wilbekin, followed by John Rockwell.

22 Our next speaker is John
23 Rockwell, followed by Peter Sugar.

24 Our next speaker is Peter Sugar,
25 followed by Carter Simpson.

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1 Our next speaker is Carter
2 Simpson, followed by Angel Carranza.

3 Our next speaker is Angel
4 Carranza, followed by Michele Matlock.

5 Our next speaker is Michele
6 Matlock, followed by Martin Reinfeld.

7 Our next speaker is Martin
8 Reinfeld, followed by Oren Shulman.

9 Our next speaker is Oren
10 Shulman, followed by Brian Manzino.

11 Our next speaker is Brian
12 Manzino, followed by Alicia Boyd.

13 Our next speaker is Alica Boyd,
14 followed by Linda Cohn.

15 Alicia, you may proceed.

16 ALICIA BOYD: Hi. My name is
17 Alicia Boyd and I have lived in
18 Brooklyn all my life. I live about
19 two miles from the Brooklyn and
20 Manhattan Bridge. I'm an MTA rider, a
21 biker and a driver.

22 Right before COVID-19, a state
23 of emergency was declared on the MTA.
24 Yet, now you want more people to get
25 on to the trains bringing those

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1 numbers back to the pre-COVID levels
2 and yet nothing is actually improved
3 with the MTA.

4 Now, all of a sudden the MTA is
5 going to get a big bag of money to
6 improve the trains, we've been here
7 before. A project is supposed to
8 create money and once the project is
9 finalized, the money disappears or as
10 one person stated already, the MTA
11 will be back for more money.

12 Just wondering, how many of the
13 people I'm seeing on the Zoom actually
14 use the MTA lately? When was the last
15 time you, Richard or Alison or Rick
16 and Lou, tried to get somewhere on the
17 weekends and found a 15 minute ride
18 lasting over an hour.

19 So here's a real life experience
20 I had this weekend when I rode a train
21 and drove a car to Harlem to attend
22 Jazz concerts from Brooklyn. Here's
23 my train experience. Someone jumped
24 the turnstile and two men were smoking
25 on the platform. When driving on to

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1 the Brooklyn Bridge to use the FDR to
2 get into Harlem, there were cars
3 backed up all the way into Brooklyn
4 because the FDR as standing still. As
5 an alternative, we got off the
6 Brooklyn Bridge and went into Downtown
7 Manhattan to avoid the serious delay.

8 Now imagine congestion pricing,
9 where everyone is now going on the FDR
10 and not taking any alternative routes.
11 What you have is congestion driving on
12 the highway along the East River Park,
13 where hundreds of trees have just been
14 torn down.

15 People who own cars do not all
16 of a sudden give up their cars to ride
17 the subways, especially if service is
18 riddled with crime, unlawfulness and
19 delays. They simply would divert
20 their vehicles to avoid tolls, causing
21 congestion on these alternative
22 routes. All the small businesses have
23 already stated that they are going to
24 be passing the tax on to customers,
25 which means the people of New York

1 City will be paying this toll. These
2 billions of dollars will be carried on
3 the backs of the people along with
4 increased congestion in other parts of
5 the city.

6 The next thing you know, MTA
7 will be doing congestion pricing for
8 lower Brooklyn and the Bronx because
9 once they start they will never end.
10 We will have more congestion pricing
11 and before you know it, everywhere we
12 go we will be paying a tax because the
13 MTA has decided that in order for them
14 to be able to manage their budget,
15 they have to continue to sit there and
16 put it on the backs of the People.
17 Thank you very much.

18 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

19 Our next speaker is Linda Cohn,
20 followed by Suzette Francis.

21 Linda, if you unmute you can
22 begin your remarks.

23 LINDA COHN: Am I online?

24 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, you are.

25 Please proceed.

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1 LINDA COHN: Thank you very
2 much.

3 So I come from a slightly
4 different perspective because I have
5 not lived in New York for more than 30
6 years. I grew up here, I lived in
7 Brooklyn for 39 years. After that, I
8 lived in Portland, Oregon for 31 years
9 and in Boise, Idaho for the past two
10 years. I came back this April because
11 of an abusive neighbor in Boise.

12 In both Idaho and Oregon,
13 current eggs prices have recently gone
14 up in price from a \$1.29 a dozen to
15 \$1.39 a dozen. When I landed here in
16 Brooklyn, eggs were \$3.99 a dozen.
17 Something very unholy is going on with
18 the price of eggs and food, in
19 general, in this city, even the rents
20 are higher here and even though the
21 transportation may take longer to get
22 food here than it does to the other
23 places. 287 percent is unholy and I
24 don't know if it's price fixing or
25 what.

1 What does this have to do with
2 congestion pricing? What I want to
3 know is, how can the tolls that you
4 are proposing -- that cause even worse
5 food inflation than we are already
6 having, ultimately leading to food
7 deprivation.

8 And as far as the environmental
9 fig leaf that is being put on top of
10 this excessive tax program, I would
11 like to remind you that Prime Minister
12 Trudeau of Canada, is outlawing the
13 use of 75 percent of fertilizers in
14 his country under the guise of
15 limiting global warming.

16 How is that going to work, you
17 thing, in those environmental justice
18 zones? Is that the direction you want
19 New York City to go in, to use
20 "environmental concerns" to cause food
21 shortages and ultimately starvation?
22 Just say no, no, no to congestion
23 pricing.

24 And PS to Mayer Adams, if you
25 could find price fixing in the egg

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1 industry or some other way to bring
2 the price of eggs down, you would be a
3 hero to me and New Yorkers for
4 generations.

5 That's all I have. Thank you.

6 MR. WOJNAR: Our next speaker is
7 Suzette Francis, followed by Raven
8 McNeil.

9 Suzette, if you'll unmute you
10 can proceed with your remarks.

11 Suzette, if you're speaking, we
12 can't hear you.

13 We'll come back to Suzette.

14 Our next speaker is Raven
15 McNeil, followed by Steve Margosian.

16 Our next speaker, the 225th
17 person to sign up, is Steve Margosian,
18 followed by Anshul Gupta.

19 Our next speaker is Anshul
20 Gupta, followed by Dawn
21 Mastrogiovanni.

22 Please proceed.

23 ANSHUL GUPTA: Good evening.
24 Can you hear me?

25 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

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1 ANSHUL GUPTA: My name Anshul
2 Gupta and I'm a resident of
3 Westchester County. Some of my
4 neighbors have previously spoken in
5 opposition to the proposed congestion
6 pricing. I'm calling in to voice my
7 strong support for this plan.

8 First, instead of opposing the
9 tolling program, I would urge my
10 neighbors in Westchester, Putnam, and
11 Rockland County to fight for cheaper,
12 convenient, faster and more
13 comfortable public transportation
14 options.

15 I can say with experience that
16 reclaiming the commute time to work or
17 relax twice a day goes a long way in
18 improving productivity and quality of
19 life for commuters.

20 Those of us who choose to drive
21 instead of using Metro-North's Rail
22 Road or bus service, may have unique
23 reasons for doing so. So let's
24 examine the impediments to public
25 transportation uses in our communities

1 and try to get MTA to address those,
2 especially with the additional revenue
3 generated by the tolling program.

4 I will also add that we're in
5 the midst of a raging climate crisis
6 largely fueled by continued burning of
7 fossil fuels, such as diesel and
8 gasoline. Hardly a week goes by
9 without the news of a historic flood
10 or historic drought or an
11 unprecedented heat wave striking vast
12 swaths of radio stations. Right here
13 in Westchester, we lost lives to
14 Hurricane Ida last fall.

15 So congestion pricing should not
16 be viewed as a tax or a toll. There
17 is a huge societal cost for driving a
18 private vehicle that the driver have
19 avoided so far. A program like CBD
20 tolling is something that at least
21 partially rights an existing wrong and
22 corrects a situation, where private
23 vehicle drivers have avoided paying
24 the true cost of their choice of where
25 to live and how to commute. And for

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1 those of us who currently feel that
2 they don't have a choice, we should be
3 fighting to get those superior
4 choices, rather than fighting to keep
5 the worst possible choice.

6 Yes, a private automobile is the
7 worst possible way to move around in a
8 city. Therefore, contrary to what has
9 often been incorrectly stated, the
10 proposed toll is not unfair,
11 especially to the elderly who have
12 enjoyed the cost-free and
13 consequence-free use of fossil fuel
14 the most.

15 I'd also like to add that if you
16 have precedence of congestion pricing
17 in major cities like Singapore,
18 London, San Diego, Milan, Stockholm,
19 et cetera, congestion pricing has
20 worked everywhere more or less as
21 expected.

22 So I ask the MTA to go ahead and
23 implement this much-delayed plan as
24 quickly as possible, without
25 unnecessary exemptions and carve-outs.

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1 I would, however, urge the MTA to
2 consider reduced rates
3 for two-wheelers.

4 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
5 your remarks.

6 ANSHUL GUPTA: Thank you.

7 MR. WOJNAR: Our next speaker is
8 Dawn Mastrogiovanni, followed by
9 Kenneth Pace.

10 Our next speaker is Kenneth
11 Pace, followed by Francis Vaughn.

12 The next speaker is Francis
13 Vaughn, followed by Elba Acosta.

14 Our next speaker, the 230th
15 person on our list, is Elba Acosta,
16 followed by Lionel Morales.

17 Our next speaker is Lionel
18 Morales, followed by Sophia Feist.

19 Our next speaker is Sophia
20 Feist, followed by Robinson Quezada.

21 Our next speaker is Robinson
22 Quezada, followed by Gonzalo Blanco.

23 Our next speaker is Gonzalo
24 Blanco, followed by Thomas O'Neil.

25 GONZALO BLANCO: Hi. Can you

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1 guys hear me and see me?

2 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

3 Please proceed.

4 GONZALO BLANCO: I live in
5 Midtown. I've been living in Midtown
6 since I was 7 years-old, been driving
7 since I was eighteen and I just don't
8 understand how I'm going to live in
9 the city, leave to go food shopping or
10 something in the Bronx and then, come
11 back home to drop off my food and I
12 have to pay a toll. That's unjust,
13 that's unfair to a New Yorker, a true
14 New Yorker.

15 I've been living in Hell's
16 Kitchen all of my life pretty much and
17 it's a shame that you guys are trying
18 to implement this into all of us. We
19 all work hard and we do a lot of
20 things, running around, this, that and
21 the third and it's unfair that you
22 guys are trying to put this on us.

23 You guys dropped the ball when
24 the pandemic happened. You guys
25 started letting people take the train

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1 without paying anything. You could of
2 -- no matter how many people were
3 going, you should have still collected
4 that money.

5 You guys need to be audited.
6 The overtime with the MTA, it's always
7 been an issue here and there. You
8 have individuals that are doing a ton
9 of hours that shouldn't even be there.
10 The subway's not safe. People don't
11 want to go on the subway anymore,
12 guys. It's not being protected well.
13 It hasn't been protected well for the
14 last year and a half. The Cross
15 Bronx, the congestion would be crazy.
16 It's already the worst highway in our
17 nation and you're going to implement
18 this. It's just going to make things
19 worse. The kids over there already
20 have asthma, it's the highest asthma
21 in the nation.

22 It's just more -- another thing,
23 Time Square. They lock Times Square
24 down. You can't drive through
25 Broadway all the way downtown. That's

1 congestion right there. You should
2 have just kept that, Bloomberg had
3 that. It's nice and everything but it
4 doesn't work for New York.

5 It's nice for people to walk
6 around but you need to drive through
7 that city. That's why every avenue,
8 every street is for, for you to drive
9 through it and the sidewalk is for you
10 to walk through. People that are
11 getting hit by other cars are usually
12 on their phones talking to their
13 friends crossing the street, not
14 looking and bam, they get hit.

15 So really, really think about
16 this congestion thing because it's
17 really, really, really not worth it.
18 It's not worth it. You're going to
19 lose more people in New York,
20 including myself. Thank you.

21 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

22 Our next speaker, the 235th
23 person to sign up, is Thomas O'Neil,
24 followed by Judith Edwards.

25 Our next speaker is Judith

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1 Edwards, followed by Nabil Khatri.

2 Our next speaker is Nabil
3 Khatri, followed by Alison Glestein.

4 NABIL KHATRI: Hey. Can you
5 guys hear me?

6 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

7 NABIL KHATRI: Good evening.
8 Thank you for everyone staying on this
9 late. I'll keep it brief. My name is
10 Nabil Khatri, born and raised in New
11 York.

12 Today I'm advocating for moving
13 forward with congestion pricing as
14 soon as possible and as swiftly as
15 possible. Congestion pricing is a
16 decade in the making. The legislature
17 passed the law in 2019 and it's
18 already been delayed.

19 I get that people feel that this
20 was rushed, but really it's been a
21 very long time and it's already three
22 years delayed and New York City can't
23 afford to delay this anymore.

24 The environment impact of the
25 status quo is something that's not

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1 talked about much but many of the
2 people that have been testifying
3 today, the traffic violence, noise
4 pollution, air pollution and
5 externalities that drivers have put on
6 the city, is something that they
7 haven't had to worry too much about
8 until now.

9 This congestion tolling goes one
10 step to address that but it doesn't
11 really truly fairly collect the cost
12 that gas vehicles have had on our city
13 but it's still a step in the right
14 direction. I think New York City has
15 to move away from car dependence. The
16 income generated by this program will
17 strengthen public transportation and
18 it will make it more accessible,
19 faster and better for more New
20 Yorkers.

21 I support earlier comments for
22 temporary exemptions for those who are
23 handicap or until MTA can make the
24 transit more accessible. I'd also
25 like to advocate for limited

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1 concession for two-wheel vehicles and
2 electric vehicles, including buses,
3 though I think electric vehicles still
4 contribute to congestion, so they
5 should not get full exemptions.

6 If there need to be cars on the
7 road, it should be those that have
8 minimal environmental impact. Thank
9 you.

10 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

11 Next speaker is Alison Glestein,
12 followed by Jaime Serrano.

13 Our next speaker is Jaime
14 Serrano, followed by Ali Madu.

15 Our next speaker, the 240th
16 person to sign up, is Ali Madu,
17 followed by Mitchell Mindlin.

18 Our next speaker is Mitchell
19 Mindlin, followed by Thomas Healy.

20 Mitchell, if you're on mute, you
21 may proceed.

22 MITCHELL MINDLIN: I was
23 planning to speak on how
24 disproportionately burdensome this
25 plan is on the people that live within

1 the zone. And don't be mistaken, it
2 is.

3 But I listened on Sunday's
4 hearing and heard compelling testimony
5 from people outside the zone that
6 would be overly burdened as well, from
7 the disabled, lower-income workers,
8 from transit deserts, to families
9 getting their kids to school. So I
10 went back and looked more carefully at
11 the Environmental Assessment. What I
12 found was that these issues were
13 either glossed over or ignored
14 entirely.

15 The report is a sham and only
16 agenda-driven. What makes matters
17 worse, most of the data it relies on
18 is from 2012 to 2016.

19 Are you really going to make
20 these decisions based on data
21 collected 6 to 10 years ago and before
22 the pandemic? Clearly the authors
23 don't live in the city the rest of us
24 live in today. There are vacant
25 storefronts throughout the CBD, office

1 occupancy is at record lows, countless
2 businesses cannot get their workers
3 physically back in the office, and not
4 to mention the number of mentally or
5 homeless and skyrocketing crime is
6 surging.

7 Yet, somehow you've reached the
8 conclusion that getting bus speeds
9 from 5 to 6 miles per hour to 7.5, is
10 going to makeup for the increased cost
11 of food, services within the zone and
12 have no effect on getting workers back
13 or businesses to fill those vacancies.
14 This is pure fantasy.

15 The report casually mentions
16 that some businesses may opt to
17 relocate and take their workers with
18 them. Guess what, it's already
19 happening even before the effects of
20 this plan.

21 Better and sustainable mass
22 transit is in all of our interests.
23 And I understand the reluctance to
24 offer exemptions, since the more there
25 are, the higher the cost for the rest.

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1 I heard someone on Sunday who said he
2 represented Transportation
3 Alternatives, declare all he hears is
4 people don't want to pay. That's
5 ironic considering the most vocal
6 supporters, like him, are the ones
7 that would not be paying for it at
8 all. Why not spread the financial
9 pain to all those who use the system?
10 The more contributes, the less bite on
11 any individual.

12 There are other ways to raise
13 these funds. Two alternatives, one
14 would be either a small MTA surcharge
15 to all that live and work here, given
16 an exemption for a poverty limit, or
17 better yet, a value-added tax that
18 would actually be more progressive
19 with higher wage earners and tourists
20 paying a larger share.

21 I heard many of these anti-car
22 advocates yearn for the day when there
23 were no cars. That's nice, but if we
24 move in that direction, what happens
25 to the revenue stream for mass

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1 transit?

2 This plan is shortsighted and
3 not sustainable. The MTA and
4 politicians will right back with their
5 hands out again. Why are we even
6 trying to --

7 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
8 your remarks.

9 MITCHELL MINDLIN: Please think
10 about this and look outside the box
11 that you've been put in.

12 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

13 Our next speaker is Thomas
14 Healy, followed by Isaac Alvarez.

15 Our next speaker is Isaac
16 Alvarez, followed by Joan Martinez.

17 ISAAC ALVAREZ: Hi. Can you
18 hear me?

19 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

20 ISAAC ALVAREZ: Hi. I'm Isaac
21 Alvarez. I grew up on the Upper West
22 Side and now I live in South Jersey.
23 And I go to the Upper West Side every
24 now and then, with my car to see my
25 family because I live in an area

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1 without train service and also you
2 have to pay to park with New Jersey
3 Transit and usually if I was taking
4 the train back home, I'm only going to
5 go for a day, not to stay overnight.

6 Now, this congestion pricing
7 plan, if there is going to be a
8 drastic impact on congestion and
9 carbon emissions, not just in the CBD,
10 but throughout in the whole
11 Metropolitan area then, I'd say okay.
12 I'd say it's worth it. But \$23 is too
13 much. I'd say it shouldn't be more
14 than like \$12 or so and there needs to
15 be credit for people who use the
16 bridges and tunnels.

17 No one should be paying more in
18 one day using any of the toll
19 facilities New York more than \$20, at
20 the very most, \$25 and this is for
21 cars.

22 I agree with what someone said
23 earlier, motorcycles should not be
24 charged congestion pricing. Trucks
25 should be charged more and for at

1 least the beginning, they should offer
2 discounts for electric vehicles and
3 there -- I'm sorry. But there are
4 really has to be a promise that
5 they're going to be serious impacts to
6 our public transportation that's going
7 to happen.

8 The pricing should not be in
9 effect on weekends. The subway is
10 less reliable on weekends, there are
11 general orders that limit the train
12 service. And it needs to be far
13 better coordination among the
14 agencies, New Jersey Transit, Port
15 Authority, MTA, New York Waterway, et
16 cetera, et cetera, so that we have
17 regional connectivity.

18 What we need are orbital transit
19 lines and it -- I feel for people who
20 live in the CBD who -- just because
21 they live there they shouldn't be
22 taxed and I shudder at the thought of
23 the Upper West Side losing parking.

24 Yes, I understand it's important
25 to move away from cars, but that could

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1 also go too far. There shouldn't
2 always be finding ways to take cars
3 off the streets because if they do
4 force people to change their
5 lifestyles.

6 And what I also want to say is
7 that if this has to be in addition to
8 taxing the very wealthy, not a
9 substitute because they are the ones
10 causing the bulk of the problems.
11 They don't pay enough of taxes and
12 they cause most emissions and the
13 working people should not have to pick
14 up the slack.

15 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

16 Our next speaker is Joan
17 Martinez, followed by Peter Nigrini.

18 JOAN MARTINEZ: Good evening --
19 almost good morning.

20 My name is Joan Martinez, can
21 everyone hear me okay?

22 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

23 JOAN MARTINEZ: Great. I'm a
24 life-long New Yorker and a public
25 school teacher, who is opposed to

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1 congestion pricing. I live above 96th
2 Street and have no choice where I am
3 sent to go teach to work in Midtown.
4 I have no choice when I go to visit
5 the doctors, who are in Midtown.

6 I do not own a car because as a
7 middle-class public servant on the
8 Upper West Side, it's impossible.
9 There's nowhere affordable already to
10 park as it is now.

11 I take the train and the bus,
12 but I have not felt safe as a female
13 over 50 doing so and neither do my
14 young students, ages 17 through 21.
15 We have seen a significant drop in
16 attendance across New York City. And
17 many, if not all, of my students have
18 cited the fact that they do not feel
19 safe going to school.

20 I, myself, have started to take
21 yellow cabs due to numerous negative
22 encounters on public transportation on
23 a daily basis. Meanwhile, I need a
24 yellow cab to drag my school supplies
25 to school in Midtown. Mind you, I pay

1 for those school supplies out of my
2 own pocket. It's expensive taking
3 those yellow cabs, but my safety is
4 priceless.

5 I am also outraged that since
6 2009, all taxi trips have included a
7 50-cent surcharge to help the MTA.
8 And 2019, a \$2.50 congestion surcharge
9 was added to all the taxi trips South
10 of 96th Street in Manhattan. Drivers,
11 for-hire vehicles pay \$2.75 per trip.
12 And I see this toll as a waste of
13 money because I have seen no
14 improvement with these surcharges that
15 we've already implemented in safety,
16 in frequency or speed of the MTA
17 service. In fact, I have seen a
18 decline.

19 This congestion surcharge
20 pricing is sham, in my opinion. It
21 has not reduced traffic in Midtown
22 thus far.

23 How much more do we need to do
24 in terms of subsidizing others who do
25 not pay their fair share? I would

1 rather see that transportation deserts
2 like Queens, have more parking for the
3 7, E and F lines to encourage MTA use
4 and thereby reduce car congestion.

5 Finally, I'd rather see a full
6 audit of the MTA, who makes billions
7 of dollars. And lastly, we will no
8 longer be your bailout. Thank you
9 very much.

10 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

11 Our next speaker is Peter
12 Nigrino, followed by Alexandra
13 Volgyesi.

14 The next speaker is Alexandra
15 Volgyesi, followed by Simon Weiser.

16 ALEXANDRA VOLGYESI: Hello.
17 Good evening. I'm speaking as an
18 Upper Manhattan and former New Jersey
19 resident in favor of aggressive
20 congestion pricing, such as through
21 tolling scenarios E and F.

22 I grew up in a New Jersey town
23 15 miles from the city, sandwiched
24 between Route 46 and Route 80, two
25 major highways in New York City.

1 Every single day, from 4:00 p.m. to
2 8:00 p.m., these highways, which cut
3 through our communities, sat clogged
4 with bumper-to-bumper traffic.

5 Trying to get around anywhere in
6 the evening was a nightmare and the
7 evenings that I would take NJ Transit
8 bus, which usually would take 30
9 minutes, would sometimes take two to
10 three hours. The bus was stuck in
11 highway bound -- it was stuck in the
12 traffic in the Lincoln Tunnel helix.
13 Even local roads would become backed
14 up as local cars and buses became
15 stuck in this traffic.

16 In other words, New Jersey or --
17 New York City congestion cripples
18 communities not just in New York but
19 in New Jersey as well, which is why
20 policies like congestion pricing are
21 instrumental.

22 Some have argued that mass
23 transit is not safe. I disagree.
24 Poorly funded, underutilized mass
25 transit, is what is unsafe. There is

1 safety in numbers and as a young
2 woman, I can assure you that I've
3 never felt safer than on a packed
4 subway at 2:00 in the morning.

5 The more people use public
6 transit, the more pedestrian traffic
7 there is and the safer the streets
8 are, which is why increased ridership
9 increases safety and which is why
10 congestion pricing will ultimately
11 make the MTA and our city safer.

12 People concerned about this
13 program have stated that they are
14 concerned about it taking away the
15 right to drive into or through the
16 Central Business District. However,
17 we do not have a right to drive, we
18 have a right to get around, which you
19 cannot do when you live in gridlock.
20 This is why congestion pricing of the
21 most aggressive kind, such as in
22 tolling scenarios E and F, which
23 de-incentivize private car use without
24 burdening taxi drivers or buses is so
25 instrumental.

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1 New York relies on robust and
2 well-funded transit to function. If
3 everyone took it, we'd have a better
4 city. If everyone in New York drove a
5 car, we'd have no city because people
6 couldn't move because of gridlock,
7 which is why the tolling program is so
8 important. So I really hope you move
9 forward with it and again, I'm in
10 favor of scenarios E and F.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

13 Our next speaker is Maria
14 Rodriguez, followed by Mary Pelzer.

15 The next speaker, the 250th
16 person to sign up, is Mary Pelzer,
17 followed by C. Montanez.

18 Our next speaker is C. Montanez,
19 followed by Uppkar Thind.

20 Our next speaker is Uppkar
21 Thind, followed by Michelle Borrelli.

22 Our next speaker is Michelle
23 Borrelli, followed by Sally Foo.

24 Our next speaker is Sally Foo,
25 followed by Richella Williams.

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1 The next speaker, the 255th to
2 sign up, is Richella Williams,
3 followed by Joseph Morales.

4 Richella, you may proceed.

5 RICHELLA WILLIAMS: Hi. Good
6 afternoon, how are you?

7 MR. WOJNAR: We're fine. You
8 may proceed.

9 RICHELLA WILLIAMS: Okay. I'm
10 going to cut straight to the point. I
11 oppose this tax, okay. Transit system
12 appears to be a bully in New York.
13 Whenever they say they want money,
14 they get money for doing nothing.

15 Right now we pay a MTA surcharge
16 on our cell phone bill, on our phone
17 bill, some of our mortgages, when we
18 take the cabs, when we -- any
19 businesses, all workers that they have
20 that come to work in New York, the
21 businesses pay the surcharge to MTA
22 for workers to come to the work.

23 How much money does the MTA need
24 before they get the job done or is
25 this just a hoot to funnel money

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1 through the MTA to put it elsewhere?
2 Because you're not doing anything for
3 the riders on the subway system. Now,
4 you're telling the drivers, the ones
5 that provide most of the revenue to
6 New York, that you need to pay an
7 extra fee to come into New York, okay,
8 into Lower Manhattan. Do you think
9 that you're going to get this money or
10 do you actually think that the drivers
11 are going to say, you know what, to
12 heck with New York. If I need to take
13 a plane or if I need to go to a
14 concert, I'm going to go to
15 Connecticut. I'm going to go to
16 Jersey. I'm not going to give New
17 York any more of my money.

18 How much can you tax us? How
19 much can you charge us for a transit
20 system that does not care about its
21 fellow drivers, pedestrians, the
22 people that ride. And answer a
23 question, when did the streets become
24 a place for pedestrians to walk?
25 Streets are for cars, sidewalks are

1 for pedestrians, okay.

2 I am tired of every time you
3 turn around, you're taking away a
4 street from us, a place for us to
5 park. Beautification, you're taking
6 away side streets and putting pots,
7 flower pots, which, of course, creates
8 congestion because now we're driving
9 around the place to find a place to
10 park.

11 What nonsense is going on in New
12 York? You sit up here -- the MTA, you
13 can't keep a CFO, CEO or president in
14 office for more than two years.
15 They're running for the hills.

16 And let's be honest, you're not
17 going to charge us \$23. You're
18 sitting here and you're going to
19 charge us \$9 and then you're going to
20 make it look like you did us a big
21 favor by charging us \$9.

22 You're using this forum to hear
23 all the ideas we're telling you so you
24 can go back to the table and work it
25 into the plan. I've had enough.

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1 Transit needs to be audited. Those
2 books that Alan Harris have asked
3 y'all four years ago, it needs to be
4 brought out to the table. We need to
5 know where this money is actually
6 going.

7 Have a good night.

8 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

9 Our next speaker is Joseph
10 Morales, followed by Jeffrey
11 Wiesenfeld.

12 JOSEPH MORALES: Hi. Can you
13 hear me?

14 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.
15 Please proceed, we can hear you.

16 JOSEPH MORALES: Good evening,
17 everybody. Thanks for staying up this
18 late. My name is Joseph Morales. I
19 go to Bronx Engineering and Technology
20 Academy as a junior in the Marble Hill
21 area and I also have a blog where I
22 discuss transportation issues in the
23 region.

24 Look, I am not here to say
25 whether or not I support congestion

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1 pricing. I travel into Manhattan's
2 CBD by all modes pretty often and I
3 know there are people in this call who
4 say congestion pricing is what we need
5 to do for the environment, what we
6 need to do to raise revenue for mass
7 transit and I know there's people on
8 this call that say I cannot be double
9 tolled. I have multiple kids, I
10 cannot take mass transit. This is
11 going to be a major expense for me.
12 This is an unfair tax because I cannot
13 drive out of the CBD without paying a
14 toll.

15 And my request is that we -- if
16 you implement congestion pricing, is
17 that you take steps to make sure
18 everybody has a viable alternative to
19 travel into the CBD. This could be
20 done through things such as
21 implementing the Freedom Ticket so
22 that New York City Residents who live
23 near the Metro-North and Long Island
24 Rail Roads can take that into
25 Manhattan and not have to drive. You

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1 could do that through implementing a
2 one-seat ride from Rockland County to
3 New York City. I mean, Rockland, like
4 they are part of the MTA but they
5 barely have fast and reliable services
6 like the rest of the counties in the
7 area.

8 I also would like you guys to
9 consider -- consider making an
10 exemption for vehicles that are
11 associated with businesses in the
12 skilled trades, such as plumbing,
13 carpentry. These businesses are
14 extremely small usually and it would
15 be passed on to their customers if
16 they have to pay congestion pricing
17 fees. Also consider the impact of
18 congestion pricing on the taxi
19 industry. You have admitted in the
20 Environmental Assessment that this
21 will come down to impact low-income
22 drivers who are already cash-strapped,
23 who need to find ways to pay their
24 bills and make a living and this is
25 one of the jobs that they can get.

1 And I also want you guys to
2 consider the tax credit for low-income
3 drivers in the CBD. It's not a big
4 population, but I think they should
5 just be flat out exempted from
6 congestion pricing.

7 The fact that these people who
8 need money for their basic needs have
9 to wait until the end of the year to
10 get it, I'm sorry. That just can't
11 happen in my opinion.

12 Thank you for hearing me out.
13 Those are just things I feel that need
14 to be done if congestion pricing is
15 implemented and thank you for your
16 time tonight.

17 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you. Our
18 next speaker is Jeffrey Wiesenfeld,
19 followed by Fouad Solazzo.

20 Our next speaker is Fouad
21 Solazzo, followed by Steve Tiernan.

22 Our next speaker is Steve
23 Tiernan, followed by Frederick Bondy.

24 Steve, once you unmute yourself
25 you may proceed.

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1 STEVE TIERNAN: Hi. Can you
2 hear me?

3 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

4 STEVE TIERNAN: Great. Hey,
5 listen, I just want to say I really
6 resent the fact you call this Central
7 Manhattan Business District. I live
8 in Peter Cooper Stuyvesant Town and
9 when I look out my window, all I see
10 are apartments, all right.

11 I take all modes of
12 transportation, bike, kick scooter,
13 subway, buses, Ubers -- I take them
14 all. And I live in this neighborhood
15 that you want to tax. I park my car
16 in a garage that costs me \$400 a
17 month. The only reason I use my car,
18 is I work in the nightlife industry
19 and I go home at 4 o'clock in the
20 morning from Brooklyn on the L Train
21 and I don't feel safe. I feel safer
22 driving than I do taking the subway.

23 The MTA has surcharged us to
24 death over the years, all right. If
25 you own a registered vehicle that's

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1 within the area that's provided by the
2 MTA, you're surcharged. Did you know
3 that?

4 The mismanagement of the MTA is
5 the only success the MTA can ever
6 claim. The biggest problem -- and I
7 do feel like a sucker because I go
8 down in the subway and I see people
9 jumping the turnstiles, going through
10 the open gates. When I'm on a SBS
11 bus, I watch people run up and just
12 jump on the bus without paying their
13 fare into the machine.

14 You know, I don't want to be
15 taxed for going to my home. This is
16 where I live and I can't help where I
17 live. I've lived here -- I was born
18 and raised in this community and I
19 just don't feel that this is proper.
20 You know what, to the Gen Z, I know
21 you all don't like to pay for
22 anything, but you know what, this is
23 not the right way to do it. I
24 appreciate your time and thank you for
25 listening to me.

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1 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

2 Our next speaker, the 260th
3 person to sign up, is Frederick Bondy,
4 followed by Daniel Mann.

5 FREDERICK BONDY: Hello.

6 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.
7 Please proceed.

8 FREDERICK BONDY: I'm sorry the
9 lighting isn't better. My name is
10 Frederick Bondy and I live just north
11 of 60th Street on 2nd Avenue by the
12 Queensborough Bridge. I've lived here
13 for 55 years. My wife and I have
14 raised three children here, who I'm
15 proud to say continue to live in
16 Manhattan with their families and
17 contribute to our city.

18 I want to strongly urge you to
19 go ahead with congestion pricing for
20 five main reasons, which I believe
21 will benefit our community and our
22 city. Number one, they are health,
23 safety, noise, climate change and
24 transportation.

25 With regard to health, the main

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1 concern is air pollution emanating
2 from vehicles and this is gas
3 emanation which could affect lungs and
4 cause various types diseases. Some
5 components in gaseous emissions can be
6 carcinogenic, et cetera.

7 Another problem is particulate
8 contamination from automobiles. When
9 we leave our windows open, I can't
10 tell you the amount of dirt and soot
11 that come into the apartment after the
12 windows are left open for a period of
13 several days. Certainly the less
14 traffic we have, the less pollution
15 we're going to have.

16 Safety. With the taxes that
17 will derive from congestion pricing,
18 we'll be able to hire more officers to
19 keep law and order on our
20 transportation facilities. Take for
21 example that poor man who was on the
22 bus and got beaten up and robbed of us
23 money. He was in a wheelchair.

24 Then noise, that noise, the
25 honking, the open radio windows, the

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1 less traffic, the less of this
2 pollution.

3 Lastly, climate change from the
4 carbon emissions and finally
5 transportation. With the money that
6 we will derive, we will be able to
7 improve maintenance of transportation,
8 the extension of transportation to
9 areas not adequately served.

10 I urge you please, as a Native
11 New Yorker for all his life, please go
12 ahead with your plan for congestion
13 pricing. Thank you.

14 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

15 Our next speaker is Daniel Mann,
16 followed by Sam O'Hana.

17 DANIEL MANN: Hi. Can you hear
18 me?

19 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

20 DANIEL MAN: Hi, my name is
21 Daniel Mann. I understand what you
22 are trying to do and I generally
23 support actions that will reduce car
24 traffic. However, I think there are a
25 lot of issues with the plan as

1 described so far that need to be
2 addressed first.

3 Firstly, from my personal
4 attachment to the issues is that my
5 wife works nights and commutes home
6 from Manhattan between the hours of 11
7 p.m. and 2 a.m. five days a week. The
8 city has done nothing to address the
9 increases in crime and violence on the
10 subways and buses. I genuinely feel
11 that to ask my wife to take mass
12 transit during these hours is risking
13 her life and our future together.

14 I drive into Manhattan every
15 single day during these hours to pick
16 her up from work when she finishes her
17 shift. While some have mentioned the
18 dangers of cars being very high
19 compared to the risks of using public
20 transit, that's not really the case at
21 these hours when I'm driving in and
22 the streets are completely empty. I'm
23 usually the only car on the road and
24 there's no congestion to be cleared up
25 at that part of the day.

1 I also want to point out that
2 despite there being a mask mandate in
3 place on the MTA trains, I rarely see
4 more than 50 percent of a train car
5 with masks being worn. And I
6 literally never seen any kind of
7 enforcement whatsoever regarding this
8 policy.

9 It does not feel safe to be on
10 the trains whether it's from violence
11 or risk of being infected from
12 people's germs. At a minimum, if the
13 issue is congestion, then there should
14 be no toll during the overnight. When
15 I make this drive, there is no
16 congestion.

17 I also want to point out that
18 California just recently made it a law
19 that there will be no gasoline powered
20 cars sold after it 2035 and many
21 lawmakers have already set similar
22 goals and roadmaps.

23 Do your studies take into
24 account the impact that will be
25 different in the future when there

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1 aren't gasoline powered cars driving
2 around, as far as the environment is
3 concerned.

4 Next, subway service is
5 currently not able to cope. It will
6 not be able to cope with mass
7 increased ridership. Increased subway
8 frequency at all times of the day need
9 to be in place before even considering
10 such a toll zone.

11 If CBD is put into effect, CBD
12 tolls should be waived on any day when
13 MTA fails to meet some minimum service
14 level both in terms of on-time
15 performance and maximum wait time
16 between trains.

17 Final thoughts real quick, all
18 the proposed rates that I've seen are
19 pretty much absolutely ridiculous.
20 The maximum toll should be less than
21 \$10 during peak times, less than \$2
22 during off peak times. And I don't
23 think there should be any during the
24 overnight. CBD residents should
25 absolutely not be expected to pay

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1 toll, period, full stop. Manhattan
2 residents should either be also exempt
3 or have a significantly reduced rate,
4 NYC residents in general should be
5 offered some sort of credit towards
6 their city taxes. Motorcycles should
7 absolutely be exempt.

8 And that's all I got, thank you.

9 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

10 Our next speaker is Sam O'Hana,
11 followed by Felix Mora Jr.

12 Our next speaker is Felix Mora
13 Jr. followed by Jean Hahn.

14 Felix, you may proceed.

15 FELIX MORA JR.: How are you
16 doing? My name is Felix Mora. I'm a
17 life-long New Yorker presently living
18 in the Upper West Side.

19 I disagree with the Central
20 Business District Tolling Program
21 because it will affect me financially
22 and it will restrict me from freely
23 deciding what I want to do on a daily
24 basis. If this CBD tolling continues,
25 I will no longer have public space

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1 without a fee. The CBD is pricing me
2 out of my own community. But who is
3 really responsible for the congestion?
4 The city, the state, the politicians
5 and the legislature who allowed all
6 the developers to build all these
7 large, unreasonable and tall luxury
8 buildings within the Manhattan Central
9 Business District.

10 Just to name a few, 225 West
11 57th Street, 35 Hudson Yards, 111 West
12 57th Street and the many more large
13 residentials that we see throughout
14 the city, currently under
15 construction. Every new floor that's
16 constructed in the city, affects the
17 ground level. Those buildings with
18 70, 60, 50 floors of building space,
19 all that space in all those floors
20 impact the ground level and that's
21 what's conducting the congestion.
22 Each floor would need delivery
23 services with all the Amazon, Fresh
24 Direct and the UPS trucks all double
25 parked making their deliveries.

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1 Each will have guests and
2 visitors come into the area filling up
3 all the parking lots and congesting
4 all the streets. Let's not forget all
5 those black chauffeured cars that are
6 waiting for their customers outside.

7 This is what's creating
8 congestion, too many people per square
9 mile in the CBD, a calculation that
10 the government has failed to control
11 and now wants its citizens to pay
12 taxes and fees that they failed to
13 collect or negotiate from these
14 developers. Even a jail and and
15 prison system has the reasonable idea
16 that when they have housing
17 restrictions of inmates, each inmate
18 is allowed a certain percentage of a
19 square footage so they avoid conflicts
20 amongst this population and ensure an
21 appropriate level of service provided
22 by the prison.

23 The city must toll the many
24 large and tall construction within the
25 business district. The other culprit

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1 in this congestion is the DOT and it's
2 responsible for failing to control
3 this increased mobility and improve
4 accessibility.

5 Restaurant owners continue to
6 abuse and overextend their public
7 spaces. Pedestrians walk at will
8 along the red and green lights.
9 Bicyclists, electric bikes and other
10 interesting motor bikes, that
11 constantly violate every traffic law,
12 that bike outside the --

13 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
14 your remarks.

15 FELIX MORA JR.: -- and on the
16 sidewalks, street vendors
17 and pedestrian spaces that are filthy
18 and --

19 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
20 your remarks.

21 FELIX MORA JR.: The transit
22 authority also needs to be audited --

23 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

24 Our next speaker is Jean Hahn,
25 followed by Erika Flores.

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1 JEAN HAHN: Hi. Can you hear
2 me?

3 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

4 JEAN HAHN: Hi. My name is Jean
5 Hahn and I'm a resident of Queens.
6 I'm speaking up today to vehemently
7 oppose the congestion pricing plan.

8 While this may resolve
9 congestion for a small area of
10 Manhattan on a short-term basis, it
11 will wreak havoc for outer boroughs,
12 especially in neighboring Queens,
13 Brooklyn and the Bronx. We would
14 suffer the same outcome as the city
15 that our plan is modeled after,
16 London, when they were just bestowed
17 in December 2021 with the honor of
18 being the most congested city in the
19 world, as reported by Bloomberg News.

20 It is outrageous that New York
21 City residents would be taxed to enter
22 a part of the city, which out of the
23 five boroughs actually does not have
24 the poorest air quality. In fact,
25 compared to the other boroughs, the

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1 air quality in the CBD is average,
2 which makes the environmental benefit
3 claim disingenuous. Broken down by
4 borough, it's good for Lower Manhattan
5 but boroughs like the Bronx, which has
6 some of the worst asthma prevalence in
7 the country, would only get worse with
8 diverted congestion. Anyone here
9 claiming that congestion pricing
10 supports Environmental Justice, is a
11 flat-out hypocrite.

12 Also what isn't being
13 considered, are reasons why people are
14 driving. It's easy for the single,
15 young and healthy to forget that many
16 of your fellow New York City residents
17 live and work in transit deserts.
18 Many simply can't get back and forth
19 to work without driving, such as my
20 husband, who doesn't get home from
21 work until midnight.

22 Taking public transportation is
23 just not an option. During any given
24 weekday morning in the CBD, one can
25 plainly see the vast majority of cars

1 have commercial license plates. They
2 are small business owners, delivery
3 drivers, contractors, medical
4 transporters and as we heard earlier,
5 even funeral workers.

6 Those who are anticar are
7 woefully idealistic. How do they
8 expect grocery stores to be stocked or
9 deliveries to be made in the stores
10 they shop in, the restaurant they eat
11 in. Of course, the added cost will be
12 passed along to the working-class.

13 I would also like to point out
14 how asinine it is to expect low income
15 drivers, which include the elderly on
16 fixed incomes, to wait a year in order
17 to receive a credit. That is not
18 equity. This is simply placing
19 additional burdens on the vulnerable.
20 It is also outrageous that our
21 politicians are not demanding
22 accountability from the MTA.

23 Instead of starting with a
24 regressive tax that would impact small
25 businesses, cab drivers, delivery

1 drivers, et cetera, why aren't we
2 calling for a full audit of the MTA,
3 who has the audacity to push with this
4 plan after receiving millions from the
5 government because they can't balance
6 their budget.

7 We should call this plan for
8 what it is. It is a cash grab by the
9 MTA and a cowardly way for politicians
10 who are working at the behest of
11 special interest -- groups to create a
12 regressive tax without calling it a
13 tax. Thank you.

14 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

15 The next speaker is Erika
16 Flores, followed by Bill Bruno.

17 ERIKA FLORES: Hello.

18 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.

19 ERIKA FLORES: Hi. Thank you
20 all for staying on so late and for
21 giving me the opportunity to speak.
22 My name is Erika Flores and I'm a born
23 and raised New Yorker. I grew up in
24 Hell's Kitchen and my family has been
25 in the Chelsea area since 1912.

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1 I'm currently a resident of Penn
2 South, which is a naturally occurring
3 retirement community that is located
4 in what's being called the CBD. I
5 live here not because I'm wealthy, but
6 because it's all I can afford. I was
7 fortunate enough to be granted
8 succession of my apartment which my
9 mother grew up in and my grandmother
10 spent her last days alive.

11 I say all of this for two
12 reasons. The first is to show that
13 not everyone who lives in this
14 proposed CBD are wealthy or have the
15 means to afford this tax and the
16 second is to highlight the concerns I
17 have for my neighbors. Many of my
18 neighbors are immobile, ill and often
19 need access to doctor's appointments
20 by services like Access-A-Ride and
21 private vehicles.

22 I know this not only because of
23 my current living in this community
24 but because I spent much of my
25 childhood escorting my grandmother to

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1 appointments as she battled COPD,
2 breast cancer three times and
3 ultimately when she was diagnosed with
4 dementia.

5 I remember how hard it was to
6 schedule Access-A-Rides for her, so we
7 often had to rely on family and
8 friends with cars or cabs. I see that
9 same thing happening today and it will
10 not only become more difficult under
11 this plan but more costly for many
12 folks who are on fixed incomes as
13 we've heard on this meeting today.

14 My mother was also recently
15 diagnosed with COPD at the start of
16 the pandemic. I would be remiss to
17 say that I am not in favor of reducing
18 pollution because I see her struggle
19 to breathe when just walking a single
20 block to take our aging dog out.
21 However, this would make us getting
22 her the care she needs, which is
23 already extremely costly, even more of
24 a financial burden.

25 In theory public transportation

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1 should be useful, but often there is a
2 walk associated with getting to the
3 train or a bus and less, 25 percent of
4 train stations have functioning or
5 safe elevators.

6 There are many things that I can
7 outline as why I'm against this plan
8 but I'm going to close with a few
9 points.

10 The first is that by far the
11 majority of folks that have shared
12 today that are in favor of this plan,
13 have been male presenting and/or
14 white. As a woman of color, I'm
15 extremely fearful of taking the train.
16 I have severe anxiety and would love
17 the privilege of being a male
18 presented person who doesn't look easy
19 pray.

20 A young woman also just spoke
21 about she has never felt safer than on
22 a packed train. However, I'd be
23 curious if that young woman is talking
24 about a train station in Times Square
25 or one on 168th Street in Washington

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1 Heights, 149th in the Bronx or Zerega
2 or even Euclid in East New York.
3 These are communities of color,
4 populations already excluded from
5 accessible and safe transportation,
6 who have to drive to areas of work.
7 Are we thinking of them? And the same
8 thing goes for when we talk about
9 Environmental Justice. Black and
10 brown people will undoubtedly be
11 further disadvantaged and we --

12 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
13 your remarks.

14 ERIKA FLORES: Thank you so much
15 and I plan on speaking again tomorrow.

16 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

17 We have reached the final two
18 speakers on the list. After they have
19 been called, we will run through the
20 names of all speakers who were
21 previously called but did not speak.

22 As we make our way through the
23 list of speakers for the second time,
24 those present who have not spoken yet,
25 will be given the opportunity to

1 comment. If you missed your name
2 being called, did not sign up to speak
3 but would like to, or have joined the
4 Zoom under a name that is different
5 from the one you used when you signed
6 up, please identify yourself in the
7 Q&A function. You may also request to
8 speak anonymously.

9 The next speaker is Bill Bruno,
10 followed by Recent Retiree.

11 BILL BRUNO: Good evening and
12 thank you for staying up so late.

13 My name is Bill Bruno from
14 Jackson Heights and I want to say that
15 congestion pricing is an overdue and
16 necessary step for an environmental
17 transit improvement, traffic violence
18 standpoint.

19 Any solution of harm caused by
20 greenhouse gas require a reduction of
21 motor vehicle use and the enhancement
22 of mass transit. Electric vehicles
23 will not come online in sufficient
24 quantities to allow net by zero 2050
25 and too many bottlenecks.

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1 All of the proposed congestion
2 pricing programs will reduce traffic
3 by several percentage points and also
4 and help support increasing mass
5 transit capabilities.

6 Congestion pricing is also
7 largely progressive in nature.
8 Residents who commute by car have on
9 average higher income than those who
10 commute by mass transit. The
11 Community Service Society, a local
12 non-profit, concluded that New Yorkers
13 in poverty benefit from transit
14 improvement, will outnumber New
15 Yorkers harmed by congestion pricing
16 by 50 to 1. Indeed the researches in
17 subway travel has been in the
18 working-class areas. Money that goes
19 from car drivers to transit.

20 Now, my preference is for Plan C
21 or G because they limit the effect of
22 the Cross Bronx. The one thing I'd
23 like to call to your attention, I
24 would advocate equal treatment to
25 taxis and FHV's. Although there are

1 far more FHV's, each individual taxi
2 takes up the same congestion, as an
3 individual FHV, they should be treated
4 the same. I would say the three times
5 a day cap. If there are drivers in
6 distress, targeted mitigation measures
7 should be far more efficient than
8 creating an exemption.

9 Also, the regressive part in
10 terms of the delivers and commercial
11 vans, as I understand would be hit
12 with a one time a day cap. Given the
13 volume of deliveries, it's hard to
14 manage the per unit cost spread out on
15 that long volume being that
16 overwhelming.

17 The one I note about C is the
18 crossing credits. Crossing credits
19 should be limited to those necessary
20 to create tolling parity so you don't
21 have toll shopping. Outside that, I
22 would not favor that. For example,
23 but if you want to off set, that would
24 make sense.

25 Outside of that, I'm glad the

1 presentation speaks of mitigation
2 measures, such as prioritizing the
3 Bronx with the introduction of
4 electric buses.

5 That should be the general rule.
6 If there's a potential hardship and I
7 believe there will be some and --
8 mitigation measures is far more
9 effective than creating a broad
10 exemption that could be easily gained.

11 I'm good. Thank you so much.
12 Thanks for staying up so late.

13 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

14 The 269th speaker on the list is
15 Recent Retiree.

16 If you could unmute your phone,
17 you can begin your remarks.

18 Recent Retiree, if you could
19 unmute your phone, you can begin.

20 You may begin.

21 Recent Retiree, we'll come back
22 to you very quickly.

23 That's the end of the first run
24 through the list.

25 MS. FLAX: We will now read

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1 through the list a second time
2 starting with the speakers we believe
3 are present.

4 The next speaker is Suzette
5 Francis.

6 Suzette, you may unmute yourself
7 and begin your remarks.

8 Suzette, you may begin your
9 remarks.

10 Suzette, you are unmuted and you
11 may begin your remarks.

12 SUZETTE FRANCIS: Hello. Can
13 you hear me?

14 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

15 SUZETTE FRANCIS: Thank you.
16 I'll start over.

17 First of all, I'm finding it
18 very difficult to understand this
19 congestion pricing. I am actually
20 speaking to you guys from work. I
21 work at night and I have a son. I
22 don't work at night because I choose
23 to, I work at night because I have to,
24 okay. Because between me and his dad
25 we have to balance out who picks him

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1 up from school and all that.

2 The whole idea when I took a
3 night job is that I cannot take public
4 transportation at night. I've done it
5 before when I had a 3:00 to 11:00
6 shift. When I was supposed to get
7 home at 1:00, I started getting home
8 at 3:00. That's how bad the train
9 was. And to compound that with the
10 fact that now with all the crime
11 that's on the train and all that, it's
12 impossible. I cannot even fathom
13 taking New York City Transit. I hear
14 a lot of people saying, oh, the train
15 is safe and this and that. I'm sure
16 those people work 9:00 to 5:00 and are
17 not standing at the subway in the
18 middle of the night trying to get to
19 work, you know. And my thing is it's
20 unfair because I can't afford it. I
21 can't afford a \$23 daily fee. And
22 it's not fair that you guys come up
23 with these rules and taxes and things
24 not even considering your regular
25 daily, every day man who has to get up

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1 and go to work on a regular basis. We
2 can't afford this.

3 You know, food is up, gas is up
4 everything is up and it's so difficult
5 to survive this city as it is because
6 it's so costly living here. And then
7 you guys just come and want to add on
8 top of it.

9 Every single time MTA cannot
10 afford something, they reach into, you
11 know, the People's pocket and I find
12 that very unfair. And I really think
13 you guys need to reconsider this whole
14 thing because it's just not fair and
15 that's really all I have to say.
16 Thank you.

17 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker is Recent
19 Retiree.

20 You may unmute yourself and
21 begin your remarks.

22 RECENT RETIREE: (Technical
23 difficulties.)

24 MS. FLAX: It's very difficult
25 to hear you. If it's possible for you

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1 to speak closer into the microphone.

2 RECENT RETIREE: (Technical
3 difficulties.)

4 MS. FLAX: We currently can't
5 hear you very well right now.

6 It's very difficult to
7 understand you. If it's possible for
8 you to try a different connection,
9 then we can come back to you but we
10 can't decipher your remarks right now.

11 RECENT RETIREE: (Technical
12 difficulties.)

13 MS. FLAX: We will move to the
14 other speakers on the list and if
15 you're able to join through another
16 connection then, we will give you
17 another opportunity to speak.

18 Donna Westervelt.

19 Kevin Anthony.

20 Harold Awerbuch.

21 Norbert Cyran.

22 Samir Chatterjee.

23 Deirdre Huntley-Smith.

24 Michael Streeter.

25 Mikhail Shchukin.

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1	Margaret Van Cleve.
2	Davindranauth Shiwratan.
3	Birain Parikh.
4	Heather Saslovsky.
5	Michael Sosin.
6	David Ramales.
7	Peter Wong.
8	Gerald Adames.
9	Jason Seo.
10	Stacia Cohen.
11	Esta Fischer.
12	Elise Liebowitz.
13	Susan Mendelsohn.
14	Max Kislevitz.
15	Bohdan Semciw.
16	Jose Moronta.
17	Sheldon Sud.
18	Sylvia Lin.
19	Louis Alifano.
20	Sylvester Otasowie.
21	Bill Bierds.
22	Carlos Cole.
23	Neil Cosgrove.
24	David Draper.
25	Claudia Leyva.

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1 Peter Petino.

2 Jessica Jean-Baptiste.

3 Christopher Trivell.

4 Alex Glatt.

5 Alex, you may unmute yourself
6 and begin your remarks.

7 ALEX GLATT: Now, I was a tax
8 collector for many years for New York
9 State and this is merely another tax,
10 which I don't have a problem with
11 since I'm a New Yorker and I pay
12 taxes. The only problem I have is
13 that this is supposed to be dedicated
14 to a specific thing. And that
15 specific thing, no matter what it is,
16 is always change put into general
17 bucks.

18 The MTA is unfortunately always
19 underfunded. It has not net any
20 schedules -- by repair services I
21 mean. It used to be that if a part
22 was due to be changed at 55,000 miles,
23 it was changed. Instead of just
24 having an additional tax, why don't
25 you just put the onerous tax, sales

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1 tax, and boost it up to 20 percent so
2 all of the rich people will have to
3 pay the 20 percent and the only people
4 that will make money on it, will be
5 the people who either work at the
6 docks and steal what they can, or the
7 truckers, who can steal what they can.

8 If you have one dedicated tax
9 instead of the low complicity of tax
10 from Articles 1 to Articles 8 of New
11 York State Tax, and just have this one
12 onerous tax, that's the income taxes,
13 it would be much simpler to collect.

14 I'm not including things like
15 the buildings that are -- or deadbeat
16 husbands or deadbeat wives that don't
17 pay their alimony or child support.
18 I'm merely talking about instead of
19 naming a new tax, just increasing one
20 tax that you can collect, which are
21 sales taxes, everybody pays them. Oil
22 companies pay them when they deliver
23 big trucks of gas. People pay them
24 when they buy good.

25 I see my time is almost up. I

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1 said what I had to say. This tax is
2 an additional tax is just an
3 additional burden that individual
4 people and individual paperwork are
5 going to go into general funds, just
6 as a lot of things did. This is
7 supposed to be for education.

8 I appreciate your time. Thank
9 you for listening and you guys have a
10 real tough deal listening to these
11 complaints because that just tells you
12 the easy way out and nobody will take
13 it because it's too simple.

14 Police don't enforce uninsured
15 vehicles, motorized vehicles as
16 another person said are on the streets
17 and they are not supposed to be.
18 Scooters -- I can't see a scooter.

19 Bye. Have a nice day.

20 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

21 Our next speaker is Joshua
22 Steinberg.

23 Elaine O'Sullivan.

24 Jacqueline Hayes.

25 Jane Reiff.

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1	Mercedes Castrelo-Huntley.
2	Barbara Kasavana.
3	Renee Lau.
4	Victoria Andino.
5	Ruth Klein.
6	Luc Athayde-Rizzaro.
7	Michael Benson.
8	Thomas Lamadrid.
9	Micahel Golz.
10	David Zelman.
11	Gary Roth.
12	John Doe.
13	Richard Sonenberg.
14	Scott Goldberg.
15	Ezekiel Zimmerman.
16	Constance Stellas.
17	Arthur Miller.
18	Adam Liggio.
19	Craig Sands
20	Denise Ruggiero.
21	John Seaborne.
22	Carol Parker.
23	Branch Worsham.
24	Lorraine Cupelli.
25	Sam Hecker.

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1	Paul Fridman
2	Richard Weiss.
3	Paul D'Antonio.
4	Arya Sajedi.
5	Clarence Tennell.
6	B. Kumar.
7	Walt Iwachiw.
8	Ken Wiederhorn.
9	Henri Falconii.
10	Bob Carbo.
11	Ron Simoncini.
12	Richard Sandano.
13	Maria Gonzalez.
14	Rena Zager.
15	Matthew Sullivan.
16	Jorge Urana.
17	Patrick Johnson.
18	Maria Danzilo.
19	Bruno Bianchi.
20	Michael O'Brien.
21	Alan Fernandez.
22	Philip Kinscherf.
23	Joan Goldberg.
24	Frances O'Hanlon.
25	Prasad Chalasani.

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1	Warren Green.
2	Otto Angulo.
3	Adam Cohen.
4	Kim Lawyer.
5	Cristina Ponsell.
6	Gordon Lee.
7	Nicholas Berkowitz.
8	Mathew Quezada.
9	Gina Wright.
10	Bee Dorsey.
11	Lucy Garnett.
12	Laura Hogan.
13	Stacey Shub.
14	Alexander Samaha.
15	Manirul Islam.
16	Regina Cornwell.
17	A. Medina.
18	Amanda Levine.
19	Kathryn Manfredonia.
20	Derek Smith.
21	Elizabeth Caputo.
22	Gary Niel.
23	Shannon Phipps.
24	Brian Tomlinson.
25	Brian Hess.

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1	John Trantos.
2	Arlene Rubenstein.
3	George Ntim.
4	Michael Wilbekin.
5	John Rockwell.
6	Peter Sugar.
7	Carter Simpson.
8	Angel Carranza.
9	Michele Matlock.
10	Martin Reinfeld.
11	Oren Shulman.
12	Brian Manzino.
13	Raven McNeil.
14	Steve Margosian.
15	Dawn Mastrogiovanni.
16	Kenneth Pace.
17	Francis Vaughn.
18	Elba Acosta.
19	Lionel Morales.
20	Sophia Feist.
21	Robinson Quezada.
22	Thomas O'Neil.
23	Judith Edwards.
24	Alison Glestein.
25	Jaime Serrano.

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1 Ali Madu.

2 Thomas Healy.

3 Peter Nigrini.

4 Simon Weiser.

5 We'll try again, Recent Retiree,
6 to see if your connection is better.

7 Recent Retiree.

8 Recent Retiree, please unmute
9 and begin your remarks.

10 Recent Retiree, if you're able
11 to unmute yourself, you may try giving
12 remarks again.

13 You're currently -- you're
14 unmuted. Please try beginning your
15 remarks.

16 We can't hear you if you're
17 speaking. You are unmuted, but we
18 cannot hear you.

19 Unfortunately, we're not able to
20 hear your remarks. We will provide
21 you with information in the chat about
22 how to submit comments to us through
23 other methods, and we thank you for
24 joining.

25 We'll now continue our reading

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1 of the list for a second time. If you
2 hear your name called, please let us
3 know in the Q&A chat.

4 Simon Weiser.

5 Maria Rodriguez.

6 Mary Pelzer.

7 C. Montanez.

8 Uppkar Thind.

9 Michelle Borrelli.

10 Sally Foo.

11 Jeffrey Wiesenfeld.

12 Fouad Solazzo.

13 Sam O'Hana.

14 Ella Pultinas.

15 Anonymous Speaker 1.

16 That concludes the second read
17 through of our list of speakers.

18 MR. OLIVA: Thank you for
19 joining us this evening. For those
20 who did not do so already, we
21 encourage you to take our short survey
22 via the QR code or link currently
23 being displayed. The link can also be
24 found in the Q&A section of the Zoom.

25 For details about our sixth and

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1 final hearing later this morning at 10
2 a.m., please visit the project website
3 at mta.info/CBDTP or call the Public
4 Meeting Hotline at (646) 252-6777.

5 As a reminder, if you would like
6 to join tomorrow's hearing --
7 actually, later this morning's hearing
8 by phone, you can visit the project
9 website at mta.info/CBDTP or call the
10 Public Meeting Hotline at (646)
11 252-6777 to obtain the call-in
12 information.

13 As a final reminder, in addition
14 to the virtual public hearings, there
15 are several other ways you can provide
16 comments on the Environmental
17 Assessment through September 9, 2022.
18 We encourage the public to comment via
19 the CBDTP website, where you can also
20 find the latest project information
21 and sign up to stay informed via
22 e-mail.

23 You may also e-mail comments to
24 CBDTP@mtabt.org, send them via mail to
25 CBD Tolling Program, 2 Broadway, 23rd

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1 Floor, New York, New York 10004, or
2 call (646) 252-7440.

3 Comments may also be provided
4 directly to the Federal Highway
5 Administration via e-mail to
6 CBDTP@dot.gov, or via mail to FHWA -
7 New York Division, RE: CBDTP, Leo W.
8 O'Brien Federal Building, 11A Clinton
9 Avenue, Suite 719, Albany, New York
10 12207.

11 The time is currently 12:34 a.m.
12 on Wednesday, August 31st. this
13 concludes our hearing. Thank you
14 again for your participation.

15 (TIME NOTED: 12:34 a.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 30th day of August, 2022.

Makeda Edwards

MAKEDA EDWARDS