

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 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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7 Date: August 25, 2022

8 Time: 5:03 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 Catherine Leslie, Director of Special Projects
7 Bureau, NYSDOT

8 Rick Marquis, New York Division Administrator for
9 the Federal Highway Administration

10 Monica Pavlik, Project Manager, FHWA

11 Anna Price, Director for Office of Programs, FHWA

12 Leah Flax, Moderator

13 Michael Wojnar, Moderator

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In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 MR. OLIVA: Good evening. We
2 will now begin the hearing. Today is
3 Thursday, August 25, 2022. And the
4 time is 5:03 p.m. My name is Lou
5 Oliva, and I will be tonight's hearing
6 officer.

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

13 Stenographers are also present and
14 will be creating a written record of
15 today's hearing. By attending this
16 virtual hearing, you are consenting to
17 be recorded.

18 Today's hearing will begin with
19 opening remarks, followed by a
20 presentation on the Central Business
21 District Tolling Program Environmental
22 Assessment, and then public comments.
23 There are 391 speakers signed up.
24 Speakers will be called in the order
25 they signed up. Due to the

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 overwhelming interest in this hearing,
2 there is a possibility we will go well
3 past midnight.

4 After we get underway, through
5 the Q&A function, we will send each
6 speaker present this evening your
7 place in the speaker list. Please
8 give us a little time as it will take
9 some time to get this message to each
10 speaker in attendance.

11 Throughout the evening, we will
12 regularly let everyone know where we
13 are in the list so you can gauge how
14 much longer you may need to wait to
15 speak.

16 During the past few days, we've
17 contacted all those who signed up
18 after the 100th person to let them
19 know about the options to transfer
20 their sign up to another hearing.
21 This is still an option.

22 If at any point in this hearing
23 you decide you would like to speak at
24 a different hearing, please let us
25 know in the Q&A function and we'll

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 move your date.

2 If you've joined the Zoom under
3 a name that is different from the one
4 you used when you signed up to speak
5 or if you did not sign up to speak or
6 would like to speak, please identify
7 yourself in the Q&A function.

8 You may also request to speak
9 anonymously. If this is your
10 preference, please indicate this in
11 the Q&A function and we will give you
12 further instructions.

13 Please do not use the Q&A
14 function for comments you would like
15 to submit on Central Business District
16 Tolling Program. Comments can be
17 submitted by visiting mta.info/CBDTP,
18 calling (646)252-7440, send mail to
19 CBD Tolling Program, 2 Broadway, 23rd
20 Floor, New York, New York 10004, or
21 via email at CBDTP@mtabt.org.

22 You may also submit comments
23 directly to the Federal Highway
24 Administration via email at
25 CBDTP@dot.gov or by mail at FHWA-New

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

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1 York Division, Re: CBDTP, Leo W.
2 O'Brien Federal Building, 11A, Clinton
3 Avenue, Suite 719, Albany, New York
4 12207. Comments submitted by mail,
5 phone, e-mail, online forum or
6 verbally at a hearing will be
7 considered equally and carry the same
8 weight.

9 In addition, and again in
10 recognition of the overwhelming
11 interest, we have added the ability to
12 submit personally-recorded video
13 comments. As with oral comments at
14 the hearing, video comments should be
15 limited to three minutes. Recorded
16 video comments may be submitted via
17 e-mail to CBDTP@mtabt.org. Such
18 comments shall be considered equally
19 and carry the same weight as all other
20 methods for submitting comments.

21 CART Captioning and American
22 Sign Language interpreters are
23 available at today's hearing. To turn
24 on CART Captioning use the CC button
25 on the bottom of the screen. Sign

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

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1 Language interpreters will appear on
2 screen for all attendees. To hear the
3 translated audio, use the
4 interpretation button on the bottom of
5 the screen.

6 We will now start with opening
7 remarks from Dr. Allison C. de
8 Cerreño, MTA's Deputy Chief Operating
9 Officer.

10 DR. C. DE CERRENO: Thank you.

11 And thank you all for joining us
12 today. We are excited to be here as
13 we continue our public outreach on
14 this historic project. I'd like to
15 thank you for taking the time to learn
16 more and share with us your thoughts
17 and comments.

18 This evening, I am representing
19 the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel
20 Authority and MTA more broadly, and am
21 joined by Nichola Angel, Vice
22 President of Triborough Bridge and
23 Tunnel Authority and other members of
24 the agency, as well as other
25 colleagues from the other project

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 sponsors for this effort. Catherine
2 Leslie, Director of Special Projects
3 for New York State Department of
4 Transportation, and William Carry,
5 Assistant Commissioner for Policy for
6 the New York City Department of
7 Transportation.

8 We also have with us this
9 evening, Rick Marquis, New York
10 Division Administrator for the Federal
11 Highway Administration, the lead
12 Federal agency for the project. He
13 will be joined by Monica Pavlik,
14 Project Manager, and Anna Price,
15 Director for Office of Programs.

16 Key personnel from all four of
17 our agencies are also in attendance
18 today, listening to what you have to
19 say; your comments will be recorded
20 indexed and responded to as part of
21 the Environmental Assessment process.

22 Last year, we held ten
23 webinar-style public sessions, nine
24 similar sessions focused on
25 environmental justice communities, and

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 several meetings each of the
2 Environmental Justice Technical
3 Advisory Group and Environmental
4 Justice Stakeholder Working Group.

5 Since then, we have incorporated
6 comments heard during these sessions
7 into the technical analyses for the
8 Environmental Assessment, or EA.

9 I want to thank you all for your
10 earlier input; I believe you will see
11 firsthand how your comments affected
12 what we explored and how we addressed
13 concerns.

14 On August 10, 2022, we released
15 the Environment Assessment for public
16 review. If you have not yet had an
17 opportunity to read the entire
18 Environmental Assessment, the
19 Executive Summary, which has been
20 translated into multiple languages, is
21 available on our website.

22 The rest of the document is also
23 on the website, and you can find a
24 hard copy of the entire Environmental
25 Assessment at numerous locations

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 throughout 28 counties in New York,
2 New Jersey, and Connecticut. A
3 complete list of locations is also
4 available on the Project website.

5 In a few moments, we will begin
6 with a presentation that provides a
7 summary review of the EA findings. It
8 is a bit longer than one might expect,
9 but there is a lot of important
10 information here and we want to ensure
11 that everyone has an opportunity to
12 hear about the areas in which they may
13 be interested.

14 After the presentation, we will
15 listen to those of you who would like
16 to provide oral public comments. The
17 formal comment period on the EA
18 continues through September 9th. For
19 those who prefer not to speak but
20 still want to submit comments, we will
21 provide information on other ways to
22 do that again, later in the session.

23 Now, let's begin our
24 presentation.

25 [Taped presentation begins -

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 Narrated by Dr. C. De Cerreño.]

2 So what is the Central Business
3 District Tolling Program? In 2019,
4 New York State enacted the MTA Reform
5 and Traffic Mobility Act, which
6 authorized the Triborough Bridge and
7 Tunnel Authority or TBTA to design,
8 develop and implement a vehicular
9 tolling program to reduce traffic
10 congestion in the Manhattan Central
11 Business District.

12 As defined by the act, vehicles
13 entering or remaining in the Manhattan
14 Central Business District on or below
15 60th Street, which is shown in the map
16 in orange, would be tolled. The FDR
17 Drive, West Side Highway, Battery Park
18 Underpass and any surface roadway
19 portion of the Hugh L. Carey Tunnel
20 connecting to West Street. In
21 essence, the dark red line along the
22 edges of the orange area on the map to
23 the right, would be excluded from the
24 toll.

25 After covering the

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 project-related capital and operating
2 expenses, revenue collected would fund
3 MTA's 2020 to 2024 capital program and
4 successor capital programs.

5 By law, 80 percent of the net
6 revenues would be used for New York
7 City transit capital improvements, ten
8 percent would be used for Long Island
9 Rail Road and ten percent for
10 improvements for Metro-North Railroad.

11 With respect to how the
12 Manhattan CBD Tolling Program would
13 work, locations for infrastructure
14 would include detection points placed
15 at entrances and exits to the
16 Manhattan CBD. On the avenues, these
17 detection points would generally be
18 between 60th and 61st Streets and an
19 algorithm would be used so those who
20 stay on excluded roadways are not
21 tolled.

22 In essence, as someone is coming
23 down the roadway, the detection points
24 would detect their vehicle and
25 determine how long it should be before

1 they are seen at the next location.
2 Assuming they continue to be seen at
3 each location within the allotted
4 time, no toll would be charged.

5 If, however, the vehicle is not
6 seen and then not seen again, at some
7 point the system will determine that
8 they must have entered the Central
9 Business District and a toll would be
10 charged.

11 On the right, you can see an
12 example of what the infrastructure and
13 the tolling system equipment would
14 look like. It's predominantly poles,
15 as you see on the right, and mast
16 arms, as you see on the left.
17 Importantly, the tolling system
18 equipment will be clustered and housed
19 in a single-unit enclosure as shown on
20 the bottom.

21 The enclosures are purposely
22 designed to minimize the amount of
23 equipment on the poles and to reflect
24 light in a way that makes them less
25 visible to someone walking or driving.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

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

14 The benefits of the program
15 would include reduced vehicular
16 traffic in and near the Manhattan
17 Central Business District, improved
18 travel times within the Manhattan
19 Central Business District, including
20 for buses and deliveries, and a new
21 source of local recurring capital
22 funding for subways, trains and buses
23 as well as improved regional air
24 quality.

25 So why is an Environmental

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 Assessment or EA needed for this
2 project? Well, some roadways in the
3 Manhattan Central Business District
4 have received federal funds, so
5 approval for tolling is needed from
6 the Federal Highway Administration.

7 Before a federal agency makes a
8 decision, the National Environmental
9 Policy Act, or NEPA, requires the
10 federal agency to understand and
11 disclose the environmental effects of
12 the action. In this case, the
13 tolling. An EA is performed to ensure
14 federal agencies consider the
15 environmental impacts of their actions
16 in the decision-making process.

17 For a proposed action that is
18 not likely to have significant effects
19 or when the significance of the effect
20 is unknown, the EA aids in determining
21 the significance of the adverse
22 effects. Since the project could have
23 effects on environment justice
24 populations, Federal Highway
25 Administration and the project

1 sponsors incorporate an enhanced
2 public outreach and coordination with
3 federal and state resource agencies.

4 The project's purpose is to
5 reduce traffic congestion in the
6 Manhattan Central Business District in
7 a manner that would generate revenue
8 for future transportation improvements
9 pursuant to acceptance into Federal
10 Highway Administration's Value Pricing
11 Pilot Program, or VPPP.

12 The need is to reduce vehicle
13 congestion in the Manhattan Central
14 Business District and create a new
15 local recurring funding source for
16 MTA's capital projects. The purpose
17 and need are refined through four
18 objectives; to reduce daily vehicle
19 miles traveled, or VMT, within the
20 Manhattan Central Business District by
21 at least five percent, to reduce the
22 number of vehicles entering the
23 Manhattan Central Business District
24 daily by at least ten percent, to
25 create a funding source for capital

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 improvements and generate sufficient
2 annual net revenue to fund \$15 billion
3 for capital projects for the MTA
4 capital program, and to establish a
5 tolling program consistent with the
6 purposes underlying the New York State
7 legislation entitled the MTA Reform
8 and Traffic Mobility Act.

9 You may be asking why do we need
10 to toll the Manhattan Central Business
11 District. Well, traffic congestion
12 has been a problem in the Manhattan
13 Central Business District for many
14 years and one of the most challenging
15 policy problems for generations.

16 Many efforts have been made and
17 yet, congestion in New York City
18 consistently ranks among the worst in
19 the United States. Indeed, congestion
20 costs 102 hours of lost time, equating
21 to almost \$1,600 per year per driver
22 in delay.

23 Between 2010 and 2019, travel
24 speeds fell 22 percent in Manhattan
25 Central Business District and local

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 bus speeds have declined 28 percent
2 since 2010. The average speed of
3 Select Bus Service, New York City's
4 bus rapid transit service routes in
5 the Manhattan CBD is 19 percent slower
6 than in the outer boroughs.

7 With respect to MTA's subway,
8 rail and bus systems, they need to be
9 repaired and modernized. Funding from
10 the project would support the 2020 to
11 2024 capital program and the successor
12 programs that prioritize investing to
13 improve reliability, committing to
14 environmental sustainability, building
15 an accessible transit system for all
16 New Yorkers easing congestion and
17 creating growth, and improving safety
18 and customer service through
19 technology.

20 I'll now walk you through the
21 findings of the Environment
22 Assessment. There were two project
23 alternatives that are evaluated in the
24 Environmental Assessment. The
25 no-action alternative in which there

1 is no program to toll vehicles in the
2 Manhattan Central Business District,
3 no comprehensive plan to reduce
4 congestion, and no new annual
5 recurring funding for MTA capital
6 programs.

7 And there is the central
8 business tolling or action alternative
9 where we implement a tolling program
10 consistent with the Mobility Act to
11 toll the vehicles entering or
12 remaining in the Manhattan Central
13 Business District. We install tolling
14 infrastructure and tolling system
15 equipment and signage within and near
16 the Manhattan Central Business
17 District, and generate funds for MTA's
18 capital investments to subways, buses
19 and commuter railroads.

20 The Environmental Assessment
21 explores each of the topics in this
22 chart. The specific chapters that
23 address the analysis for each area are
24 identified here. As you can see, the
25 analysis shows that most of the areas

1 have beneficial effects or no adverse
2 effects, but there are few areas with
3 potential adverse effects. The slides
4 a bit later in the presentation will
5 address each of the areas and identify
6 any mitigation that is needed.

7 This slide has a lot of
8 information and it is in the executive
9 summary and in chapter two of the
10 Environmental Assessment for further
11 review. I am going to spend a few
12 moments reviewing and explaining it
13 here so everyone can understand its
14 importance.

15 As I said a moment ago, there
16 are two alternatives for this
17 Environment Assessment, the no-action
18 and the Central Business District
19 Tolling Alternative.

20 Within the Central Business
21 District Tolling Alternative, there
22 are a number of tolling scenarios that
23 vary in several ways. Modeling these
24 different scenarios helped us to
25 understand the full range of effects

1 of the Central Business District
2 Tolling Alternative since the decision
3 on the actual tolling scenario has not
4 yet been made.

5 For those of you who
6 participated in the early outreach,
7 you may notice that we now have seven
8 tolling scenarios when we originally
9 discussed six. That is because we
10 added a tolling scenario, which I will
11 get to shortly, as a result of
12 concerns raised during the early
13 public outreach.

14 So let me walk you through.

15 Along the top, are the tolling
16 scenarios. Tolling Scenario A we
17 referred to as the base plan. This is
18 the plan that is characterized in the
19 legislation. Tolling Scenario B has
20 that same base plan but starts to add
21 caps in the form of how many times a
22 vehicle can be tolled and certain
23 exemptions.

24 Tolling Scenario C adds what we
25 call low-crossing credits for vehicles

1 using tunnels to access the Central
2 Business District with some caps and
3 exemptions. Those crossing credits,
4 when they are low are roughly \$6.50.
5 When they are high, as you see in
6 tolling scenarios D, E and F, the
7 credits are roughly \$13. And this was
8 used for modeling purposes.

9 In D, E and F, you see those
10 high-crossing credits. In D and E,
11 they are applied to the tunnels that
12 enter into the Central Business
13 District. And in F, vehicles using
14 all of the toll facilities that enter
15 Manhattan would be eligible for
16 crossing credits.

17 Moving down the left side, you
18 see the distinction on the items that
19 are varying. First, the potential
20 crossing credits. Again, these are
21 credits that would be applied toward
22 the Central Business District toll,
23 for tolls paid at facilities prior to
24 entering the Central Business
25 District.

1 As you move to the right, you
2 can see the nos and yeses which
3 determine whether or not that
4 potential crossing credit applies to
5 the facilities that are identified.

6 Moving to the next group, are
7 potential exemptions and discounts in
8 the form of caps on the number of
9 tolls per day. Importantly, by
10 legislation and in the modeling, and
11 in the program, passenger vehicles
12 would be charged only once per day.
13 But other vehicles could be charged
14 more than that.

15 And as you read across to the
16 right, you will see under each of the
17 different tolling scenarios how these
18 different types of vehicles were
19 treated with respect to caps or
20 exemptions.

21 Finally, as you move to the
22 bottom, we have the approximate toll
23 rate for autos, small trucks and large
24 trucks that resulted from the
25 modeling.

1 The one tolling scenario I'd
2 like to mention is tolling scenario G,
3 all the way to the right. This
4 tolling scenario has a base plan with
5 the same tolls for all vehicle
6 classes. We'll talk about that a
7 little bit later in the presentation.
8 But importantly, as you see on the
9 bottom, the toll rate is set the same
10 for every type of vehicle.

11 So that was a lot of
12 information. And so, I'd like to
13 leave you with some key takeaways.

14 First and foremost, tolling the
15 Manhattan Central Business District in
16 all scenarios, reduce traffic entering
17 the Manhattan Central Business
18 District and results in a net benefit
19 in congestion reduction for the
20 region.

21 Discounts, crossing credits and
22 exemptions result in the need for
23 higher toll rates. Higher toll rates
24 lead to a greater degree of traffic
25 reduction in the Manhattan Central

1 Business District, but also lead to
2 increased traffic diversions,
3 including increases along the Cross
4 Bronx Expressway and the Staten Island
5 Expressway.

6 Crossing credits lead to more
7 parity in the total cost among
8 different routes that are taken by
9 vehicles entering the Manhattan
10 Central Business District, but those
11 same crossing credits change the
12 balance of effects on traffic.

13 It results in less effect
14 reducing traffic from Queens and much
15 less effect reducing traffic from New
16 Jersey. They result in greater
17 effects reducing traffic from north of
18 60th Street in Brooklyn and they
19 result in more traffic at the
20 Queens-Midtown tunnel, the Hugh L.
21 Carey Tunnel and the Long Island
22 Expressway.

23 Before we move on, I thought it
24 was helpful to give at least a sense
25 of where are the commuters actually

1 coming from into the Manhattan Central
2 Business District.

3 On the left, you can see the
4 28-county region. Again, this is all
5 in the Environmental Assessment for
6 further review. The colors on the map
7 denote the proportion of total
8 commuters to the Manhattan Central
9 Business District from each county in
10 the 28-county region.

11 The map also shows how many
12 commute by transit, car or some other
13 transportation mode to reach the
14 Manhattan Central Business District.
15 Not surprisingly, counties that are
16 further away tend to have fewer
17 commuters to the Manhattan Central
18 Business District.

19 For example, of all the
20 commuters to the Manhattan Central
21 Business District, fewer than one
22 percent come from counties like New
23 Haven and Dutchess. About one to three
24 percent come from counties like
25 Rockland, Morris and Richmond. And

1 roughly four to five percent come from
2 Bergen, Hudson and Westchester
3 counties.

4 Closer in, about six to ten
5 percent come from Nassau County and
6 the Bronx. While the remainder of the
7 New York City boroughs contribute 11
8 to 22 percent of the commuters to the
9 Manhattan Central Business District.

10 On the right in the figure, you
11 can see that of all the people
12 commuting to work in the Manhattan
13 Central Business District, the vast
14 majority, 85 percent, commute by
15 transit. Of the 11 percent who
16 commute by car, approximately eight
17 percent of them are from counties in
18 New York, roughly three percent in New
19 Jersey and less than one percent from
20 Connecticut.

21 Now we'll go through the effects
22 of each of the topic areas. On the
23 top right of each slide, you'll see
24 that we've identified whether effects
25 are beneficial, not adverse or

1 adverse. In this case, this is the
2 regional effects of transportation.
3 Broadly speaking, all tolling
4 scenarios reduce the number of vehicle
5 entries into the Manhattan Central
6 Business District and reduce vehicle
7 miles traveled in the Manhattan
8 Central Business District.

9 The table on the bottom left
10 provides the degree to which the
11 traffic is reduced. In this case,
12 there is a reduction of vehicles
13 entering the Manhattan CBD of nearly
14 20 percent to roughly 15 percent,
15 depending upon which tolling scenario
16 one is looking at.

17 On the right-hand side, you see
18 the increase or decrease in daily
19 vehicle miles traveled for each of the
20 areas throughout the 28 counties. And
21 as you can see, broadly speaking,
22 regionally again, there's largely a
23 benefit.

24 In the Manhattan Central
25 Business District, VMT decreases

1 anywhere from a little over nine
2 percent to about seven percent.
3 Throughout New York City, the
4 reduction is roughly 1.5 percent to
5 about 0.7 percent and so on down the
6 group.

7 With respect to highways, we
8 have beneficial effects and we do have
9 some adverse effects in a few
10 locations where mitigation will be
11 required. Some locations experience a
12 decrease in congestion, which is a
13 beneficial effect. There were three
14 highway segments, though, that would
15 experience adverse effects in the form
16 of increased delays at certain times.

17 As you can see here, it's the
18 Westbound Long Island Expressway near
19 the Queens-Midtown tunnel in the
20 mid-day, approaches to the Westbound
21 George Washington Bridge on I-95 also
22 in the mid-day, and in the evening,
23 the Southbound and Northbound FDR
24 Drive between East 10th Street and
25 Brooklyn Bridge.

1 For mitigation, the project
2 sponsors implement a monitoring plan
3 prior to the project beginning that
4 identifies thresholds for adverse
5 effects. If the thresholds are
6 reached, as a result of the project,
7 the project sponsors will institute
8 Transportation Demand Management
9 measures such as ramp metering,
10 motorist information or signage, at
11 identified highway locations with
12 adverse effects.

13 In addition,
14 post-implementation, the project
15 sponsors will monitor effects. And if
16 needed, Triborough Bridge and Tunnel
17 Authority, TBTA, will modify the toll
18 rates, crossing credits, exemptions
19 and/or discounts to reduce those
20 adverse effects.

21 Note the call-out in the upper
22 right and recall what I mentioned
23 regarding tolling Scenario G earlier.
24 During our early outreach in
25 conversations with environmental

1 justice communities we shared
2 information regarding changes in
3 traffic patterns. Here on the left,
4 you can see one of the maps that was
5 used for analysis related to traffic
6 and air quality effects. These are
7 areas with environmental justice
8 communities. Under this tolling
9 scenario, some of these communities
10 would experience reduced vehicle miles
11 traveled. Others would see some
12 increases as traffic diverts to avoid
13 the toll. As noted earlier, as the
14 toll goes up, these diversions
15 increase.

16 Participants raised concerns
17 about the increased traffic along the
18 Cross Bronx Expressway and asked what
19 that meant in terms of truck traffic,
20 as trucks are associated with
21 particulate matter and associated
22 health effects. The team reviewed the
23 initial six scenarios at a specific
24 location, Macombs Road and found the
25 daily increases in truck traffic in

1 the table to the right. During the
2 same outreach period, the trucking
3 associations also raised their
4 concerns that people can move to
5 transit to avoid the toll. But trucks
6 cannot do this.

7 Further, the tolled bridges
8 roadways and tunnels typically charge
9 higher tolls for trucks given the wear
10 and tear on the roadway. The purpose
11 of this project is to reduce
12 congestion.

13 The project team looked closer
14 at why trucks were diverting in the
15 modeling. We found that the extent of
16 the diversion was linked to the truck
17 toll and price differential in the
18 initial six tolling scenarios where
19 trucks are tolled at a higher price.
20 To test this, we created tolling
21 Scenario G, which prices all vehicle
22 types the same.

23 The results, as you can see,
24 reduced the diversions along with the
25 relative incremental number of trucks

1 on the Cross Bronx Expressway. Given
2 the concerns raised, the project team
3 decided to include this tolling
4 scenario formerly in the Environmental
5 Assessment.

6 With respect to local
7 intersections, again, there were
8 beneficial effects and adverse effects
9 where mitigation is required.

10 Specifically, most intersections would
11 experience decreases in delay.

12 Tolling Scenarios D, E and F, the
13 high-credit scenarios, have four out
14 of a 102 intersections that
15 experienced adverse effects in the
16 modeling in the form of increased
17 delay at certain times. And you can
18 see them here on the right.

19 Project sponsors will monitor
20 those intersections where adverse
21 effects are identified and implement
22 appropriate signal timing adjustments
23 to mitigate the effect for New York
24 City Department of Transportation's
25 normal practice.

1 In terms of transit, we found
2 beneficial effects and some adverse
3 effects where mitigation is required.
4 With respect to beneficial effects,
5 reduced roadway congestion would
6 result in reliable faster bus trips.
7 There is an increase in transit
8 ridership of one to two percent
9 system-wide for travel to and from the
10 Manhattan Central Business District,
11 but no adverse effects from increased
12 ridership on any lines or transit
13 stations.

14 We do see that in some scenarios
15 increased ridership could adversely
16 affect passenger flows at specific
17 stairs or escalators, what we refer to
18 as stationed elements.

19 With respect to mitigation, in
20 tolling Scenarios E and F, TBTA will
21 coordinate with New Jersey Transit and
22 the Port Authority of New York and New
23 Jersey to implement a monitoring plan
24 with specific thresholds for
25 pedestrian volumes on a specific

1 Station Stair in Hoboken Terminal.

2 If the thresholds are reached,
3 TBTA will coordinate with these
4 agencies to implement signage and
5 wayfinding. In all the tolling
6 scenarios, TBTA will coordinate with
7 MTA's New York City Transit to
8 implement monitoring plans with
9 specific thresholds at the locations
10 bulleted here.

11 At 42nd Street and Times Square,
12 there's a specific stair affected.
13 And if the threshold is reached, the
14 center handrail will be removed and
15 the riser will be adjusted. At Union
16 Square Subway Station and Flushing and
17 Main Street Station, there are two
18 escalators, one in each, that could be
19 affected. If the thresholds are
20 reached, we would increase escalator
21 speeds. And at Court Square, there's
22 a stair affected. If the threshold is
23 reached, we would construct a new
24 stair to increase capacity.

25 With respect to pedestrians and

1 bicycles, the EA found that increases
2 in passengers at transit hubs would
3 have no adverse effects. There would
4 be some increases in bicycle trips
5 overall and near the transit hubs, but
6 again, no adverse effects.

7 Outside the Manhattan Central
8 Business District, increased transit
9 usage at individual stations would not
10 adversely affect pedestrian conditions
11 on nearby sidewalks, crosswalks or
12 corners. But within the Manhattan
13 Central Business District, there are
14 two crosswalks and one sidewalk that
15 would be adversely affected.

16 You can see here, on the right
17 with the red lines that they occur on
18 8th Avenue near West 32nd Street and
19 7th Avenue and on West 34th Street and
20 Avenue of the Americas. For
21 mitigation, the project sponsors will
22 implement a monitoring plan with
23 threshold for action. If the
24 threshold is reached, pedestrian space
25 would be increased and obstructions

1 will be removed or relocated.

2 With respect to parking and to
3 social conditions, specifically
4 population characteristics and
5 neighborhood character, we found
6 either beneficial effects or no
7 adverse effects.

8 With respect to social
9 conditions, improvement in travel time
10 and safety, reduced vehicle operating
11 costs, and reduced emissions would
12 occur from the project. There would
13 be no adverse effects on neighborhood
14 character or access, travel to
15 employment within the Manhattan
16 Central Business District or reverse
17 commuting, traffic patterns on local
18 streets or community facilities and
19 services.

20 With respect to parking, the
21 study found a reduction in parking
22 demand within the Manhattan Central
23 Business District and increased
24 parking demand at subway and commuter
25 rail stations and park-and-ride

1 facilities outside of the Manhattan's
2 Central Business District. But the
3 increase at any individual location
4 would not be large enough to result in
5 an adverse effect from the project.

6 Economic conditions found
7 increased productivity as well as
8 safety improvements. There were no
9 adverse effects to any particular
10 industry or occupational category in
11 the Manhattan Central Business
12 District.

13 Depending on the tolling
14 scenario, the toll could reduce taxi
15 and for-hire vehicle revenues in the
16 Manhattan Central Business District.
17 While the industry would remain
18 economically viable overall,
19 individual drivers could be adversely
20 affected, and this is dealt with a
21 little bit later in the presentation.

22 In terms of energy and noise,
23 again, there are beneficial effects
24 and no adverse effects. With respect
25 to energy, the region would benefit

1 from reductions in regional energy
2 consumption as a result of reductions
3 in the vehicle miles traveled.

4 In terms of noise, 102
5 intersections were assessed and all
6 the crossings into the Manhattan
7 Central Business District. The study
8 found imperceptible increases or
9 decreases in noise levels resulting
10 from changes in traffic volumes.

11 With respect to air quality, the
12 Environmental Assessment found that
13 regionally, air pollutants would be
14 reduced including precursors to
15 greenhouse gases. There would be no
16 local exceedances of air quality
17 standards.

18 Recognizing that air quality is
19 of great concern to many constituents,
20 we have several enhancements though
21 there were no local exceedances of
22 those standards. New York City
23 Department of Transportation will
24 coordinate to expand the New York City
25 community air survey network of air

1 quality monitors. This will be
2 supplemented by a small number of
3 real-time monitors for particulate
4 matter.

5 Also, based on feedback during
6 outreach for the project, MTA will
7 prioritize Kingsbridge and Gun Hill
8 Bus Depots, both located in and
9 serving primarily environmental
10 justice communities in Upper Manhattan
11 and the Bronx, when electric buses are
12 received in MTA's next major
13 procurement of battery electric buses.

14 In terms of environmental
15 justice, the study did find adverse
16 effects where mitigation is required.
17 The map to the right shows the
18 communities that are environmental
19 justice communities throughout the
20 region. They are widespread and as
21 shown earlier in some cases, certain
22 EJ communities will benefit directly
23 from this project.

24 However, the project would have
25 the potential for disproportionately

1 high and adverse effects on low-income
2 drivers who do not have an alternative
3 transportation mode for reaching the
4 Manhattan Central Business District
5 and on taxi and for-hire vehicle
6 drivers in New York City, many of whom
7 identify as part of an environmental
8 justice population.

9 This adverse effect occurs
10 specifically in tolling scenarios that
11 toll their vehicles more than once per
12 day. We have a number of mitigation
13 for low-income drivers which you can
14 see here on the left.

15 There will be a tax credit for
16 Central Business District tolls paid
17 by residents of the Manhattan Central
18 Business District whose New York
19 adjusted gross income for the taxable
20 year is less than \$60,000. TBTA will
21 coordinate with New York State
22 Department of Taxation and Finance to
23 ensure availability of documentation
24 needed for drivers eligible for the
25 credit.

1 TBTA will also post information
2 related to the tax credit on the
3 project website with links to the New
4 York State Department of Taxation and
5 Finance website to guide eligible
6 drivers to information on claiming the
7 credit.

8 TBTA will also eliminate the \$10
9 refundable deposit required for
10 E-ZPass customers with no credit card
11 linked to their account. They will
12 increase promotion of existing E-ZPass
13 payment and plan options and will work
14 with MTA to increase outreach and
15 education on eligibility for existing
16 discounted transit fare products and
17 programs.

18 The project sponsors will
19 establish an environmental justice
20 community group that will meet on a
21 biannual basis with the first meeting
22 six months after project
23 implementation to share updated data
24 and analysis and hear about potential
25 concerns.

1 For effects on taxi and FHV
2 drivers, the project sponsors will
3 work with appropriate city and state
4 agencies so that when passengers are
5 present in the vehicles, the
6 passengers will pay the toll rather
7 than the driver.

8 Again, these mitigations would
9 be for New York City taxi and FHV
10 drivers if a tolling scenario is
11 implemented with tolls of more than
12 once per day for their vehicles.

13 TBTA will work with MTA New York
14 City Transit to institute an
15 employment resource coordination
16 program to connect drivers
17 experiencing job insecurity with a
18 direct pathway to licensing, training
19 and job placement with MTA or its
20 affiliated vendors at no cost to the
21 drivers.

22 For those who may not want a
23 commercial driver's license, TBTA will
24 coordinate with MTA New York City
25 Transit to submit a request to the

1 Federal Transit Administration for a
2 pilot program that will help increase
3 eligibility of taxi and FHV drivers to
4 use their vehicles to provide
5 paratransit trips and MTA's New York
6 City Transit will implement this
7 program if approved.

8 With respect to construction
9 effects, no adverse effects were
10 found. Construction would consist of
11 replacement of existing poles or
12 installation of new poles and mast
13 arms excavation and construction of
14 foundations, placement of new support
15 poles or structures attachment of
16 tolling system equipment, and
17 restoration of the roadway, sidewalk
18 or ground surface.

19 The construction would occur on
20 streets and sidewalks and take
21 approximately one to two weeks per
22 location. During this time, there
23 would be temporary disruptions to
24 traffic and pedestrian patterns and
25 temporary noise disruptions at nearby

1 land uses such as residences and
2 businesses. The project sponsors
3 would require the contractor to
4 develop and comply with plans and
5 procedures to minimize construction
6 effects.

7 With respect to visual
8 resources, there were also no adverse
9 effects. Infrastructure is similar in
10 form to street light poles, sign poles
11 or similar structures already in use
12 throughout New York City. Signage is
13 similar in size and character to signs
14 already present and the color would
15 match existing light pole colors.

16 On the bottom right, there's a
17 rendering of tolling system equipment
18 that would be placed on existing
19 infrastructure. Again, as noted
20 earlier, the tolling equipment is
21 clustered into those single enclosures
22 to reduce visual impact and cameras
23 would use infrared illumination at
24 night so there would be no visible
25 light needed. The project would have

1 a neutral effect on viewer groups and
2 no adverse effect on visual resources.

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

15 Central Park and the High Line
16 have the potential for a de minimis
17 use. Federal Highway Administration
18 is soliciting input from the public on
19 the effects of installing equipment
20 and signs within and on these
21 properties. Signage and for
22 replacement poles with tolling
23 technology would be installed in
24 Central Park.

25 Tolling technology equipment

1 would be added to the underneath of
2 the existing structure of the High
3 Line. You can see some of the
4 renderings at the bottom here.

5 With respect to the findings,
6 the Central Business District Tolling
7 Alternative does not result in adverse
8 effects pursuant to Section 106 of the
9 National Historic Preservation Act.
10 And it does not adversely affect the
11 activities, features or attributes
12 that qualify the resource for
13 protection under Section 4(f).

14 Federal Highway Administration
15 has concurrence on a proposed finding
16 from officials with jurisdiction over
17 Central Park and the High Line and
18 will consider public input on its
19 proposed finding received during this
20 public review of the Environmental
21 Assessments.

22 There were two final additional
23 enhancements I would like to mention,
24 and again, they were in response to
25 outreach during the early outreach

1 period.

2 First, the project sponsors are
3 committed to ongoing data collection
4 and reporting on the potential effects
5 of the project. Data will be
6 collected in advance and after
7 implementation and a formal report
8 will be issued one year after
9 implementation and then every two
10 years thereafter.

11 The reporting website will make
12 data, analysis and visualizations
13 available in open data format to the
14 greatest extent possible with updates
15 provided on at least a biannual basis
16 as data becomes available and analysis
17 is completed.

18 Again, through our conversations
19 and public outreach and particularly
20 with environmental justice
21 communities, we are also committed to
22 prioritizing equity and bus service
23 improvements. New York City's buses
24 serve a greater share of low-income
25 minority households and other modes

1 including subways.

2 MTA developed a new approach
3 that combines considerations of equity
4 and air quality to identify equity
5 priority areas, which are then used to
6 target improvements and investments to
7 promote equity and access to
8 opportunities in transit-dependent,
9 historically marginalized and
10 underserved areas.

11 Information on our early public
12 outreach is here on the left. During
13 that period, we held ten virtual
14 public outreach meetings as well as
15 nine environmental justice outreach
16 meetings.

17 We had three meetings of the
18 Environmental Justice Technical
19 Advisory Group and two meetings of the
20 Environmental Justice Stakeholder
21 Working Group. During the 19 public
22 outreach and EJ outreach meetings, we
23 had over a thousand participants
24 registered and nearly 400 speakers.

25 All of the sessions were left on

1 our project website and people could
2 access them through YouTube. To date,
3 we've had over 14,000 views and we
4 received over 7,300 comments. Our
5 current public outreach sessions will
6 include six public hearings starting
7 on Thursday, August 25th and running
8 through Wednesday, August 31st.

9 We will also have another
10 meeting of the Environmental Justice
11 Stakeholder Working Group and another
12 meeting of the Environmental Justice
13 Technical Advisory Group.

14 With respect to schedule, this
15 shows where we currently are. We did
16 our early public outreach in 2021. In
17 early 2022, we prepared the
18 Environmental Assessment, we've
19 notified agencies and organizations
20 and individuals of the Environmental
21 Assessment's availability and we're
22 now in the midst, in orange here, of
23 public review and comment on the
24 Environmental Assessment.

25 After the formal comment period

1 closes, there will be a determination
2 whether the action, in this case, the
3 tolling, will result in significant
4 effects.

5 Ultimately, we're expecting that
6 in early 2023, Federal Highway
7 Administration will issue a decision
8 document. If adverse effects are not
9 significant or can be mitigated below
10 significant levels, FHWA would issue a
11 FONSI, a Finding of No Significant
12 Impact. If there are significant
13 effects that cannot be mitigated, then
14 an Environmental Impact Statement or
15 EIS would be required.

16 As noted, our public comment
17 period is open until September 9,
18 2022. If you would like to submit
19 written comments, you may do so in the
20 following ways: Through our project
21 website, by email, mail, phone or fax,
22 or to the Federal Highway
23 Administration by email or mail.

24 All of this information is also
25 available on our website and the

1 information on the project website
2 email, mail, phone and fax for MTA
3 bridges and tunnels is also in the
4 Environmental Assessment. In
5 addition, formal oral comments can be
6 made at the public hearings as many of
7 you are doing today. They will be
8 recorded by the stenographer.

9 Thank you again for attending
10 this public hearing to learn more
11 about the Environmental Assessment for
12 the Central Business District tolling
13 program. And now, we look forward to
14 hearing from you.

15 [Taped presentation ends.]

16 MR. OLIVA: We encourage anyone
17 joining via Zoom or livestream to take
18 a short survey using the QR code or
19 link currently being displayed. The
20 link can also be found in the chat
21 section of the Zoom.

22 We are gathering public comment
23 today on the Environmental Assessment
24 for the Central Business District
25 Tolling Program. Comments will be

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 recorded, indexed and responded to as
2 part of the Environmental Assessment
3 process.

4 There are 391 speakers signed up
5 to speak today. Each speaker is
6 limited to three minutes. At the
7 two-and-a-half-minute mark, the clock
8 will turn red and you will hear it
9 beep notifying you that you have 30
10 seconds remaining. We ask that
11 speakers keep their remarks to the
12 three-minute time frame out of respect
13 for all other speakers.

14 We will be calling speakers in
15 the order that they signed up, but
16 anyone who wishes to speak will have
17 an opportunity. Due to the volume of
18 speakers, there may be extended wait
19 times to speak. Comments submitted by
20 mail, phone, e-mail, online form, or
21 verbally at a hearing will be
22 considered equally and carry the same
23 weight.

24 If you have joined the Zoom
25 under a name that is different from

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 the one you used when you signed up to
2 speak or if you did not sign up to
3 speak but would like to speak, please
4 identify yourself in the Q&A function.
5 You may also request to speak
6 anonymously. If this is your
7 preference, please indicate this in
8 the Q&A function and we will provide
9 you with further instructions.

10 Please note that comments on the
11 Central Business District Tolling
12 Program are not being received via the
13 Q&A function. And comments submitted
14 in that fashion will not be part of
15 the hearing record.

16 When you are called on to speak,
17 there will be a brief transition on
18 your screen before you will be able to
19 unmute and enable your camera. Please
20 make sure that once your scene
21 updates, your camera and your
22 microphone are enabled before
23 beginning your remarks. If you do not
24 wish to use your camera, you do not
25 have to do so.

1 You will not be able to unmute
2 or enable your camera until it's your
3 turn to speak. Please remain patient
4 until then. In the event you miss
5 your name being called, we will call
6 you again after all other speakers in
7 attendance have been called a first
8 time.

9 As a reminder, this hearing is
10 being livestreamed and recorded and
11 will be available publicly on our
12 YouTube channel and on our project
13 website at mta.info/CBDTP.

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

18 MS. FLAX: We will now begin the
19 public comment portion of today's
20 hearing.

21 Our first speaker is Senator
22 Anna Kaplan, followed by Congresswoman
23 Nicole Malliotakis.

24 SENATOR ANNA KAPLAN: Good
25 evening. I'm Senator Kaplan. I want

1 to thank you for this opportunity.

2 When we set out to enact
3 congestion pricing in 2019, we were
4 trying to address chronic problems
5 impacting our region; traffic and the
6 lack of investment in our public
7 transit.

8 Unfortunately the pandemic has
9 only made these problems worse,
10 straining finances at the MTA, putting
11 new investments in the Long Island
12 Rail Road at risk. So it's important
13 that we do this right so that our
14 region can benefit from new investment
15 with the lowest cost to Long
16 Islanders.

17 The promised ten percent
18 proceeds for the Long Island Rail
19 Road, estimated at one hundred million
20 per year, will allow for
21 transformative investment to take
22 place in our local infrastructure like
23 the purchase of desperately needed new
24 train cars. And overall, improvements
25 to service and reliability for Long

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 Island commuters.

2 Importantly, it allows this
3 investment to take place without
4 hiking rates on Long Island commuters
5 who take the train into the city.
6 This money must be protected for Long
7 Island and must be used exclusively
8 for the benefit of Long Island Rail
9 Road riders. And I will not accept
10 any program that does not fulfill this
11 promise.

12 Additionally, in setting toll
13 prices and exemptions, there must be
14 regional fairness if this program is
15 going to succeed. There can only
16 be -- there can be no reference (sic)
17 given to New York City or New Jersey
18 residents that aren't also given to
19 the suburban Long Island residents.

20 Carving out certain people from
21 responsibility while shifting the
22 burden to others is unfair. And I
23 will not support a program that
24 mistreats Long Island residents and
25 commuters.

1 Ultimately, the tolling plan
2 that should be enacted is the one that
3 has the lowest out-of-pocket costs for
4 residents who choose to drive into the
5 city, while still hitting the targets
6 needed for investments in Long
7 Island's infrastructure.

8 This program stands to be a huge
9 win for our region, one billion
10 dollars invested annually in our mass
11 transit and our subways. But it must
12 be reasonable for residents who are
13 still struggling themselves due to the
14 higher cost of everyday items.

15 Thank you.

16 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

17 Our next speaker is woman is
18 Congresswoman Nicole Malliotakis,
19 followed by New York State
20 Assemblymember Mike Lawler.

21 CONGRESSWOMAN NICOLE MALLIOTAKIS:
22 Good evening, everyone. Can you
23 guys hear me?

24 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

25 CONGRESSWOMAN NICOLE MALLIOTAKIS:

1 Great. I want to thank you for
2 putting together this comment period.
3 But I do believe that that this
4 program is being jammed down the
5 throats of the people that I represent
6 and all New Yorkers. And I think that
7 there is more time and transparency
8 that is needed to ensure that the
9 consequences of this program is
10 understood before it's implementation.

11 I understand that you guys do a
12 shortcut here in terms of
13 environmental impact. And I believe
14 that there needs to be a full thorough
15 environmental impact study and also an
16 economic impact study to understand
17 the consequences of what this will
18 mean and the burden that it will place
19 on our business community, on our
20 residents, and on tourism.

21 New York City is just getting
22 back on its feet following the COVID
23 pandemic. We are trying to get more
24 people to come to our city, and I
25 think that this is going to have a

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 detrimental impact on that. And I
2 think those consequences need to be
3 understood considering that this is
4 the first in the nation type program,
5 also as it relates to congestion in
6 our city center.

7 And I understand your goal of
8 wanting to reduce congestion. But
9 really, this is also about revenue.
10 Let's be honest, right. There always
11 been a war-on-cars approach, but
12 there's always also been the need by
13 the MTA to get more resources and
14 revenue.

15 I just feel that we need to
16 pause here so it doesn't have an
17 impact on the other constituencies
18 that we represent. I rep a very
19 toll-sensitive community, representing
20 Staten Island. And as you know, we're
21 the only borough that has to pay a
22 toll to connect to the rest of the
23 city. And I fear that this will lead
24 to my constituents being double
25 tolled. And no one should have to pay

1 a 23-dollar fee to have to connect to
2 another borough in the city in which
3 they live.

4 And in terms of congestion, if
5 you look at what occurred in London,
6 the congestion just shifted. So I
7 know my colleagues have brought up
8 concerns about pollution in other
9 areas. I mean, this is going to also
10 just shift that burden to, you know,
11 whether it's the Bronx, whether it's
12 Manhattan above 60th Street, whether
13 it's Downtown Brooklyn. And we need
14 to understand the entire picture
15 before we just jam this through.

16 Now, I was very proud to support
17 the bipartisan and infrastructure
18 package because I understand that the
19 MTA does need revenue for important
20 capital projects, but hopefully expand
21 its options to transportation deprived
22 communities like mine.

23 I'd rather have you look at
24 those resources and opportunities for
25 matching grant programs and understand

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 that communities like mine, Staten
2 Island sort of Brooklyn, we lack
3 transportation options and so a lot of
4 people do rely on their cars.

5 Let's get the city subways under
6 control. Let's make them safe. Let's
7 make sure people are not turnstile
8 jumping or fare evading. And that
9 should be the first step to try to
10 satisfy the fiscal needs of the MTA.

11 And I thank you for your time.

12 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

13 Our next speaker is New York
14 State Assemblymember Mike Lawler,
15 followed by Councilmember Joseph
16 Borelli.

17 WLER: NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLYMEMBER MIKE LA

18 Good evening. Thank you very
19 much for the opportunity to speak with
20 you tonight. I think the hearing
21 certainly was informative and I
22 appreciate the opportunity to speak.

23 I represent Rockland County and
24 Rockland County is the only county in
25 the MTA region that has a value gap.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 We pay 50 million more in taxes to the
2 MTA than services we receive. It's
3 totally unacceptable.

4 Congestion pricing is nothing
5 more than a money grab. This has been
6 a plan to tax suburban communities.
7 In Rockland County, we do not have a
8 one-seat ride -- express rail service
9 has been limited. The MTA even
10 threatened to eliminate it during the
11 pandemic. Totally unacceptable.

12 And now what you're proposing is
13 to tax Rockland County residents at
14 \$23 a hit for coming into Lower
15 Manhattan to go to work; that's cops,
16 that firefighters, first responders.
17 It's totally insane.

18 We are forced to cross over the
19 Tappan Zee Bridge or go through the
20 Holland or Lincoln Tunnels to get into
21 the city. We do not have adequate
22 mass transit service. And yet, we're
23 expected to pay for your bloated and
24 out-of-control agency.

25 The MTA is the worst-run

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 authority in the country. Period.
2 You guys borrow billions of dollars
3 every year. You're given billions of
4 dollars by the state. You were given
5 billions in a federal bailout. And
6 now you want to tax New York State
7 suburban commuters and New Jersey
8 commuters. And you want to tax them
9 at about \$6,000 a year in addition to
10 the tolls they already pay.

11 And we all know in Rockland
12 County, there's not going to be one
13 ounce of investment that comes towards
14 upgrading our ability to get a
15 one-seat ride that comes towards
16 upgrading our ability for our
17 commuters to get into Manhattan to
18 work.

19 So I am totally opposed to this
20 plan. I have put a bill in into state
21 legislature to repeal it. It should
22 be repealed in full. Should I be a
23 member of congress next year, I will
24 work to end this program in its
25 entirety.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

65

1 It has never worked wherever it
2 has been implemented around the world.
3 And for this to be put forward as a
4 plan knowing full well what you are
5 all attempting to do, which is to just
6 take more money and invest it in New
7 York City and pay for your operations
8 because it has been so poorly managed
9 for over 30 years.

10 So I -- at a time with inflation
11 being at a 40-year high, gas prices
12 hovering around \$5 a gallon, taxes
13 being through the roof, this plan
14 needs to be dead on arrival.

15 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
16 remarks. Thank you.

17 Our next speaker is
18 Councilmember Joseph Borelli, followed
19 by Rosalind Carter.

20 Our next speaker is Rosalind
21 Carter, followed by Beatriz Bofill.

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

24 ROSALIND CARTER: Thank you.
25 Sorry about that.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 Good evening. My name is
2 Rosalind Clay Carter. I currently
3 serve on the Permanent Citizens
4 Advisory Committee to the MTA and the
5 Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council.

6 We already knew that congestion
7 pricing would reduce traffic, improve
8 air quality, and help fight climate
9 change. More importantly, the data
10 and projections in the Environmental
11 Assessment show that the vast majority
12 of people who enter Manhattan below
13 60th Street do so using public
14 transit.

15 Given our mass transit system
16 that permits one to board a train in
17 the northern most section of the Bronx
18 and travel all the way to Coney Island
19 on a single swipe of a MetroCard or
20 OMNY card, it makes sense to implement
21 a toll on the few who still choose to
22 drive in order to fund transit
23 improvements for the millions of
24 riders who depend on the MTA every
25 day.

1 Of course the reality is that
2 there are still transportation deserts
3 that deny many residents of the outer
4 boroughs ready access to reliably
5 convenient public transportation.
6 These residents should not bear the
7 burden of congestion pricing.

8 There are still questions to be
9 answered and time to develop answers.
10 Congestion pricing should be
11 accompanied by other policies to
12 accomplish these goals. Including
13 restrictions or incentives on truck
14 deliveries during peak or off-peak
15 business hours and variable congestion
16 pricing tolls depending on vehicle.

17 We have companies with fully
18 remote staff. Surely these same
19 companies can determine how to rout
20 safe deliveries in off-peak hours.
21 The transit system design, pricing
22 schedules and service frequency must
23 be reimagined based on the new remote
24 work and lifestyles, not to mention
25 the need for safe and clean transit

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 vehicles in stations to attract riders
2 and increase revenue.

3 Congestion can be further
4 improved by trucks not being double
5 parked for deliveries and blocking
6 streets and bus lanes. I recognize
7 these are not easy solutions, but they
8 do warrant research and exploration as
9 you implement congestion pricing.

10 Thank you so much for your time.

11 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker is Beatriz
13 Bofill, followed by Michael Smith.

14 Our next speaker is Michael
15 Smith, followed by Felipe Castillo.

16 Our next speaker is Felipe
17 Castillo, followed by Jonathan
18 Petersen.

19 FELIPE CASTILLO: Hi, everybody.
20 Thanks so much for providing this
21 panel, thanks for the panelists,
22 thanks for the elected public
23 officials who made their time
24 available to speak on the matter.

25 I just want to share my

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 resounding support for any sort of
2 congestion pricing. I think that this
3 plan will be able to save lives by
4 decreasing the levels of traffic
5 violence currently in -- on our
6 streets. Streets that are -- belong
7 to the public and belong to all of us.
8 And when private vehicles come into
9 these streets, they occupy space that
10 other vehicles cannot occupy, other
11 pedestrians cannot occupy.

12 As you showed in your
13 Environmental Assessment, more than
14 80 percent of people come into the
15 district via Transit. The people who
16 remain in private vehicles should pay
17 their fair share. They make the rest
18 of us -- there are externalities to
19 driving a car, parking it in
20 Manhattan.

21 So I commend the panel and the
22 Department of Transportation for
23 putting together this plan. I thank
24 everybody for taking the time to
25 listen to our concerns as there may be

1 further modifications that need to be
2 made so that we can assure that this
3 is the most equal and the most
4 beneficial to everybody. Thanks for
5 everything.

6 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Jonathan
8 Petersen, followed by Laura Mount.

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

16 Our next speaker is Laura Mount,
17 followed by Bob Friedrich.

18 Laura, you may begin your
19 remarks.

20 LAURA MOUNT: I'm a long-time
21 resident of Midtown Manhattan. I came
22 here as a student. And because of the
23 nature of my work, I'm a performing
24 artist, much of my work is in other
25 boroughs, other states, neighboring

1 states. So I commute the rigorous
2 commute of most people.

3 And because of the nature of my
4 work, concerts starting at 8 p.m. and
5 ending sometimes 10:00, 11 o'clock,
6 when I come home, there's no public
7 transportation for me to come that's
8 reasonable coming from far away places
9 in Connecticut.

10 And I find it disturbing that
11 although 80 percent of the people who
12 this is targeting, those of us who
13 live in the zone, who do make maybe
14 \$61,000, will be taxed and that maybe
15 will have to move. I don't know.

16 But I wonder why the
17 consideration hasn't been that all
18 residents who is billing for their
19 E-ZPasses, are in the zone are not
20 exempt. Often, a tax credit does not
21 really make lower-income residents
22 exempt, as they would still have to
23 pay the toll upfront.

24 In addition, this model
25 discriminates against all residents in

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 the zone who have to pay a toll to get
2 to their homes. I repeat, I think it
3 is unfair to toll residents returning
4 to their home because they reside in
5 the zone.

6 And if the purpose is to reduce
7 congestion, has any consideration been
8 given to restricting commercial
9 deliveries between the hours of 9 p.m.
10 and 6 a.m.? I understand that many
11 businesses close at 6 or 8 p.m., but
12 it would create jobs and it would
13 create -- reduce the congestion if
14 businesses had to receive deliveries
15 overnight as they do in, actually,
16 other countries.

17 And finally, if the plan is to
18 fix the broken MTA, elevators,
19 escalators are added but not
20 maintained. The cars are filthy.
21 When I take the LIRR, it's dirty
22 inside. The subway stations are
23 renovated, not maintained.

24 What is the plan with all this
25 new windfall of money and how does the

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 anticipated increased budget for
2 tolling mean that anything will
3 actually change for the MTA because it
4 has not changed in the last 30 years.

5 Thank you very much. I hope
6 that consideration will be made to
7 exempt all residents who live in the
8 zone from this unfair tax.

9 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

10 Our next speaker is Bob
11 Friedrich, followed by Councilmember
12 Joseph Borelli.

13 Bob, you may begin your remarks.

14 BOB FRIEDRICH: Hi. My name is
15 Bob Friedrich, and I am president of
16 Glen Oaks Village, which is a co-op in
17 Queens. We are the largest
18 non-apartment co-op in New York with
19 10,000 residents.

20 There are no subway lines in our
21 community and no 24-hour or seven-day
22 mass transit services available in our
23 community. Our residents are
24 working-class families where both
25 parents work to make ends meet. We

1 are a community with many seniors who
2 often need to traffic into Manhattan
3 for medical care.

4 Have you lost sight that we are
5 in very tough economic times and just
6 coming out of a pandemic? The various
7 scenarios you propose are all
8 unaffordable and make the already
9 stressful trip to a doctor in
10 Manhattan even more stressful.

11 Our seniors could be your
12 grandparents and we should not be
13 punishing them or making their trip to
14 a doctor more difficult than it
15 already is. Please try to understand
16 the financial crush of your proposals.

17 In summary, we propose: One,
18 exemption from the punitive tolling
19 plan for any resident with a handicap
20 hangtag or a New York City handicap
21 placard that was not even shown in any
22 of your scenarios.

23 Number two, congestion pricing
24 tolls should be limited to actual peak
25 congestion hours and not a 24-hour per

1 day as your plans propose and no
2 congestion pricing tolls on weekends
3 and holidays. That was never
4 envisioned when we first started
5 discussing these plans.

6 And three, no congestion pricing
7 tolls or significantly reduced rates
8 on motorcycles, which are a solution
9 to congestion and not a detriment.
10 The revenue loss would be de minimis
11 based on the most data available from
12 the MTA.

13 So I'm asking you to take into
14 consideration the fact that we have no
15 mass transit here in Eastern Queens
16 that's available 24 hours a day or on
17 weekends, and we have seniors who need
18 to travel into Manhattan for medical
19 care. Most of them have hangtags or
20 the New York City placard. You really
21 need to take into consideration those
22 individuals and they should be exempt
23 from the tolling proposals that you
24 have put forth.

25 And by the way, the last thing I

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

76

1 just want to mention, subways are now
2 very, very dangerous and people are
3 very concerned about going into them.
4 So please take into consideration
5 while you study your proposals and
6 implement them.

7 Thank you so much. I appreciate
8 the opportunity.

9 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

10 Our next speaker is
11 Councilmember Joseph Borelli, followed
12 by Gil Franco.

13 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH BORELLI:

14 Hi. Thank you, and I'm sorry
15 for the miscommunication earlier.

16 I want to be extremely brief and
17 to the point. The MTA board is
18 unelected. The fact that you'll have
19 power to raise revenue without
20 anyone's consent is appalling for
21 anyone who believes in democracy. I
22 think the real person all of our
23 comments should be addressed to is
24 Governor Kathy Hochul, whose consent
25 is 100 percent necessary for this to

1 be implemented.

2 The fact that we're modeling
3 this essentially off of London, a city
4 which has actually worse congestion by
5 the -- by the study that you guys --
6 the INRIX study that you guys actually
7 used, should be embarrassing to the
8 Governor and everyone on the MTA who
9 suggest it.

10 The fact that your study admits
11 that this will have a disproportionate
12 impact on low-income and poor
13 residents of this city, meaning that
14 poor and low-income people will be
15 more adversely affected than anyone
16 else, that should be embarrassing to
17 Kathy Hochul.

18 The fact that you're going to
19 admittedly add pollution, add cars,
20 add traffic to every single other
21 place in New York City and the
22 surrounding counties without any
23 concern for those people is
24 embarrassing.

25 So I just want to say that I

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 don't think there will be any change
2 in this process unless the governor is
3 changed or the governor changes her
4 mind. So it's mission critical, I
5 think, that everyone makes that clear
6 in their comments as well.

7 The fact that this business will
8 have an impact on so people
9 disproportionately should be something
10 that embarrasses the MTA and
11 those that appointed you.

12 Thank you.

13 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

14 Our next speaker is Gil Franco,
15 followed by Luke Szabados.

16 Our next speaker is Luke
17 Szabados, followed by Craig Lader.
18 And we are now at the 15th person on
19 our speaker list.

20 LUKE SZABADOS: Hi. Can you
21 hear me?

22 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

23 LUKE SZABADOS: Hi. And thanks
24 so much for having this hearing. And
25 it's a pleasure to again testify here.

1 I am totally in support of
2 congestion pricing. We need to do as
3 much mitigation as possible. As
4 somebody who lives in the Bronx and
5 who bikes nearly every day to work,
6 it's astounding how much pollution we
7 have and is experienced by -- by
8 constituents in the city.

9 Putting a price and mitigating
10 the amount of pollution-causing
11 vehicles that are entering the city is
12 going to be a great win for us. I
13 think that the MTA needs to take a
14 step further, it needs to explore
15 putting bike highways in the city,
16 such as the Hudson River Greenway.

17 The MTA needs to explore
18 high-speed rail on Long Island. Long
19 Island who is going to be benefiting
20 from a lot of these transit
21 improvements need to seriously
22 accommodate the density by upzoning
23 places right next to the stations, for
24 example, along the Long Island Rail
25 Road.

1 The MTA, this is -- this is
2 great. We need this immediately. But
3 we can go bigger. California is
4 moving to ban gas vehicles by 2035.
5 What is New York State doing? This
6 needs to be paired with realistic and
7 immediate micromobility options, such
8 as bike lanes on the Verrazzano
9 Bridge, better bike access on the
10 Queensboro Bridge.

11 And I want to thank you again
12 for the time. I also want to flag the
13 concern about air quality across the
14 Cross Bronx Expressway which is
15 thought to increase in truck
16 pollution. As somebody who works a
17 block from the Cross Bronx, that's a
18 really big concern.

19 I think the MTA needs to double
20 down on the federal and city study
21 around capping the Cross Bronx and
22 moving to implement a pollution
23 mitigation in heavy transportation
24 vehicles like trucks.

25 And that's pretty much it. I

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 think we can solve a lot of our
2 problems if the electives on the call
3 can actually support micromobility
4 options in their neighborhoods.

5 Thanks so much.

6 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Craig Lader,
8 followed by Andrew Fine.

9 Craig, you may unmute yourself
10 and begin your remarks.

11 CRAIG LADER: Good evening. I
12 am a transportation planner and
13 cochair for Community Board 8
14 Manhattan Transportation Committee and
15 Congestion Pricing Task Force. But my
16 statement reflects my personal
17 opinions as a supporter of congestion
18 pricing who wants to see a successful
19 implementation that minimizes
20 disruption across the city, and
21 specifically to my Upper East Side
22 neighbors, and on that is fair and
23 equitable to vulnerable populations
24 across New York City.

25 My comments are as follows:

1 One, the EA depicts all entry and exit
2 points of the Queensboro Bridge as
3 being tolled, except for the Manhattan
4 bound upper level. If this becomes a
5 preferred route for those destined
6 north of 60th Street and the untolled
7 portions of the FDR Drive, this will
8 likely create adverse impacts on 62nd
9 and 63rd Streets, and perhaps further,
10 offsetting some of the benefits that
11 would result from crossing credits
12 granted through other crossings.

13 Two, the EA concedes that some
14 vulnerable populations would incur
15 additional costs, especially those
16 accessing medical appointments. This
17 is problematic.

18 If a resident in my community
19 who has a physical disability and is
20 living on a fixed-income that is just
21 over \$60,000 needed to access health
22 care facilities in the toll zone,
23 where if someone similar residing in
24 the toll zone was trying to access the
25 East 60's hospital corridor, they

1 would be treated the same as wealthy
2 or able-bodied individuals who entered
3 the toll zone for any non-medical
4 related trip.

5 It will be insensitive to
6 encourage use of the transit system
7 when doing so would be too physically
8 challenging or inconvenient and unwise
9 to further strain an already very
10 expensive paratransit system.

11 Enrollment-based discounts or
12 exemption programs for congestion
13 pricing similar to those for reduced
14 fare transit should be considered and
15 put in place to ensure that health
16 care needs of vulnerable populations
17 are not jeopardized. There should
18 also be a sliding scale for
19 income-based tax credits rather than a
20 stark cutoff that would hurt those
21 making just over the 60,000-dollar
22 threshold the most.

23 Three, none of the scenarios
24 depicted in the EA are ideal, but
25 Scenario C strikes me as the most

1 balanced approach, with one exception.
2 The idea of exempting taxis and
3 capping for-hire vehicle charges.

4 The TMR team must find a
5 balanced approach that doesn't
6 penalize drivers of taxis and for-hire
7 vehicles for doing their job, but also
8 doesn't promote -- shifts for persons
9 who are aware of this loophole that
10 would result in the passenger paying
11 only the current \$2.50 surcharge to
12 enter the congestion zone a
13 significant savings as compared to
14 driving into the zone.

15 Four, although it's certainly a
16 group with impressive credentials, I
17 fear the appointed TMRB
18 representatives will be making
19 decisions solely from a dollar-sense
20 perspective without regard to impacts
21 that may affect specific neighborhoods
22 or groups.

23 And finally, I am disappointed
24 that the public hearings were
25 scheduled for late August when many

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 people are on vacation. I also
2 believe two weeks between the EA
3 releasing the public hearings is not
4 sufficient given the immense nature of
5 the document. I hope you'll consider
6 additional and more targeted outreach
7 similar to how the original round of
8 hearings is performed, based on
9 geography.

10 Thank you very much.

11 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker is Andrew Fine,
13 followed by Jonathan Blair.

14 Our next speaker is Jonathan
15 Blair followed by Daniel Hernandez.

16 Our next speaker is Kay Cardona,
17 followed by Frank Tufano.

18 Our next speaker is Frank
19 Tufano, followed by Michael Adler.

20 Our next speaker is Michael
21 Adler, followed by Ross Perlin.

22 Our next speaker is Ross Perlin,
23 followed by Silvano Ferrin.

24 Our next speaker is Silvano
25 Ferrin, followed by Pedro Rodriguez.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 Our next speaker is Pedro
2 Rodriguez, followed by Michael
3 Gentile.

4 PEDRO RODRIGUEZ: Hello. My
5 name is Pedro Rodriguez, and I live in
6 Forest Hills, Queens.

7 I grew up in the Bronx since I
8 was a child. Like all New Yorkers, I
9 have relied heavily on public
10 transportation and the MTA since I was
11 a kid. I depend on it now just like I
12 did back then; to go to doctors, to go
13 to parks, shopping, visit friends and
14 everything in between.

15 We need congestion pricing --
16 congestion pricing. We needed it
17 three years ago, and we need it now
18 even more than ever. Car usage in New
19 York City leads to premature death of
20 1,400 New Yorkers from pollution alone
21 every year and about 300 from crashes.
22 Those are deaths per year. And then
23 countless lives -- life-altering
24 injuries every single year.

25 Reducing the number of cars on

1 our streets will not also
2 save countless lives, but it will help
3 fund the lifeline of our city, which
4 is the MTA and our transit system.

5 Without it, workers won't be
6 able to go to work, children won't be
7 able to go to school, elderly New
8 Yorkers won't be able to get to their
9 doctor appointments. Millions of New
10 Yorkers will also be forced to drive
11 even more than they do right now.
12 Massively increasing our cost of
13 living, as well as increasing our
14 mortality rate.

15 New York will simply not be New
16 York without our transit system. For
17 that reason, we need congestion
18 pricing and we need it now. The MTA's
19 future depends on it, the city's
20 future depends on it, and the future
21 of more than 1700 New Yorkers every
22 year that die from pollution or car
23 crashes also depends on it.

24 No more delays, no more
25 exceptions, except the ones that are

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

88

1 required by law. And no more excuses.

2 Thank you.

3 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

4 Our next speaker is Michael
5 Gentile, followed by Brooklyn Borough
6 President Antonio Reynoso.

7 MICHAEL GENTILE: Hi there. Can
8 you hear me?

9 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

10 MICHAEL GENTILE: Great. Thank
11 you for having me. And thank you,
12 everyone, for setting up this forum.
13 You mentioned 391 speakers. It's
14 going to be a long evening for a lot
15 of you. So thank you for everyone who
16 is on the screen, who is here today.

17 I apologize upfront if I'm
18 misstating any facts. I'm sure you'll
19 correct me. But I think in the
20 presentation, you talked about
21 reducing vehicles between five and ten
22 percent, the number of vehicles
23 heading in.

24 But according to the website,
25 the MTA website, we've already

1 achieved that as part of the pandemic.
2 I think we're at 90 percent. We're at
3 prepandemic -- a prepandemic level of
4 traffic. And that feels about right.
5 I do drive into Manhattan. I live in
6 Astoria.

7 There is a lot of conversation
8 here about environmental justice,
9 which is certainly important.
10 California just enacted a law, which
11 perhaps in the future, New York will
12 as well where we're switching to
13 electric cars. So perhaps, you know,
14 down the road, the pollution issue
15 will be mitigated by that.

16 But I also want to sort of talk
17 about economic and social justice as
18 well, and some of the folks had
19 mentioned this. This is ultimately
20 disproportionately going to affect
21 elderly, disabled and their
22 caretakers. As a caretaker myself, I
23 can speak to that.

24 Many of these folks cannot or
25 will not take public transportation to

1 get to medical appointments or to
2 their rehab. This is also going to
3 impact many small businesses or a
4 number of parking garages throughout
5 Manhattan that rely on folks from the
6 outer boroughs to come in.

7 I do understand that a part of
8 this move is to get people to public
9 transportation. I also use public
10 transportation. But that continues to
11 be unsafe, even more so during the
12 pandemic. So the timing here just
13 seems a bit not the best.

14 Just doing simple math, right,
15 if folks take the Queens-Midtown
16 Tunnel, then they drive into
17 Manhattan, then they park at a garage,
18 you're looking at over a 50 to
19 75-dollar experience, probably even
20 further, just to get into Manhattan.

21 There's also the element here of
22 toll creep. You've heard of it already
23 with some folks talking about
24 disproportionate impact to 60th Street
25 and above. So we start it in Midtown,

1 then do we have another toll that
2 affects Uptown, do with then go with
3 the outer boroughs? Is there enough
4 tolls for Long Islanders to get into
5 the borough?

6 So I think once you set up a
7 technology like this and sort of have
8 it working, there's always that
9 possibility for toll creep.

10 And I do appreciate the benefit
11 of protecting those who make under
12 60,000 a year. But as anyone who
13 lives in the city can attest, folks
14 who make more than that, you know,
15 it's still -- every penny counts. So
16 that element of economic justice
17 should also be considered.

18 Ultimately, our taxes and
19 current tolls should be subsidizing
20 all of the things that are intended to
21 be subsidized here. So perhaps we can
22 manage that better.

23 Thank you all for your time. Be
24 well, be safe. Thank you.

25 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 Our next speaker is Brooklyn
2 Borough President Antonio Reynoso,
3 followed by Corey Bearak.

4 YNOSO: BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT ANTONIO RE
5 Hello. I hope you can all hear
6 me.

7 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

8 YNOSO: BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT ANTONIO RE
9 Thank you so much.

10 First, I just want to thank the
11 representatives that are on today.
12 Thank you for your work and your
13 dedication that you will be having
14 today. So to that, the FHWA, the MTA,
15 and the state and city DOT. Thank you
16 so much. Also, thank you for the
17 opportunity to speak today in support
18 of the Central District Business
19 Tolling Program, also known as
20 congestion pricing.

21 The policy has been a long-time
22 coming. More than 15 years, in fact.
23 And I'm happy to see it finally moving
24 forward. Implementation of this
25 program is even more dire now with car

1 ownership in New York City up over 200
2 percent due to the pandemic, and the
3 MTA facing a fiscal cliff as -- as
4 soon as 2024, we failed to act.

5 In Brooklyn, we've seen the
6 harmful impacts of growing congestion
7 on the economy, and especially on
8 street safety and local air quality.

9 Brooklyn neck -- go to school
10 and only two to five percent of New
11 York residents drive a car into the
12 Central Business District. And
13 drivers are, on average, significantly
14 wealthier than other car-owning New
15 Yorkers. For this reason, it is
16 crucial that the plan to move ahead
17 with a fee structure that provides no
18 exemptions or has as few exemptions as
19 possible.

20 The fairest approach for drivers
21 is a very broad base and comparatively
22 low toll rate that does not
23 disproportionately burden non-exempt
24 drivers. If we are to seriously take
25 on the responsibilities of improving

1 public health and adjusting the
2 reality of climate change, we need to
3 remove as many cars from our streets
4 as possible.

5 This will only be achieved
6 through applying the fewest
7 exemptions. Additionally, the fee
8 structure should be equalized across
9 the crossing to eliminate toll
10 shopping. This behavior only
11 exacerbate the issues we're trying to
12 solve.

13 And while one of the most
14 important outcomes of implementing
15 congestion pricing is decreasing air
16 pollution across our city, I recognize
17 that the Environmental Assessment
18 identifies potential additional
19 increases in truck emissions for our
20 South Bronx neighbors with no
21 mitigation required.

22 We must ensure that the proposed
23 enhancements are sufficient to improve
24 air quality for these residents as
25 they already have battled poor air

1 quality, high asthma rates and other
2 associated environmental justice
3 issues for decades.

4 In summary, for our city to
5 continue to function, we must get
6 people out of their cars and back into
7 reliable public transportation.

8 Congestion pricing is set to be a win,
9 win, win for this city -- economy,
10 transit system, traffic reduction
11 efforts and overall safety and quality
12 of life for Brooklyn-ites and all New
13 Yorkers.

14 Thank you again for your time,
15 and I look forward to continuing this
16 conversation. Given the quick
17 turnaround and the late summer
18 schedule of these hearings, I hope
19 that the Traffic Mobility Review Board
20 will consider conducting more outreach
21 and holding these hearings in the
22 fall, specifically on the proposed
23 pricing structures so that more New
24 Yorkers will have the chance to have
25 their voices heard.

1 Thank you again, and please
2 don't forget to spread love, it's the
3 Brooklyn way. Peace.

4 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

5 Our next speaker is Corey
6 Bearak, followed by Tommy Rutkiewicz.

7 Corey, you may begin your
8 remarks.

9 COREY BEARAK: Okay. I just
10 have to choose a different background.

11 By every measure, the regressive
12 and unequitable unfair and
13 unsustainable congestion tax fails on
14 every level. And despite its name, it
15 achieves nothing of any consequence in
16 relieving congestion. It even falls
17 short of its claims concerning the
18 environment.

19 Everyone should recognize the
20 need to build and maintain an
21 effective public transit system
22 serving 22.2 million resident in the
23 largest and most economically
24 significant metropolitan region in the
25 U.S. with more than ten million jobs.

1 The issue should be number one,
2 resources and number two, impacts of
3 any resource plan here, some misguided
4 folks got into their heads, the need
5 to eliminate passenger cars in
6 Manhattan, mostly south of 60th
7 Street, by imposing a tax on entry
8 that effectively eliminates all but
9 the uber-wealthy if this toll tax
10 scheme that requires a net revenue
11 ultimately prevails.

12 And it's first weakness, a total
13 failure to consider alternative
14 revenue sources that likely better
15 meet the funding goals of the program.
16 Thus, improve public transit. And
17 thus, induce those relying on cars to
18 opt to use transit.

19 Almost as important from an
20 environmental justice perspective, the
21 entire project fails to resource
22 improvements in transit deserts.
23 Additionally, the adverse effects on
24 low-income drivers associated with the
25 cost of any new tolls, tax scheme

1 would constitute a disproportionately
2 high and adverse impact.

3 In New York City, the tax scheme
4 imposed displacement as drivers seek
5 parking outside the zone in
6 Manhattan's Upper West Side and East
7 Side, and neighborhoods near transit
8 in Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx.

9 No capacity exists to absorb
10 displaced cars or new transit riders
11 at any of these locations. The
12 parents of the congestion tax offered
13 no improvements to transit deserts in
14 Brooklyn and Queens. Consumers in
15 zone may opt to drive outside the zone
16 might be facing increased cost of
17 consumer goods they receive instead
18 through delivery.

19 Further, the tax scheme proposes
20 no measures that address asthma where
21 it impacts most, air pollution
22 hotspots including the South Bronx,
23 East Harlem, South Jamaica and
24 Bedford-Stuy. Long Island
25 working-class drivers and small

1 businesses would get no benefits and
2 will be burdened with yet another
3 senseless cost scheme that ignores
4 most congestion in the zone which
5 results from the predominance of app
6 base for-hire vehicles.

7 The rest of my testimony can be
8 found at KeepNYCFree.com. And I will
9 submit it. But we have a list of
10 revenues and additional 13 points
11 of -- that also speak to this issue.
12 Thank you.

13 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

14 Our next speaker is Tommy
15 Rutkiewicz, followed by Jennifer
16 Barretta.

17 Our next speaker is Jennifer
18 Barretta, followed by Marcos Pilozo.

19 Our next speaker is Marcos
20 Pilozo, followed by Gilda Aronson.

21 MARCOS PILOZO: Thank you for
22 this opportunity to speak. Some folks
23 say that CBE tolling is strictly a
24 money grab affecting the residents of
25 the New York metro area. I believe

1 this is obviously true and undeniable.
2 I believe that if the MTA were given a
3 trillion dollars, they would find a
4 way to spend it and then they would
5 say they need more.

6 There are two primary reasons
7 that I believe this is a money grab
8 for bloated MTA. Firstly, and most
9 importantly, is the data used to come
10 up with the reasons to tell us this
11 tolling is critically needed is very
12 old. That data regarding
13 environmental impact was gathered a
14 very, very long time ago.

15 Environmental data was gathered
16 years before COVID when workers would
17 have to go to their workplaces in
18 person. Fewer people go to their work
19 places now. There are fewer cars in
20 New York City today, as a prior
21 speaker recently mentioned.

22 Lower congestion is not just
23 because of changes in commuting
24 habits, but also because driving into
25 Manhattan and other boroughs is

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

101

1 already extremely challenging due to
2 the lack of lanes, lack of parking,
3 people just not driving into Manhattan
4 unless they absolutely have to.

5 Second reason this is obviously
6 a money grab, is that you state that
7 the environment would be helped by
8 drivers paying a lot of money to enter
9 the CBD the zone. Obviously this will
10 simply move a perceived environmental
11 problem to the periphery of the CBD
12 zone. Among others, this would --
13 this will harm Harlem, Washington
14 Heights, Western Queens, the Bronx,
15 Staten Island and parts of Eastern New
16 Jersey across from Manhattan. So
17 there will be a lot of impact to those
18 in the poorer communities.

19 I hope you guys have thought
20 that out. I know that sometimes there
21 are unintended consequences to very
22 large changes. This is going to end
23 up making huge impacts to the poorer
24 communities.

25 That's all I have to say. Thank

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 you so much for this opportunity to
2 speak.

3 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

4 We'll now move on to the 31st
5 person on the list, Gilda Aronson,
6 followed by Anderson Blackman.

7 Our next speaker is Anderson
8 Blackman, followed by Fred English.

9 Our next speaker is Fred
10 English, followed by Nicole Nurse.

11 Our next speaker is Nicole
12 Nurse, followed by Isacc Perez.

13 Our next speaker is Isacc Perez,
14 followed by Joshua Bienstock.

15 Our next speaker is Joshua
16 Bienstock, followed by Michael Murray.

17 Our next speaker is Michael
18 Murray, followed by Isabella Rieke.

19 Our next speaker Isabella Rieke,
20 followed by Anthony Nichols.

21 Our next speaker is Anthony
22 Nichols followed by Vladimir Malinsky.

23 Our next speaker is Vladimir
24 Malinsky, followed by Dan Rodriguez.

25 Our next speaker is Dan

1 Rodriguez, followed by Henry Kim.

2 Please go ahead with your
3 remarks.

4 DAN RODRIGUEZ: I'm before you
5 as a representative of Coach USA and
6 subsidiaries and the Bus Association
7 of New Jersey, of which I am
8 president. Thank you for the
9 opportunity to state our position on
10 the Central Business District Tolling
11 Program.

12 Coach USA looks forward to the
13 opportunity to separately comment on
14 the Environmental Assessment for the
15 program, which will be made clear in
16 our comments; Coach USA believes
17 inadequately addresses the central
18 issue I'm here to speak about today;
19 the need to exempt the reliable,
20 affordable, inter-city bus service
21 provided by Coach USA carriers from
22 congestion tolling.

23 Coach USA operates more than 25
24 bus carriers in North America that
25 operates scheduled bus routes, motor

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 coach tours, airport shuttles and city
2 sightseeing tours. The bus routes
3 operated by Coach USA subsidiaries
4 include private passenger service, as
5 well as federally funded public
6 transit service, including throughout
7 New York. Thus why a public carrier,
8 a private carrier, we are
9 fundamentally intertwined with public
10 transit bus service in the New York
11 area.

12 One of our carriers is notably
13 Megabus. Since its inception in
14 April of 2006, Megabus is one of the
15 leading intercity motorcoach services
16 with more than 55 million customers.
17 Megabus has 196 daily routes serving
18 four stops in Manhattan. Megabus'
19 relationship with Manhattan is vital
20 to this service and most importantly,
21 to our passengers who rely on an
22 economical and efficient
23 transportation to New York
24 Metropolitan area.

25 I want to stress and make clear

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 from the start, that we value the
2 support that needs to address the New
3 York traffic congestion concerns at
4 issue here today. As such, we provide
5 public transportation to over 73,000
6 passengers every day and over
7 26 million a year. That's 26 million
8 cars we take off Manhattan's streets.
9 Therefore, we believe that the MTA
10 Traffic Mobility Review Board and the
11 Federal Highway Administration, should
12 not approve any congestion tolling
13 that applies to buses.

14 While currently several proposed
15 tolling scenarios in the Environmental
16 Assessment include exemptions for
17 buses, other proposals do not.
18 Moreover, the assessment also does not
19 clearly distinguish between New Jersey
20 Transit buses and private operated
21 buses serving New Jersey Transit
22 routes. It is why we seek that any
23 and all bus operators should be
24 expressly exempt from all tolling
25 requirements imposed by the program.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

106

1 Don't get me wrong, there is a clear
2 need to impose tolls on passenger cars
3 as opposed to cars that enter
4 Manhattan below 60th Street.

5 The current traffic created by
6 passenger cars, their emissions is bad
7 for a quality of life, public health
8 and adverse to businesses. However --

9 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
10 your remarks.

11 DAN RODRIGUEZ: -- and the
12 public interest served by buses,
13 should not be penalized through
14 congestion tolls.

15 Ridership on our buses, as I
16 mentioned, removes 26 million
17 passenger cars from Manhattan streets
18 every year.

19 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

20 DAN RODRIGUEZ: By removing
21 these cars, we have already reduced
22 the carbon footprint --

23 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

24 Our next speaker is Henry Kim,
25 followed by Daniel Geary.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 Our next speaker is Daniel
2 Geary, followed by Gregory Bishop.

3 Our next speaker is Gregory
4 Bishop, followed by Sonia Figueroa.

5 Our next speaker is Sonia
6 Figueroa, followed by Colette Vogell.

7 Our next speaker is Colette
8 Vogell, followed by Suzette Mcleod.

9 COLETTE VOGELL: Hi, can you
10 hear me?

11 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

12 COLETTE VOGELL: Hi. So I live
13 in the congestion zone in the East
14 30s. I'm a middle-class family with
15 two children here. I don't have
16 access to the 2nd Avenue subway to
17 take my kids to all of their
18 after-school activities, so I can't
19 use public transportation to go from
20 30th Street all the way to 90th Street
21 and get them there in the time they
22 need to.

23 So can you guys tell me that
24 it's going to be \$23 every day that I
25 need to take my car out of my

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 driveway? It is outrageous and I
2 can't believe that this is even being
3 discussed. I mean, how would you feel
4 if they said to everyone in the
5 boroughs it's \$23 to move your car out
6 of your driveway. I'm sure if that
7 happened, we wouldn't be having that
8 discussion.

9 If you want to stop the
10 congestion in Manhattan, then you need
11 to get rid of all of the restaurant
12 shantys, all of the stupid bike
13 docking systems that are around the
14 most inconvenient areas around the
15 Midtown Tunnels and the bridges.

16 I'm a cyclist and it's not safe
17 to cycle in Manhattan plus, I can't
18 take a bike and take my kids to where
19 they need to be. It is ridiculous and
20 outrageous. You also have the
21 congestion pricing on all the taxis.
22 If I'm correct, it's \$2.50 for every
23 person that takes a taxi ride or an
24 Uber.

25 What has the MTA done with that

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 money? They wasted it. They've done
2 nothing with it. They've just -- it's
3 a money grab, as someone earlier said.
4 The only way to really stop this fee,
5 to stop this whole process, is to
6 elect Zeldin, we need to get Hochul
7 out and get a republican in this year
8 that can really get us back to where
9 we need to be, okay.

10 All these businesses in the area
11 here are going to go out of business.
12 I shop here, I buy things here. All
13 your deliveries, who do you think is
14 going to pay for that, the consumer,
15 the people that use it in the area.
16 So you going to go and buy a doughnut,
17 your doughnut that's \$1, is now -- it
18 might be \$1.50.

19 It's bad enough that we have to
20 spend more on our groceries, but now
21 every delivery is going to be passed
22 on to the consumers in the congestion
23 zone and it's just not fair. So I
24 think this is a horrible idea, I
25 believe that your idea of -- this

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

110

1 environmental impact, I think it's
2 flawed. I don't think it's even
3 correct. I think you're just moving
4 the climate change areas so you might
5 not have a little bit of climate area
6 in the zone, but it's going to be
7 moved elsewhere.

8 This whole thing is a poorly
9 planned situation and people like me
10 are all going to move out of
11 Manhattan, and the people who live
12 here are not even going to be able to
13 sell their apartments if you continue
14 on this journey. And it's going to be
15 the death of Lower Manhattan, say
16 goodbye, and all the business are
17 going to end up moving out anyway
18 because no one's going to want to work
19 here. Thank you.

20 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

21 Our next speaker is Suzette
22 Mcleod, followed by Israel Kaufman.

23 Our next speaker is Phil
24 Konigsberg, followed by Danna Dennis.

25 PHIL KONIGSBERG: Okay, should I

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 start?

2 MR. WOJNAR: You may.

3 PHIL KONIGSBERG: My name is
4 Phil Konigsberg. I live in Bay
5 Terrace in Northeast Queens and for
6 over a decade, I've been speaking
7 against congestion pricing for years
8 and years that this has come up
9 before.

10 I'm a member of the disabled
11 community and I'm also on the Board of
12 Directors of the Jamaica Estates
13 Volunteer Ambulance Corps. So I'd
14 like, if possibly when I'm finished,
15 someone here could address if already
16 that disabled drivers and emergency
17 vehicles are exempt from this
18 congestion pricing. I believe that
19 was established previously. And yet,
20 I don't see that listed on any of the
21 information so far.

22 Now, to my presentation. How do
23 you expect New York Metropolitan
24 residents to give up their vehicles
25 and take mass transit, when on a daily

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 basis, criminal activity is a headline
2 on television, radio and printed
3 social media. Commuters are afraid to
4 ride mass transit, so why does anyone
5 think they will give up their cars and
6 put their health and safety in
7 jeopardy?

8 As a result of congestion
9 pricing, businesses are going to
10 relocate to the surrounding outer
11 boroughs and/or Jersey or be the
12 deciding factor of businesses to leave
13 the entire New York City Metro area.
14 This goes against the goal of bringing
15 business back to Manhattan after
16 COVID.

17 Traffic and air pollution north
18 of 60th Street in Manhattan and the
19 outer boroughs will significantly be
20 increased by implementing this tax on
21 vehicles entering the Central Business
22 District. Queens already experiences
23 traffic congestion throughout the day
24 on most major highways. Implementing
25 this tax will only slow traffic, which

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 often is moving at a snail's pace in
2 Queens, not just for cars, trucks, but
3 for the local bus and express bus
4 traffic, that the congestion pricing
5 policy's encouraging commuters to
6 switch to.

7 And let's not forget about the
8 congestion pricing effect on the taxi
9 industry. They are struggling now to
10 make a living. Congestion pricing
11 will have a combined effect of
12 decreasing this vital service and/or
13 reducing the number of passengers who
14 will have a surcharge added to their
15 fares. I urge that someone, Governor
16 Hochul, an elected state legislator,
17 as previously said -- Mike Lawler
18 mentioned he was going to propose a
19 bill to cancel. At this point --

20 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
21 your remarks.

22 PHIL KONIGSBERG: Okay. Someone
23 has to step up at this 11th hour and
24 put a stop to this before it's too
25 late.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 Thank you, everyone.

2 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

3 Our next speaker is our 51st
4 sign-up, Danna Dennis, followed by
5 Chris Collins.

6 Our next speaker is Chris
7 Collins, followed by Sharon Lee.

8 Our next speaker is Sharon Lee,
9 followed, Henry Schaier.

10 Our next speaker is Henry
11 Schaier, followed by Christopher
12 Colon.

13 Our next speaker is Christopher
14 Colon, followed by Cindi Patterson.

15 Our next speaker is Cindi
16 Patterson, followed by JeanDarcel
17 Michel.

18 Our next speaker is JeanDarcel
19 Michel, followed by Lauren Secular.

20 Our next speaker is Lauren
21 Secular, followed by Chris Doyle.

22 Our next speaker is Chris Doyle,
23 followed by John Chamberlin.

24 Our next speaker is the 60th
25 sign up, John Chamberlin, followed by

1 Howard Babich.

2 Our next speaker is Howard
3 Babich, followed by Kat Harley.

4 HOWARD BABICH: Thank you for
5 the opportunity to speak. I think
6 it's very interesting that both the
7 city's original report, Move New York,
8 and the state's original report, Fix
9 New York, say that the reason for the
10 congestion -- the reasons for the
11 congestion are the proliferation of
12 for-hire vehicles, lack of enforcement
13 of traffic laws, and construction.
14 Yet, you have a program here that does
15 nothing to address those causes.

16 Also, I saw a recent study of
17 the program in place in London that
18 said the program was a total failure
19 and congestion hasn't been addressed
20 at all, because it hasn't addressed
21 the true cause of it, the congestion,
22 which is the proliferation of for-hire
23 vehicles.

24 So it seems that the state is
25 saying, we have congestion, we know

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

116

1 what the problems are, and we're
2 putting forward a program that does
3 nothing to address those problems; it
4 makes a lot of sense. As a matter of
5 a fact, the city's Mobility Report of
6 2019 and your own Environmental
7 Assessment says that the proliferation
8 of the for-hire vehicles have tripled
9 over the past, so there's a serious
10 problem right there.

11 Also, in your Environmental
12 Assessment, you state that the
13 project's purpose is to reduce traffic
14 congestion in the Manhattan Central
15 Business District in a manner that
16 will generate revenue for future
17 transportation improvements. It's
18 funny that you don't say that the
19 project's purpose is to reduce
20 congestion, period.

21 You go on to say that to raise
22 money. So I have to tend to agree
23 with Assemblyman Lawler, where he says
24 it's a money grab. But to put it a
25 little more nicely, it's a revenue

1 enhancement; nothing more than that.
2 I think everyone knows that and you're
3 not fooling anybody by saying it's
4 otherwise.

5 But it seems to be, as the
6 Governor said, a done deal and it's a
7 fait accompli, so I don't really want
8 to dwell on that. But what I really
9 like to focus on is, as a resident of
10 the district, I live in Chelsea and
11 I'm concerned about a carve-out or
12 exemptions. A \$60,000 cap on income,
13 first of all, it's not clear whether
14 that's household income or individual
15 income. If it's household, then it's
16 ridiculous because two wage earners
17 earning a minimum wage, earn over
18 \$60,000. So \$60,000 is ridiculous.

19 As a matter of fact, Assemblyman
20 Gottfried was going to propose raising
21 that to \$100,000. But unfortunately,
22 he's retiring. Also, as for the tax
23 credit, I need to know is that a
24 refundable tax credit or
25 nonrefundable. Because if it's

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 nonrefundable, then persons who don't
2 have tax liabilities cannot use a tax
3 credit. If you do not pay state tax,
4 and many people do not pay state tax,
5 the tax credit is useless. So to do
6 it as a nonrefundable tax credit would
7 be a waste.

8 Thank you very much.

9 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

10 Our next speaker is Kat Harley,
11 followed by Barak Friedman.

12 Our next speaker is Barak
13 Friedman, followed by Renee Kinsella.

14 MR. FRIEDMAN: Hey, everybody.
15 Can you hear me?

16 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

17 BARAK FRIEDMAN: Okay. First of
18 all, thank you to the MTA for having
19 this meeting and giving us an
20 opportunity to speak.

21 I want to say that I'm a huge
22 supporter congestion pricing, or
23 Central Business District Tolling
24 Program. I live in the congestion
25 zone and honestly, we're drowning here

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 in the congestion zone. So many
2 people are driving in and the air
3 quality is pretty bad, we have high
4 asthma rates. The noise pollution is
5 terrible.

6 We have the slowest buses in the
7 country, so I'll repeat that again,
8 that's atrocious. We have the slowest
9 buses in the country and this is
10 serving people who are less wealthy.
11 We have our deliveries being slowed
12 down by all this congestion. Our
13 delivery drivers have to double park
14 with all the externalities of double
15 parking that occurs.

16 This will be a huge help for
17 emergency vehicles, fire trucks,
18 ambulances who need to obviously get
19 to emergencies on time. There's a
20 traffic violence epidemic in this
21 city. We have hundreds of people die
22 every year and get hit, and this will
23 help that. This will fund the subways
24 and buses which we desperately need.

25 I would only support an

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

120

1 exemption that's already in effect for
2 the buses, subways, LIRR and
3 Metro-North. Any exemption that
4 applies to car drivers, must also
5 apply to public transit commuters.
6 Otherwise, it's not fair and
7 regressive.

8 I want to thank you for your
9 time, and that's it.

10 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

11 Our next speaker is Renee
12 Kinsella, followed by Xuepeng Pang.

13 Our next speaker is Xuepeng
14 Pang, followed by Michael Golz.

15 Our next speaker is Michael
16 Golz, followed by David Tenenbaum.

17 MICHAEL GOLZ: Can everybody
18 hear me?

19 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.
20 Please proceed.

21 MICHAEL GOLZ: All right. So I
22 just want to go over some history. I
23 think every single one of us, no
24 matter if you're pro or con against
25 congestion pricing, we can't trust the

1 MTA. We're just going to go over some
2 financing and accounting as issued by
3 the NY State and comptroller. And
4 this has to do with outstanding
5 long-term debt.

6 2010, \$25 billion dollars; 2019,
7 \$35 billion dollars, an increase of 37
8 percent; 2021, \$40 billion dollars, an
9 increase of 13 percent. Outstanding
10 debt will reach \$47 billion by 2026,
11 could go as high as \$57 billion by
12 2030 and that includes all bonding
13 backed by congestion pricing revenues
14 paid for by the MTA's Capital program.

15 In this same report by the NY
16 Comptroller, identified \$54 billion
17 that the MTA has yet to be committed
18 to projects this date, as back as
19 2010. So 2010, you have 54 billion
20 dollars left that you haven't even
21 been applied yet to projects that are
22 going on.

23 Now, for example, here's
24 something, the 2nd Avenue Subway, one
25 section of it with three stops, was

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

122

1 initiated -- and I'm being generous
2 here -- 1972. There needs to be an
3 independent federal audit of the MTA
4 finances before any of this is even
5 considered. New Jersey and the other
6 surrounding areas will not be double
7 taxed for the MTA's fiscal failure.
8 This is a cash grab, as many people
9 said before, plain and simple.

10 At a time when you're trying to
11 get people back to the city, you do
12 this? It sounds opposite to that, I
13 don't even understand. Even if rail
14 and bus commuters do return to
15 prepandemic levels, the systems are
16 already over capacity. Look at what
17 happened this week, a stalled train
18 caused a ninety-plus minute delay at
19 Penn Station. New Jersey Transit is
20 still only running at 60 percent
21 capacity.

22 Maybe you should have done it
23 like London did, improve mass transit
24 before you implement congestion
25 pricing, but you can't because you

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

123

1 made a mess of your old finances over
2 the last 50 years and we can't expect
3 any different with this poorly
4 conceived program.

5 And the environment, you're just
6 putting pollutants in other places,
7 like the Bronx, places in Jersey,
8 Lincoln and Holland Tunnel, Fort Lee,
9 George Washington Bridge. Congestion?
10 How about all of those pedestrian
11 plazas and bike lanes installed --
12 I'll finish.

13 You're using the surrounding
14 communities, Downstate, New Jersey,
15 Connecticut, Long Island, as your
16 piggy bank. We are the economic
17 engine and workforce of the community
18 and if you think that charging trucks
19 that bring in supplies to the city are
20 a good thing, if you think inflation's
21 bad now, just wait. That gallon of
22 milk, those dozen eggs, nah, ain't
23 going to happen.

24 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
25 your remarks.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

124

1 MR. GOLZ: Thank you.

2 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

3 Our next speaker is David
4 Tenenbaum, followed by Jinah Lim.

5 Our next speaker is Jinah Lim,
6 followed by Austin Celestin.

7 Our next speaker is Austin
8 Celestin, followed by Michael Gross.

9 Our next speaker is Michael
10 Gross, followed by Aileen Goldstein.

11 Our next speaker is Aileen
12 Goldstein, followed by Christopher
13 Gomez.

14 AILEEN GOLDSTEIN: Hello?

15 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.
16 Please proceed.

17 AILEEN GOLDSTEIN: Hi. This is
18 geographic discrimination for outer
19 borough residents who pay the same
20 taxes as Manhattanites.

21 You're only addressing the
22 lower-income group. But with
23 additional tolls and fees, you are
24 pushing us in the middle-class down to
25 the lower class.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 Why did we get rid of the
2 commuter tax all these years? That
3 could have been used to fund the MTA.
4 And why is tolling 24/7, when there's
5 no congestion overnight and most
6 weekends.

7 I'm going to use myself as an
8 example. I transit through Manhattan
9 through Queens to reach the Holland
10 Tunnel for work. I go from the
11 Manhattan Bridge to Canal Street for
12 approximately twelve blocks to get to
13 the Holland Tunnel. Why should I be
14 tolled at the same rate as someone who
15 was in the district driving around for
16 the whole day causing congestion? I'm
17 leaving, I'm not part of the
18 congestion. I also do not always come
19 home the same day, so I will be tolled
20 twice.

21 I had four medical procedures in
22 the past three months. I had to be at
23 the hospital at 5:30 a.m. in the CBD.
24 I had general anesthesia and I needed
25 to be accompanied home, which is the

1 hospital rule. It was no way I
2 could've taken public transportation
3 or a for-hire vehicle. It would have
4 been an economic hardship to have a
5 toll in addition to the garage.

6 I had chemo and radiation a few
7 years ago, weekly and daily. There is
8 no way to afford to go to treatment
9 with additional tolls. World class
10 hospitals will be out of reach for
11 most New Yorkers.

12 There should be a cap on the
13 number for-hire vehicles and the ones
14 causing the congestion are them as
15 well as delivery trucks and double
16 parkers and Citi Bike racks.

17 All of this only reduces daily
18 vehicle miles within the district five
19 percent and daily cars entering by ten
20 percent. That's a tall tree number
21 for a big money grab.

22 How do we know that the MTA will
23 not continue to waste money like the
24 cost overruns on the Oculus and the
25 2nd Avenue subway. And Janno Lieber,

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

127

1 don't keep threatening that the more
2 exemptions and carve-outs will cost us
3 more. Some people deserve those
4 exemptions, like the handicapped.

5 This is all a farce, you all
6 decided already what's going to happen
7 and nothing we say is going to change
8 the plan.

9 I'm a member of the
10 Environmental Justice Group and you
11 have not addressed anything that was
12 brought up being disabled or
13 motorcycles. This city has world
14 class museums, theaters and cultural
15 attractions. We can barely afford to
16 take advantage of them now. With
17 these kind of fees, nobody will be
18 able to come into the city that lives
19 around to take advantage of this.

20 Thank you.

21 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

22 Our next speaker is Christopher
23 Gomez, followed by Maria Del Pilar.

24 Our next speaker is Maria Del
25 Pilar, followed by Jennifer Harvey.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

128

1 Our next speaker is Jennifer
2 Harvey, followed by Michael Dumas.

3 Our next speaker is Michael
4 Dumas, followed by Evan Ferrer.

5 Our next speaker is Evan Ferrer,
6 followed by Ian Robinson.

7 EVAN FERRER: Hello. My name is
8 Evan and I was born and raised on
9 Manhattan Island, specifically
10 Morningside Heights. Besides four
11 years at university, I've lived my
12 entire life on Manhattan Island.

13 Neither of my parents have ever
14 owned a car, neither have I. I took
15 the bus to Corpus Christi grammar
16 school on 121st Street and I took the
17 1 Train to Xavier High School on 16th
18 Street.

19 Currently, I work as a CPA for
20 Deloitte tax. Our offices are
21 headquartered in 30 Rockefeller Plaza,
22 in Manhattan Central Business
23 District. I came to work by subway or
24 bicycle. With that said, I am
25 desperately in favor of congestion

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 pricing. I have lost friends to
2 traffic violence, I have friends that
3 currently ride bicycles for fun and
4 some for work.

5 It's deliveries that fuel our
6 city's economy. I ride my bicycle and
7 so does my girlfriend. Let me tell
8 you plain and clear, there are too
9 many cars on New York City streets.
10 Congestion pricing is not just another
11 toll and certainly not a tax on the
12 poor. It is a means by which we will
13 fund the future of our infrastructure.
14 It should serve as a steppingstone to
15 a change in the way we fundamentally
16 think about transportation. The
17 socioeconomic benefits of a healthy
18 public transportation system are
19 invaluable.

20 Also, I don't think the loud,
21 tinted cars on our streets are all
22 driving to their doctor's office.
23 Cars are currently terrorizing our
24 city streets. Enough of the rhetoric
25 about unsafe subways for the elderly.

1 Are highways any safer? Have you ever
2 seen the madness that occurs on our
3 city roads? Is this really safer for
4 the elderly? Enough is enough. No
5 more excuses, no exemptions and no
6 caps.

7 It's clear where my support lies
8 and so I'll end on this note, it's not
9 fair to New Yorkers that congestion
10 pricing is only to be applied in
11 Manhattan Central Business District.
12 In fact, it should be applied to every
13 one of the five boroughs, with the
14 Central Business District being tolled
15 more heavily than others. Other
16 metropolitan cities have figured it
17 out. It's time for New York to step
18 into the 21st Century.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

21 Our next speaker is Ian
22 Robinson, followed by Alexander Frank.

23 Our next speaker is Alexander
24 Frank, followed by Wendy Pincus.

25 Our next speaker is Wendy

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 Pincus, followed by Erica Levin.

2 Our next speaker, the 80th to
3 sign-up, is Erica Levin, followed by
4 Felicia Sparkman.

5 Our next speaker, is Erica
6 Levin, followed by Eric Martz.

7 Our next speaker is Eric Martz,
8 followed by Quanda Francis.

9 Our next speaker is Quanda
10 Francis, followed by Tensae
11 Andargachew.

12 Our next speaker is Tensae
13 Andargachew, followed by James Ofalo.

14 Our next speaker is James Ofalo,
15 followed by Maritza De Leon.

16 Our next speaker is Maritza De
17 Leon, followed by Dunton Black.

18 Our next speaker is Dunton
19 Black, followed by Chayse Pena.

20 Our next speaker is Chayse Pena,
21 followed by Tai Lau.

22 Our next speaker is Tai Lau,
23 followed by Christopher Amplo.

24 Our next speaker, the 90th to
25 sign-up, is Christopher Amplo,

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

132

1 followed by Harmanpreet Singh.

2 CHRISTOPHER AMPLO: Can you hear
3 me?

4 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.
5 Please proceed.

6 CHRISTOPHER AMPLO: My name is
7 Christopher Amplo. I'm a born and
8 bred New Yorker from Brooklyn. I've
9 lived in Queens, I've lived in Nassau
10 County. I'm also a small business
11 owner.

12 My main clientele that we
13 service, as we are in the service
14 industry, is that of New York City,
15 with an unusually high rate of those
16 that are in the lower side of
17 Manhattan.

18 I'm adamantly against the idea
19 of congestion pricing, as I don't find
20 it will be a solution to remove
21 vehicles from the road. Additionally,
22 it will increase the costs of services
23 and goods that are being provided for
24 the residents that you're so
25 desperately attempting to help.

1 A few of the questions that I,
2 myself, ask when I reviewed this idea
3 is, why do we not limit or reduce the
4 number of for-hire vehicles on the
5 road? How will this affect the goods
6 that people do need to purchase that
7 are being brought in through trucks;
8 how will this affect the cost of
9 services, such as fixing something
10 like a refrigerator or a dishwasher,
11 which generally needs to occur during
12 normal business hours, as to building
13 rules.

14 Additionally, when it comes to
15 the toll itself, how do we know the
16 limit will be maintained for any
17 extended period amount of time, or
18 whatever the final amount is decided
19 upon? With that, how will the success
20 of the program be measured? Who will
21 be the oversight? Once the program is
22 reviewed and is either deemed success
23 or failure, if it were to be deemed a
24 failure, would it be rolled back?

25 Additionally and finally, the

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

134

1 question I find myself repeatedly that
2 I ask about the MTA in particular, a
3 service that I use quite frequently to
4 visit clients and travel throughout
5 the New York City area is, why have
6 the fares to the buses and trains have
7 not been increased in quite some time
8 and yet, the penalties for people that
9 need or choose to use vehicles is
10 consistently being increased in some
11 form or another, whether it be speed
12 camera, violations, increased
13 registration cost, limited parking and
14 a number of other things that have
15 really lead me to believe that there
16 is a war on vehicles in New York City.

17 I'm not saying that there isn't
18 a problem with traffic, but I do feel
19 that there may be other solutions,
20 such as the EV technology that will be
21 coming out and limiting the amount of
22 for-hire vehicles in New York City.

23 Thank you for the opportunity
24 and we appreciate you giving us all
25 the chance to hear our perspective.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

135

1 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

2 Our next speaker is Harmanpreet
3 Singh, followed by Steve Neeren.

4 Our next speaker is Steve
5 Neeren, followed by Brent Bovenzi.

6 Our next speaker is Brent
7 Bovenzi, followed by David Stern.

8 BRENT BOVENZI: Hi there. My
9 name is Brent Bovenzi. I live in
10 Brooklyn, I work in Manhattan. I grew
11 up in Jersey. I'll go take the train,
12 hike in the Hudson. I'll visit my
13 friends in Westchester and
14 Connecticut.

15 We have ample public transit to
16 cross this region. But that transit
17 right now is under threat due to
18 budget shortfalls and Manhattan is
19 currently choked with cars. People
20 that cross Manhattan through Canal
21 Street just get to Jersey.

22 It leaves us in a really
23 dangerous position as a pedestrian, as
24 a cyclist and this program for the
25 congestion pricing is a great first

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

136

1 step to make this city cleaner and
2 more equitable and should happen as
3 soon as possible and with the fewest
4 possible exceptions; of course, there
5 should be for handicapped vehicles; of
6 course, it should be for emergency
7 vehicles; but not for a police officer
8 that takes their private car to then
9 drive an emergency vehicle. And we
10 should then use this money to
11 eliminate all the transit deserts in
12 the region and provide everybody in
13 this region with fast, frequent,
14 reliable and accessible transportation
15 options that serve us seven days a
16 week, not just Monday through Friday.

17 And this funding source can help
18 a ton for us to achieve that so we
19 don't need a car to enter Manhattan,
20 and we can do more with that space
21 than just have it for these massive
22 highways that destroy our
23 neighborhoods and cause our asthma
24 problems. And these suggestions are
25 not a -- but we have to do these

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

137

1 things first and have congestion
2 pricing later. We can do all of this
3 together, this is a yes. And yes to
4 congestion pricing and provide better
5 options; yes and let's work on our
6 transportation options; yes and let's
7 improve park space; yes and let's
8 figure out better ways to get goods
9 into the city without all of these
10 trucks that cause massive amounts of
11 pollution. That's what we should be
12 focusing on, what can we do with this?

13 From what I've read, I would
14 prefer option D and I hope that's what
15 we go for.

16 Thank you very much.

17 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker is David Stern,
19 followed by Richard Calabro, followed
20 by Frederick Courvoisier.

21 Our next speaker is Frederic
22 Courvoisier, followed by Lee Berman.

23 Our next speaker is Lee Berman,
24 followed by Tuhin Khan.

25 LEE BERMAN: Hi. Can you hear

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 me?

2 MR. WOJNAR: Yes.

3 LEE BERMAN: Hi. I'm Lee
4 Berman, District Leader from the Lower
5 East Side of Manhattan, a Transit
6 desert. And I represent thousands of
7 residents within the Central Business
8 District, many of whom have lived here
9 for generations that would be
10 irreparably and negatively affected by
11 this ridiculous plan. If this
12 ill-conceived and discriminatory plan
13 is approved, an exemption for all
14 residents who live in Lower Manhattan
15 must be granted.

16 Those of us who live here, who,
17 unlike as stated in your Environmental
18 Assessment, do not have the ability to
19 just pick up and move to outside the
20 zone, should not have to pay an
21 additional tax on top of the taxes and
22 fees we are already forced to pay to
23 live here. The purported credit for
24 those earning under \$60,000 will still
25 require them to fork over this tax and

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 then wait to get a refund when they
2 file their income taxes. And if you
3 earn one dollar over the 60,000-dollar
4 threshold, you're totally screwed.

5 Many in this very community,
6 this Transit desert, require the use
7 of a car; whether to get to and from
8 their job, to get to doctors'
9 appointments, to pick up their
10 children from after-school programs or
11 extracurricular activities, or who
12 wish to visit family who live too far
13 to visit on unsafe and unreliable mass
14 transit. Or because taking a family
15 of four, or six, or eight, on buses
16 and trains for two to three-plus hours
17 each way is not possible for them.

18 You're going to tax Orthodox
19 Jews who drive to Brooklyn to buy
20 kosher food. In Chinatown, residents
21 can drive to Sunset Park, get to other
22 Chinatowns to shop for their families
23 because they don't want to risk being
24 victims of hate crimes on the subway.

25 Congestion pricing will further

1 tax the working middle class, and
2 lower income families of Lower
3 Manhattan.

4 One of the things the pandemic
5 has shown is that more and more
6 residents who can afford to, will
7 leave. But too many of us in Lower
8 Manhattan do not have that luxury, no
9 matter what the anti-car fanatics
10 claim. Every Lower Manhattan resident
11 will now have to pay higher prices for
12 everyday goods and services, including
13 those who can least afford to. That
14 includes those of us living in poverty
15 and the disabled.

16 Our local bodegas, supermarkets
17 and other stores are not going to eat
18 the increased fees they have to pay
19 for deliveries. Every store is going
20 to pass along the cost of their
21 suppliers' transportation to all of us
22 in Lower Manhattan.

23 And while the bougie cyclists
24 and those of you making this decision
25 to tax my community can afford it, we

1 cannot. You insult New Yorkers'
2 intelligence by telling us that the
3 MTA, which for generations have
4 squandered our tax dollars and fares
5 to the tune of hundreds of billions of
6 dollars over the years, will actually
7 spend this newfound tax to actually
8 improve transit and not waste it. If
9 you believe that, then I have a bridge
10 to sell you. No. We will not let you
11 bleed the working-class people of
12 Lower Manhattan dry so that you can
13 continue the wasteful spending of the
14 MTA on the backs of our residents.

15 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
16 your remarks.

17 LEE BERMAN: Thank you.

18 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

19 Our next speaker is Tuhin Khan,
20 followed by Wassim Rikabi.

21 Our next speaker is Wassim
22 Rikabi, followed by Tim Schnurr.

23 Our next speaker, the 100th to
24 sign up, is Tim Schnurr, followed by
25 Pablo Zevallos.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

142

1 Our next speaker is Pablo
2 Zevallos, followed by Jessica Guity.

3 PABLO ZEVALLOS: Good evening.
4 My name is Pablo Zevallos. And I'm a
5 lawyer, a straphanger and an Upper
6 West Side resident. I'm testifying in
7 support of speedy adoption of
8 congestion pricing with only the
9 exemptions required by statute and
10 this approach would benefit my West
11 Side neighbors and me.

12 Congestion pricing is vital
13 because it's set up for success. It
14 will raise \$15 billion for capital
15 improvements to our transit system.
16 These improvements, in addition to
17 reduced car traffic to begin with,
18 will make transit faster, more
19 reliable and more accessible.

20 For my part, whether I'm heading
21 down to Court or to see friends and
22 family, I need transit I can trust,
23 not 2 and 3 trains held between 96th
24 and 72nd Street due to signal
25 problems.

1 Crucially, these improvements
2 would, in turn, also make using buses
3 and subways a steadier option for
4 older adults and people with
5 disabilities who are eligible for
6 half-priced MetroCards and
7 disproportionally used buses to begin
8 with.

9 In addition, the MTA's plan to
10 submit a request to the federal
11 government to allow more taxis and
12 for-hire vehicles to use their
13 vehicles for paratransit will combine
14 with funded accessibility improvements
15 and the MTA's existing paratransit
16 options to create a fuller suite of
17 accessible public transportation
18 options.

19 Now, of the scenarios evaluated,
20 Scenario A is best positioned to bring
21 about a faster, more reliable, and
22 more accessible transit. By spreading
23 across broadly, it will ensure us that
24 we will still have enough drivers
25 coming in to work and visit our city

1 and pay the tolls that will fund these
2 improvements.

3 It will be unworkable for West
4 Side drivers to pay \$23 to enter the
5 Manhattan Central Business District
6 just to create car routes for Uber,
7 Lyft and Amazon, while further
8 straining our supplying chains with
9 sky-high rates for trucks.

10 Scenario A would also work for
11 our West Side community. Under
12 Scenario A, traffic from vehicles
13 entering and leaving the CBD would
14 decrease by about 23 percent on West
15 Side streets. For taxis and for-hire
16 vehicles, which have been the single
17 biggest driver of increased traffic in
18 our city, this decrease would be 29
19 percent and for trucks, 17 percent.
20 Vehicle miles traveled between 60th
21 and 82nd Street would shrink by 11
22 percent, an additional one percent
23 reduction between 82nd and 126th
24 Street.

25 These traffic reductions would

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

145

1 slash greenhouse gas emissions and
2 accelerate city implementation of
3 street safety measures that would
4 reduce speeding and traffic injuries
5 and deaths. Congestion pricing
6 Scenario A would be a boon to Transit
7 riders like me as well as to our
8 surrounding communities.

9 Thank you for the opportunity to
10 comment.

11 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker is Jessica
13 Guity, followed by Murtaza Munir.

14 Our next speaker is Murtaza
15 Munir, followed by Jeffrey Zack.

16 Our next speaker is Jeffrey
17 Zack, followed by Sumiko Ito.

18 Our next speaker is Sumiko Ito,
19 followed by Joel Antonio Cespedes
20 Rodriguez.

21 Our next speaker is Joel Antonio
22 Cespedes Rodriguez, followed by Jon
23 Lindenbaum.

24 Our next speaker is Jon
25 Lindenbaum, followed by Milwood

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

146

1 Hughes.

2 Our next speaker is Milwood
3 Hughes followed by Lehns Jean-Michel.

4 Our next speaker is Lehns
5 Jean-Michel, followed by Jesus Morena.

6 LEHNS JEAN-MICHEL: Hello. Can
7 you hear me?

8 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

9 LEHNS JEAN-MICHEL: Hello. My
10 name is Lehns Jean-Michel. Thank you
11 for giving us this opportunity to
12 speak to you.

13 First off, I want to say that I
14 support reducing congestion and
15 pollution in the city. I just have a
16 few concerns as to how this program
17 will affect our New York citizens.

18 First off, I want to -- my main
19 concern is how are the funds going to
20 be used that displaces on our people.
21 For example, I think that there are
22 some issues when it comes to driving
23 into the city and being charged.

24 Let's say I need to get to 70th
25 Street and I'm taking the Queensboro

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

147

1 Bridge and I'm dipping into the
2 Central Business District for just
3 about a couple blocks because it gets
4 me over 59th Street and it's not
5 charging me. I don't think that's
6 really fair as to I'm only in the area
7 for just a moment.

8 I think that we need to address
9 concerns with for-hire vehicles and
10 how they affect congestion. And I
11 hope that the funds that are raised by
12 this program are going to be used to
13 expand Transit service to those of us
14 in less accessible areas. Such as
15 certain parts of Queens and certain
16 parts of Long Island.

17 Overall, I do support the
18 program. I just hope that everything
19 that you do will actually benefit us.

20 Thank you for your time.

21 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

22 Our next speaker is Jesus
23 Morena, followed by Lissette Velez.

24 Our next speaker and 111th on
25 the list is Lissette Velez, followed

1 by Anthony Duran.

2 LISSETTE VELEZ: Hi. Thank you
3 for allowing me to speak. I just have
4 some quick comments that I've been
5 jotting down as I go through.

6 I live in the outer boroughs. I
7 live in Queens and we're consistently
8 being treated as second-class
9 citizens. Everything is hosted in
10 Manhattan and we're prompted to go
11 there to receive services like the
12 major hospitals, city offices, for
13 school movements for our kids and
14 small businesses outreach trying to
15 get their needs met.

16 Before any price increase is
17 considered -- or congestion pricing is
18 considered, transportation to the
19 outer boroughs, especially for those
20 who have two and three fare zones,
21 needs to be implemented in a more
22 fluid manner. If not, it will be a
23 total backup and fiasco. Transit
24 issues need to be addressed properly,
25 not ignored.

1 My question is, why are so many
2 outside of New York City vehicles
3 being allowed to park and enter into
4 New York City? Will they be held to
5 the same standards? Why is that?
6 Because we're already paying New York
7 City taxes. And on top of paying New
8 York City taxes we would have this
9 congestion pricing. That's a double
10 tax, as I see it.

11 Congestion pricing has to take
12 effect for those -- in consideration
13 for those with lesser means who have
14 urgent needs to use their vehicles.

15 For example, I have my mother
16 with multiple myeloma in her spine.
17 She was disabled. I had to pick her
18 up many time for Access-A-Ride and
19 take her back from the chemotherapy.
20 At the same time, I had a son who was
21 on a scholarship to go to a fencing --
22 for fencing and that's major
23 equipment. You can't take a train
24 with that.

25 And there's just tons of

1 other -- I also had a small business.
2 I was a restaurant owner. And many
3 times, we had last-minute needs. Why
4 are we not seeking more remedies for
5 the outer boroughs?

6 For example, express buses go
7 from, let's say Forest Hills or Fresh
8 Meadows, directly into the city? Why
9 can't they make stops in Long Island
10 City to reroute people to allow them
11 to stop and work in Long Island City,
12 if they do so, or go to school in Long
13 Island City. For example, MTA did
14 away with the Queens borough -- took
15 away the Queens bus to Bronx Science
16 and Bronx Science had about 50
17 students and people who worked in the
18 Bronx utilize the bus that one time.
19 Yet, they can put it to other buses
20 that have frequent trips that day to
21 that one trip that the buses did.
22 That in itself would alleviate. As a
23 woman of middle age, I do feel --

24 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
25 remarks.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

151

1 LISSETTE VELEZ: I'm sorry?

2 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
3 comment.

4 LISSETTE VELEZ: As a woman of
5 middle age, I do not feel safe riding
6 in the subway. Today, for example --

7 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

8 Our next speaker is Anthony
9 Duran, followed by Malik Francois.

10 Our next speaker is Malik
11 Francois, followed by Christopher
12 Pierro.

13 Our next speaker is, Christopher
14 Pierro, followed by Sean Gerlis.

15 Our next speaker is Sean Gerlis,
16 followed by Tiffany Zhang.

17 Our next speaker is Tiffany
18 Zhang, followed by Deno Lufo.

19 Our next speaker is Deno Lufo,
20 followed by Giovannia Esquivel.

21 Our next speaker is Giovannia
22 Esquivel, followed by Stephen Burke.

23 Our next speaker, 120th on the
24 list, is Steven Burke, followed by
25 Roland Levin.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 Our next speaker is Roland
2 Levin, followed by Robert Schweit.

3 Our next speaker is Robert
4 Schweit, followed by Arlene Curinga.

5 Our next speaker is Arlene
6 Curinga, followed Wallace Jean.

7 Our next speaker is Wallace
8 Jean, followed Judi Edwards.

9 Wallace, you may begin your
10 remarks.

11 Wallace, unmute yourself and
12 then you may begin your remarks.

13 WALLACE JEAN: Sorry about that.

14 Hi. I'm against congestion
15 pricing. I live in the north Bronx
16 and this is basically like other
17 people said, is an unfair tax on
18 commuters and disenfranchised people.
19 I'm a cyclist myself, I use public
20 transportation as much as I can. But
21 the MTA, for years, has been stealing
22 money, mismanaging money. So I don't
23 trust the MTA either, as far as 2004
24 cooking the books, having two sets of
25 books and raising the fares; the

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

153

1 subways are unsafe for elderly people,
2 young people, basically anybody in
3 this city.

4 In order to get rid of the cars,
5 you have to make the subway system
6 safe. I don't ride the subway. I
7 don't take the public transportation
8 because it's not safe for anybody. If
9 you take public transport, you're
10 risking either assault, robbery or
11 death and that's not fair to people.
12 People in the South Bronx,
13 middle-class and working-class people
14 can't afford another tax.

15 The Brooklyn borough president
16 said that people that have cars are
17 wealthy, that's not true. People
18 drive their cars because they don't
19 feel safe on public transportation.
20 That's the thing. Fix the system
21 that's currently existing and people
22 will come. Until then, taxing people
23 \$23 -- you're not seeing the big
24 picture -- people will leave.

25 I'm a property owner in this

1 city, I was born and raised in this
2 city, but again, the MTA continues to
3 mismanage our public dollars. You're
4 not working for the people. You're
5 working against the people. This is
6 not right, it's not fair and even
7 though we're speaking on this panel,
8 you're going to do what you want to
9 do. You're just going to drive more
10 people out of this city, you're going
11 to drive more people out of this state
12 and that concludes my remarks. Thank
13 you.

14 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

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

22 We'll now call our 125th speaker
23 on the list, Judi Edwards, followed by
24 Marcel Kaganovskaya.

25 Our next speaker is Marcel

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 Kaganovskaya, followed by Gerald
2 Adames.

3 Our next speaker is Gerald
4 Adames, followed by Krzysztof
5 Klewinowski.

6 Our next speaker is Krzysztof
7 Klewinowski, followed by Ranjeet
8 Singh.

9 Our next speaker is Ranjeet
10 Singh, followed by John Samoilis.

11 Our next speaker is John
12 Samoilis, followed by Abdelkader
13 Frikha.

14 Our next speaker is Abdelkader
15 Frikha, followed by John Damato.

16 Our next speaker is John Damato,
17 followed by Bryce Shuman.

18 Our next speaker is Bryce
19 Shuman, followed by Octavia Williams.

20 Our next speaker is Octavia
21 Williams, followed by Joel Samuel.

22 Our next speaker Joel Samuel,
23 followed by Daysi Cuevas.

24 Our next speaker is Daysi
25 Cuevas, followed by our 140th speaker

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

156

1 on the list, Mukul Biswas.

2 Our next speaker is Mukul
3 Biswas, followed by Abdul Wadud.

4 Our next speaker is Abdul Wadud,
5 followed by Anika Richman.

6 Our next speaker is Anika
7 Richman, followed by Marietta Viera.

8 Our next speaker is Marietta
9 Viera, followed Sandra Fleming.

10 Our next speaker is Sandra
11 Fleming, followed by Neal Williams.

12 Our next speaker is Neal
13 Williams, followed by Andrew Hyatt.

14 Our next speaker is Andrew
15 Hyatt, followed by Robert Arnone.

16 ANDREW HYATT: Hello. Thank
17 you, everyone, for presenting this. I
18 think this sounds like a really well
19 thought out plan. I appreciate all
20 the work that has gone into this,
21 which is considerable, it's been
22 years.

23 I live in Central Business
24 District. I've lived in Queens for
25 ten years, I raised a family in Queens

1 and here as well. I've taken my kids
2 to the doctor, I've been hospitalized
3 myself. I understand the needs of
4 people, you know. It's not like I'm a
5 recent convert who I'm coming here and
6 I just don't understand how actual
7 people live. I think I have that
8 experience.

9 I support this with minimal
10 exceptions. I think a lot of people
11 have mentioned that this is going to
12 be a very high tax. I think if you
13 look at the slides that were presented
14 at the beginning of this meeting, it's
15 high to the extent that there are lots
16 of exceptions. If there's not a lot
17 of exceptions, it's not that high.

18 There's -- I think in the
19 Central Business District, it's hard
20 to -- unless you've lived here, it's
21 kind of hard to appreciate how much
22 pollution there is. Both actual
23 pollution, just grime that gets on
24 everything caused by cars and noise
25 pollution caused by cars -- but mostly

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

158

1 motorcycles but also cars quite a bit.
2 And besides all of that, which is --
3 actually studies have shown that noise
4 pollution is harmful to your health.
5 So we're being harmed here in the
6 Central Business District, really
7 because lots of people are coming
8 here. They're taking joyrides,
9 they're doing it for free, yes, I know
10 no one is arguing for exceptions for
11 these people, but this is a lot of
12 traffic that is coming in.

13 Furthermore, the more cars, the
14 more crashes, this is deadly. I've
15 lost a friend and a coworker to
16 crashes, to vehicle -- to vehicular
17 violence. This is going to get better
18 with this plan so this is another
19 reason I support it.

20 Many people have said that it's
21 a cash grab by the MTA. I feel like
22 to say it's a cash grab by the MTA and
23 yet, you want the MTA to do lots of
24 things to make it better before you
25 can support it is a contradiction,

1 right? It doesn't work.

2 Yes, the MTA could do better in
3 managing money, for sure. But it's
4 not the MTA who caused the pandemic
5 and now the subway system is 70
6 percent. That's not because of crime,
7 that's because of commuting.

8 So in sum, I think this will be
9 good for everyone, the MTA. I think
10 it's even going to be good for
11 drivers. They're going to get less
12 congestion. Yes, they pay something,
13 they get something. They're getting
14 less congestion. They get where
15 they're going faster and with less
16 headaches.

17 So this is going to be great all
18 around. Thank you so much for being
19 here presenting this.

20 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

21 Our next speaker is Robert
22 Arnone, followed by our 150th speaker
23 on the list, Seydou Sangare.

24 Our next speaker Seydou Sangare,
25 followed by Ibrahim Sedrak.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

160

1 Our next speaker is Ibrahim
2 Sedrak, followed by Hassan Ali.

3 Our next speaker is Hassan Ali,
4 followed by Johny Smith.

5 Our next speaker is Johny Smith,
6 followed by L. Medina.

7 Our next speaker is L. Medina,
8 followed by Dr. Uzma Gul.

9 Our next speaker is Dr. Uzma
10 Gul, followed by AnnMarie Carbonneau.

11 Our next speaker is AnnMarie
12 Carbonneau, followed by Edgar
13 Rodriguez.

14 Our next speaker is Edgar
15 Rodriguez, followed by Joseph Sutkowi.

16 Our next speaker is Joseph
17 Sutkowi, followed by Howard Spector.

18 Our next speaker is Howard
19 Spector, followed by our 160th speaker
20 on the list, Janice Gardner.

21 Our next speaker on is Janice
22 Gardner, followed by Susan Lee.

23 Janice, you may begin your
24 remarks.

25 JANICE GARDNER: Hello. Can you

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

161

1 hear me?

2 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

3 JANICE GARDNER: I just want to
4 say I live on the south end corner of
5 60th Street and Freedom Place between
6 -- well, 60th Street between West End
7 Avenue and Freedom Place. I have no
8 idea of how this congestion price is
9 going to work out when this is
10 supposed to be a private parking area.

11 I don't understand how any of
12 these things could have been made
13 available or without any kind of input
14 coming from these building owners. I
15 live in this area, I park on the
16 street and for me to go around the
17 block of West End Avenue to make a
18 right on 59th Street, to make another
19 right on Freedom Place back to 60th
20 Street. That's like I'm paying a
21 double toll to come home.

22 So I would like for you guys to
23 really, really, really take assessment
24 of that because there are people that
25 are residents of this area and we're

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

162

1 still trying to figure it out, how can
2 we park here without having other
3 people from other places come and
4 park. So that's my very short answer
5 or, you know, my short request to the
6 MTA and would you lookout for the
7 residents over in this area on the
8 west side near the Hudson River.

9 So lookout for us, thank you.

10 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
11 Susan Lee, followed by Mary Ann Ceron.

12 Our next speaker is Mary Ann
13 Ceron, followed by Stephen Kalaj.

14 Our next speaker is Stephen
15 Kalaj, followed by Andrew Otoole.

16 Our next speaker is Andrew
17 Otoole, followed by Jason Seo.

18 Our next speaker is Jason Seo,
19 followed by Michael Simon.

20 Our next speaker is Michael
21 Simon, followed by Donald Davis.

22 MICHAEL SIMON: Can you hear me?

23 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

24 MICHAEL SIMON: Thank you very
25 much.

1 My position is that Medallion
2 taxis should not be charged, while
3 Uber and Lyft should be. After the
4 Great Depression, Mayor La Guardia
5 created the Medallion for the same
6 purpose you are having a hearing now,
7 to limit congestion.

8 The Taxi Medallions were given
9 the exclusive right to cruise while
10 capping the number of cars, achieving
11 the purpose of limiting congestion.
12 Taxi Medallion owners bought their
13 Medallion for the right to cruise.
14 Uber and Lyft didn't pay for the right
15 to cruise. If they wanted the right
16 to cruise, they should have bought
17 Medallions. By avoiding buying the
18 Medallion, they avoided the cost.

19 New York City permitted vast
20 numbers of app cars without charging
21 them for the privilege to cruise.
22 This created congestion. By utilizing
23 taxi service, you could greatly
24 decrease the 100,000 app cars. Yellow
25 cabs can service with a street hail or

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

164

1 an app service. We do not need the
2 100,000 app cars only.

3 With all the cabs in storage,
4 why is anyone worried that jobs would
5 be lost? App drivers and taxi drivers
6 have identical jobs. You could change
7 from one to the other the very next
8 day. So if app drivers are
9 disadvantaged in any way, renting or
10 buying Medallion now is an
11 opportunity. There is a lot of
12 Medallions in storage and Medallions
13 values are cheap.

14 Taxis can transport more
15 passengers per vehicle compared to app
16 vehicles. App vehicles need to travel
17 to their next fare, while taxis can
18 immediately pick up a fare, giving it
19 a high utilization rate. Taxi fares
20 are fixed due to City rules.
21 Passengers rely on taxis for a
22 reliable price. Taxis are being
23 subjected to more or less price
24 harassment. When the city is slow,
25 Uber and Lyft apps undercut taxi fares

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 by going lower. When the city is busy
2 app cars raise their rates making more
3 dollars than taxis.

4 There needs to be some reward
5 somewhere for taxis in exchange for
6 providing this price stability.
7 Eliminating the congestion fee for
8 taxis is one way of achieving this.

9 Why do you need so many black
10 cars when you have taxis? It's a
11 redundant service.

12 There's a strong branding
13 between New York City and yellow cabs.
14 It helps brings tourists in. The
15 yellow cab is an icon of New York. In
16 the yellow cab, you already have
17 everything you need to get congestion
18 under control, while providing
19 the needed service for passengers to
20 go downtown.

21 Let the tourists and the
22 residents know that they can leave
23 their car behind and go everywhere in
24 the city by taxi at a reasonable
25 price. Thank you.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

166

1 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

2 Our next speaker is Donal Davis,
3 followed by Neil Cooper.

4 Our next speaker is Neil Cooper,
5 followed by Reva Ambrose.

6 Our next speaker is Reva
7 Ambrose, followed by our 170th
8 speaker, Daniel Feldman.

9 Our next speaker is Daniel
10 Feldman, followed by LD.

11 Our next speaker is LD, followed
12 by Daniel Tainow.

13 Our next speaker is Daniel
14 Tainow, followed by Jaspal Sidhu.

15 Our next speaker is Jaspal
16 Sidhu, followed by Bill Feinberg.

17 Our next speaker is Bill
18 Feinberg, followed by Craig Siel.

19 Our next speaker is Craig Siel,
20 followed by Aziz Bah.

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

23 CRAIG SIEL: Thank you. Give me
24 one second. I'm having problems with
25 my video, but I'm just going to go

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

167

1 ahead. You guys can hear me?

2 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

3 CRAIG SIEL: Okay, great. Thank
4 you, Allison, Rick, Kathryn, Will and
5 Lou, and of course our ASL interpreter
6 on the screen. I appreciate you guys
7 being here and doing this. Hopefully
8 you guys are taking some good notes.

9 So good evening. I'm Craig
10 Siel. I live and work within what is
11 being established as the Central
12 Business District. I do ride on the
13 MTA subway, buses, of course, I walk
14 as a true New Yorker. I've been here
15 for a majority of my life, born in
16 Brooklyn, raised in Jersey and spent
17 my -- most of my adulthood here in
18 Manhattan.

19 I ride bicycles, Citi Bike and
20 at times more than not, I do travel
21 quite a bit within Manhattan and the
22 other boroughs on a motorcycle. So
23 with that said, I participate in a few
24 New York City motorcycle communities;
25 New York Classic riders, which is a

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

168

1 global community, New York Motorcycle
2 and Scooter Task Force, which I'm sure
3 some of you are all too familiar with.
4 I'm sure you've met with some of them
5 regarding some of our DOT and New York
6 City policies towards motorcyclists.
7 And I'm also a proud member of the
8 Gotham New York Ducati Desmo Owners
9 Club, which is also a global community
10 celebration of all things Ducati.

11 Though I'm not speaking on any
12 of their behalves, many have shared
13 their sediments.

14 So once again, as I did last
15 fall, I'm advocating for full
16 exemption of motorcycles from the CBD
17 tolling. Motorcycles not only do not
18 contribute to factors that warrant CBD
19 tolling, like parking, congestion, air
20 quality, distress to structures and
21 others, but rather help alleviate
22 them. Most, if not all jurisdictions
23 around the world exempt motorcycles
24 from congestion pricing and there's no
25 reason why New York City would not

1 follow suit with this best practice.

2 Such as the congestion pricing
3 reference documentation in your recent
4 studies that note Stockholm in London,
5 Stockholm exempts motorcycles one
6 hundred percent. London exempts
7 motorcycles providing that they meet
8 the minimum EU emission standard or
9 pay ultra low emission zone fee, of
10 which most modern motorcycles
11 manufactured after July 2007 adhere to
12 those standards.

13 Just a quick summary virtually,
14 motorcycles demonstratively reduce
15 congestion, traffic, take up less
16 space than cars in parking, they also
17 are more fuel efficient and produce
18 significantly less greenhouse gases
19 compared to passenger cars, SUVs,
20 taxis and trucks.

21 And in terms of noise pollution,
22 I have yet to hear or see any noted
23 complaints or studies of motorcycle
24 noise complaints filed with DOT.

25 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

170

1 remark.

2 CRAIG SIEL: -- or the New York
3 City.

4 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

5 CRAIG SIEL: Okay. Thank you.

6 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
7 Aziz Bah, followed by Steve Carrellas.

8 AZIZ BAH: Good evening,
9 everyone. Thanks for the opportunity
10 to speak. My name's Aziz Bah. I'm a
11 for-hire vehicle rideshare driver and
12 the organizing director of the
13 Independent Driver's Guild, which
14 represent over 140,000 drivers in New
15 York State.

16 I am here today on behalf of New
17 York's FHV rideshare drivers to
18 implore you to not add any additional
19 congestion charges on trips involving
20 for-hire vehicle, including Uber,
21 Lyft, liveries and taxis.

22 If for-hire vehicles are
23 required to pay additional congestion
24 fees as recommended under any of the
25 scenarios in the Environmental

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

171

1 Assessment, thousands of drivers will
2 lose their lifesaving, their
3 investment, their livelihood, their
4 homes, their abilities to survive,
5 feed their families. We all know that
6 while passengers may be charged this
7 additional surcharge, but it is the
8 driver who will ultimately pay in
9 significantly fewer trips and lower
10 compensation. This will result in
11 thousands of jobs lost and continue
12 economic disaster for the effective
13 driver community, 90 percent of which
14 are immigrants, people of color.

15 Our industries, drivers, taxis
16 and FHV are very a fragile community
17 that collectively has been through a
18 lot over the last several years. I'm
19 talking about demonstratable
20 experiences. I'm talking about hard
21 fact, fact in which your own
22 Environmental Assessment acknowledge
23 but completely disregard.

24 Many of our drivers were out of
25 work for many several months and still

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

172

1 are. Some drivers got sick, some
2 drivers died, some have continued to
3 suffer from depression, anxiety and
4 other mental disorders. Many drivers
5 have been financially devastated and
6 are still struggling to recover, even
7 as business slowly began to return,
8 drivers could not recoup their loss
9 and the record high gas price and so
10 many expenses.

11 The MTA should be ashamed of
12 themselves. Why are immigrants,
13 people of color, poor and
14 working-class folks the only one being
15 asked to pay two congestion fees?

16 Why is it that our investment,
17 our livelihood and mental health
18 matters less than others and are in
19 fact offered to be sacrificed over the
20 business and environment interest? Do
21 the benefits you achieve -- you seek
22 to achieve with congestion pricing
23 really outweigh the devastation that
24 will be brought upon our communities,
25 our children and our families.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

173

1 Making us ask for an exemption
2 make it sound like we asking for some
3 kind of special treatment, which in
4 itself is outrageous and unfair.

5 In sum, we respectfully ask the
6 Traffic Mobility Review Board and the
7 MTA to reject any further surcharges
8 for any and all for-hire vehicle for
9 such action --

10 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
11 remarks.

12 AZIZ BAH: -- of the impact of
13 the working-class immigrants or people
14 of color that makes up both the driver
15 and driving community.

16 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

17 AZIZ BAH: Thank you.

18 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
19 Steve Carrellas, followed by Pedro
20 Acosta.

21 STEVE CARRELLAS: I'm Steve
22 Carrellas, the head of the New Jersey
23 Motor Association. Many of us will
24 comment on the New Jersey issues with
25 a plan so I'm going to focus on why

1 this ill-conceived plan should be
2 rejected by the Federal Highway
3 Administration with the no action
4 alternative. The project's sponsors
5 are seeking tolling authority under
6 the Value Pricing Pilot Program that
7 was originally established for
8 congestion pricing. The name change
9 is an attempt to put sheep's clothing
10 on a predatory wolf and in some cases
11 to provide actual value.

12 So what is real value pricing?
13 Value pricing provides a choice, in
14 this case to the motorist, to travel
15 on a congested roadway or to pay more
16 to travel on a better flowing one with
17 a charge proportional for real-time
18 level of the better service. The keys
19 here are choice and valued better
20 service.

21 The CBD tolling plan is not
22 value pricing. It's clearly
23 congestion pricing, where the only
24 choice to avoid paying is for
25 motorists not to use their vehicles.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

175

1 For all those who do, are forced to
2 pay for supposed congestion relief
3 based on the hope and a prayer that
4 the new cost would, of course, reduce
5 traffic.

6 That's right, the congestion
7 toll is just a money grab for
8 motorists to pay for a hopeless
9 attempt at improving MTA services
10 without providing any congestion
11 relief to motorists.

12 Under this wishful thinking
13 approach, motorists are actually
14 paying more for a worse driving
15 experience. The estimates in the
16 Environmental Assessment for
17 congestion reduction are a joke. They
18 won't be achieved, neither will the
19 motorists' perception of reduced
20 congestion, nor will the other
21 associated benefits, aside from
22 revenue generation.

23 Now, the FHWA must take a
24 careful look at the modeling
25 assumptions and the probabilities of

1 achieving real congestion relief. Why
2 would they approve a value pricing
3 project that will fail to reduce
4 congestion? Well, follow the money.
5 New York City congestion toll is all
6 about providing a billion a year for
7 the MTA and two rail roads. All seven
8 toll scenarios are designed to
9 generate this annual revenue with no
10 allocation of investment to actually
11 include the roadway infrastructure.
12 Now, where's the value in that for
13 motorists that have no interest in New
14 York City's perennial problematic
15 public transit?

16 Congestion toll annual rate will
17 create unintended consequences and
18 escalating costs, that includes toll
19 collection and billing problems, toll
20 avoidance, fraud, more enforcement,
21 equipment vandalism, all plus more
22 that would further cut future revenue.
23 Now, what will happen when it goes all
24 wrong? Will the pilot end, tolls be
25 raised to punish motorists, congestion

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

177

1 can't be reduced or if significant
2 costs cut into revenue will be their
3 guarantees or guardrails.

4 What a racket. The structure of
5 this tolling plan is horrible, but
6 thankfully many things are in play to
7 kill or radically fix it. If the FHWA
8 --

9 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
10 remarks.

11 STEVE CARRELLAS: That concludes
12 them.

13 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

14 Our next speaker is Pedro
15 Acosta, followed by Sheldon Sud.

16 PEDRO ACOSTA: Hello. Can you
17 hear me?

18 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

19 PEDRO ACOSTA: My name is Pedro
20 Acosta and I'm a driver for over 20
21 years. I live in Brooklyn and I
22 totally oppose to these taxes to FHV
23 industry. If you are grateful, you
24 have to remember that during the
25 pandemic, we were the only one who

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

178

1 were offering this service to
2 everybody who wasn't moving from point
3 to point. Not even the train and the
4 buses were working when we were doing
5 this work. And also I have to tell
6 you that we lost hundreds of drivers
7 doing this service, but you guys don't
8 look at it.

9 We also offer this service to
10 the handicap people and people with
11 other disabilities, which is a very
12 important point that you should pay
13 attention to. Okay. I remember that
14 two years ago, two or three years ago,
15 they put a cap on the new plates for
16 FHV vehicle and they only allow
17 handicap plate, new plate or a
18 wheelchair vehicle, I mean. So I look
19 to try to get out of the service as
20 well. So if you don't think about
21 what it's like a human being, how, at
22 the least think about the disability
23 people who needs our service.

24 We are totally opposed to these
25 tax for the FHV industry. Please, no.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

179

1 We don't want that tax. Thank you so
2 much.

3 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

4 Our next speaker is Sheldon Sud,
5 followed by Jim Reyes.

6 Our next speaker Jim Reyes,
7 followed by Imran Khan.

8 Our next speaker is Imran Khan,
9 followed by Stuart Keller.

10 Our next speaker is Stuart
11 Keller, followed by Dale Pozzi.

12 Our next speaker is Dale Pozzi,
13 followed by Jean Hahn.

14 Our next speaker is Jean Hahan,
15 followed by Rey M.

16 Our next speaker is Rey M.,
17 followed by Patricia McSharry.

18 Our next speaker is Patricia
19 McSharry, followed by Matthew Hopkins.

20 Our next speaker is Matthew
21 Hopkins, followed by Andrew Krug.

22 Our next speaker is Andrew Krug,
23 followed by Lisa Martin.

24 Our next speaker is Lisa Martin,
25 followed by Devon Edwards.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

180

1 LISA MARTIN: Can you see me?

2 MR. WOJNAR: Yes. You can
3 please proceed.

4 LISA MARTIN: I'm Lisa Martin.
5 I'm a public high school teacher. I
6 live in the East Village and I'm
7 posted in East New York so -- and I'm
8 older. And it's -- I am wondering if
9 y'all had a idea as to what you do
10 being a city employee and I have no
11 choice where I work, I am posted
12 there. But I have to return and it's
13 so expensive, you know, with this
14 congestion pricing. Anyway, I just
15 want to give a little shout out to all
16 the teachers out there.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. WOJNAR: The next speaker,
19 the 190th to sign up, is Devon
20 Edwards, followed by Ray Dries.

21 Our next speaker is Ray Dries,
22 followed by Brendan Peo.

23 Our next speaker is Ray Dries,
24 followed by Brendan Peo.

25 Our next speaker is Brendan Peo,

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

181

1 followed by Kabir Javaid.

2 BRENDAN PEO: Hi, there. Can
3 you hear me?

4 MR. WOJNAR: Yes. Please
5 proceed.

6 BRENDAN PEO: Great.

7 I'm speaking today to share my
8 concerns with the CBD Tolling
9 Initiative that had been proposed and
10 while I believe they are
11 well-intentioned, I don't think the
12 totality of the initiative will have
13 the desired effects. The use of mass
14 transit is still performing way under
15 what it used to and it is, to no
16 surprise, due to the increase in
17 violence, disruptions on the subway,
18 et cetera. Weekly we hear about
19 events that are occurring underground
20 and make it unsafe for us to use the
21 subway.

22 If we want a greener and cleaner
23 New York City, we must work with what
24 we have first. No one wants to take
25 mass transit, it's not safe. Jumping

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 turnstiles, shooting, looting,
2 fighting, the list goes on. I feel
3 like we're still talking about the
4 smoke and the bombing from the subway
5 shooting in Brooklyn only a few months
6 ago and here we are now talking about
7 putting a toll for those entering
8 Manhattan.

9 The suggestion that more people
10 would use mass transit instead of
11 driving when conditions are like this
12 in the subway is asinine. Another
13 concern of mine is, I'm a New York
14 City public schools teacher. I'm also
15 a resident of Bergen County, New
16 Jersey. I commute into the city to go
17 to work. In mid-2022, the Port
18 Authority removed the toll discount
19 for carpools on the George Washington
20 Bridge, Holland Tunnel and soon the
21 Lincoln Tunnel, making it, once again,
22 more difficult and costly for us to
23 work in the city and live outside to
24 get into the city.

25 In fact, without that discount

1 the pollution goals are essentially
2 null and void because there is no
3 incentive to carpool and people will
4 continue to come into the city with
5 more cars, increasing greenhouse
6 gases.

7 Now, with the prospect of an
8 additional toll to enter midtown and
9 below, it is beyond me why I should
10 consider even coming into the city,
11 not only for my professional job,
12 which I can change, but for my
13 entertainment purposes as well. I am
14 proud to work in-person and be a
15 public school teacher for the
16 Department of Education in New York
17 City.

18 Living here in New Jersey and in
19 the tri-state area, I'm accustomed to
20 higher prices for food and for gas,
21 but increasing the burden with
22 additional tolls is ridiculous. I
23 would like to note that a stakeholder,
24 which is not here, The Port Authority
25 of New York and New Jersey, in which

1 it doesn't directly involve but will
2 directly impact them, should also be
3 present to have a say in this,
4 especially representative of consumers
5 myself.

6 I want the best for all people
7 and I want the best for our planet and
8 our neighbors, however, the creation
9 of an additional toll is not the way
10 to achieve environmental
11 sustainability. I'm happy that my
12 governor, Governor Murphy, is
13 listening and he will represent us as
14 well, if you won't. Thank you.

15 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

16 Our next speaker is Kabir
17 Javaid, followed by LD Sullivan.

18 Our next speaker is LD Solomon,
19 followed by Gale Pose.

20 LD Solomon.

21 LD SOLOMON: Hello?

22 MR. WOJNAR: Yes. Please
23 proceed.

24 LD SOLOMON: I didn't sign up to
25 speak. It just told me to unmute.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

185

1 MR. WOJNAR: We'll move to the
2 next.

3 The next speaker is Gale Pose,
4 followed by Christina Santos.

5 Gale Pose.

6 GALE POSE: Hello.

7 MR. WOJNAR: Please proceed.

8 GALE POSE: Thank you very much.

9 I'd like to make the case that
10 congestion pricing is going to be
11 onerous and slightly cold for the
12 seniors and the disabled, as well as
13 the unwell who live below 60th Street.
14 Particularly those such as myself and
15 my husband who live in the northern
16 end, whose lives are very much across,
17 now, the invisible border.

18 It is inconceivable that, let's
19 say a woman that's 75 who is unstable
20 on her feet or a man suffering from
21 cardiac or respiratory issues is going
22 to be able to walk to a subway or bus
23 stop -- the right subway or bus stop
24 to visit a doctor or family member or
25 place of worship or to access shopping

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 that may be a little more affordable
2 for them in their own neighborhood.

3 Not all of us who live below
4 60th Street are very wealthy, nor do
5 many of us meet the \$60,000 threshold.
6 I say this personally, from personal
7 experience. My husband and I were
8 active train and subway users until
9 about four years ago when my husband
10 was put on a medication that had to
11 lower his heart rate slightly.

12 In April of 2018, while running
13 to catch a train in Penn Station
14 because there was delays, my husband
15 slid off from me for a moment to get
16 the tickets and when I looked over my
17 shoulder, he was gone. But there was
18 a man laying on the floor, who I very
19 quickly realized was my own husband
20 laying, blacked out on the floor of
21 Penn Station with blood pouring from
22 his head. His heart rate could not
23 keep up with the rush down the
24 escalator and over to the ticket
25 booth.

1 So we've had to become drivers
2 to get out of our neighborhood more
3 often. I really hope that you
4 consider the burden on the elderly in
5 the neighborhood and I hope you will
6 understand that our cost of living for
7 deliveries for services will go up and
8 we will also now have to pay this
9 added premium.

10 Thanks very much.

11 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

12 As a reminder, if you have
13 joined the Zoom under a name that is
14 different from the one you used when
15 you signed up to speak or if you did
16 not sign up to speak, but would like
17 to speak, please identify yourself in
18 the Q&A Function. You may also
19 request to speak anonymously.

20 Our next speaker is Thomas
21 Maguire, followed by Martin Weinberg.

22 Our next speaker is Martin
23 Weinberg, followed by Tom La Guidice.

24 Our next speaker is Tom La
25 Guidice, followed by Alex Shehovsov.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

188

1 Our next speaker is Alex
2 Shehovsov, Steven Kent Abraham.

3 Our next speaker is Steven Kent
4 Abraham, followed by Joseph Labetti.

5 Our next speaker, our 200th to
6 sign up, is Joseph Labetti, followed
7 by Robert Aracena.

8 Our next speaker is Robert
9 Aracena, followed by Richard Catalano.

10 Our next speaker is Richard
11 Catalano, followed by Ciro Luna.

12 Our next speaker, Ciro Luna,
13 followed by Naomi Pemberton.

14 Our next speaker is Naomi
15 Pemberton, followed by Davida LoSavio.

16 Our next speaker is Davida
17 LoSavio, followed by Prakash Parmar.

18 DAVIDA LOSAVIO: Can you hear
19 me?

20 MR. WOJNAR: Yes. Please
21 proceed.

22 DAVIDA LOSAVIO: Okay. So I'm
23 here, I'm from the Bronx and I'm very
24 concerned about this. I am a single
25 mother to a special needs child. I

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

189

1 have a car that right now actually
2 I'm waiting on a replacement car
3 because it got -- my other one got
4 broken into and vandalized to the
5 point where it was considered and
6 declared totaled. So I've now been
7 waiting for five months for my
8 daughter's cousin to send me another
9 one.

10 I need to have the car because
11 due to my daughter's diagnosis, she is
12 Bipolar I with mania, the MTA is
13 dangerous, as in fatal dangerous for
14 me and her. Because if something
15 happens, we don't know if it's going
16 to trigger her, she act up. We know
17 what's going on in these subways with
18 people who either have undiagnosed
19 mental illness or don't have mental
20 illness, it's the world acting like
21 they are crazy. The thing is that
22 you're going to raise these prices,
23 okay. I also use my car to earn a
24 living, which already I barely make
25 any money because I do deliveries,

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 such as Instacart and such. And most
2 of the money goes to the gas, which we
3 all know is high.

4 Doing a \$23 -- so that I have to
5 do deliveries -- I'm going to make no
6 money, you going to put me out on the
7 streets. I am -- I live in the Bronx,
8 like I said, which we all know is the
9 poorest borough. And I am considered
10 well-below the poverty level. To have
11 us constituents in the five boroughs
12 to pay these prices, is inconceivable,
13 it's disrespectful and you're like
14 spitting in our faces.

15 There's too much going on in
16 this world right now for you to go and
17 have us pay more. I'm already
18 struggling trying to keep a car so
19 that my child is safe, so that I am
20 safe, so we don't get COVID, we don't
21 get the Polio, the Monkeypox, all the
22 stuff that's going on now these days,
23 so we don't get shot on the subway,
24 pushed into the tracks, X, Y, Z.

25 Also to the bicyclists, they

1 need to stop fighting with vehicles
2 about issues, due to the fact that
3 bicyclists are not following road
4 rules and they need to, so that's got
5 to stop.

6 As for stating about -- there
7 was another thing that was said, I
8 can't think of it right now but this
9 is wrong and those of us vulnerable
10 New Yorkers that are already
11 struggling to even try to survive and
12 keep a roof over our heads --

13 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
14 your remarks.

15 DAVIDA LOSAVIO: This is
16 inconceivable, you need to find way to
17 exempt us.

18 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

19 Our next speaker is Prakash
20 Parmar, followed by LD.

21 Our next speaker is LD, followed
22 by Aliza Gregory.

23 MR. WOJNAR: LD, please proceed.

24 Our next speaker is Aliza
25 Gregory, followed by Shane Harris.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 Our next speaker is Shane
2 Harris, followed by LD.

3 Our next speaker is LD, followed
4 by Robert Bolowsky.

5 LD: Can you hear me?

6 MR. WOJNAR: Yes. Please
7 proceed.

8 LD: I am strongly opposed. It
9 is inhumane. You have not announced
10 exemptions for cars with passengers
11 who have disabled car tags, not
12 disabled license plates, but disabled
13 auto tags that hang from the inside
14 car mirror because some have disabled
15 tags which are not tied to a specific
16 vehicle but are tied to a disabled
17 individual who was driven by a
18 caretaker.

19 A speaker alluded to those who
20 can choose to drive. For some people,
21 there is no choice and driving is the
22 only way. There are elderly disabled
23 patients who are physically incapable
24 of navigating the subway system. They
25 go to medical care in the district.

1 They will not be able to afford to
2 continue with their medical care,
3 given the exorbitant price you
4 propose.

5 Many disabled elderly are on a
6 fixed income. The exorbitant fees you
7 proposed could make the difference of
8 the elderly not being able to afford
9 food or medicine. Your plan harms the
10 vulnerable community and causes
11 economic hardship for the elderly.
12 You must exclude the physically
13 disabled who are driven in cars with
14 disabled tags hanging on their
15 mirrors, not just disabled license
16 plates, and make a way for the
17 disabled to submit their disabled tag
18 information and the corresponding
19 license plate for exclusion.

20 Safety is an issue in the
21 subway. It is not safe. It is
22 unfairly burdensome to the disabled.
23 Everyone who opposes this plan, should
24 contact Governor Hochul. This is a
25 selfish money grab for the MTA that

1 will shift congestion elsewhere.

2 The MTA should not benefit off
3 the backs of commuters in cars. Some
4 drivers carry heavy and bulky items
5 into the city that they could not
6 possibly carry on the subway or bus.
7 The plan presumes drivers are
8 wealthier and could support the MTA.
9 It is not true. Some drivers have
10 cars that are ten to 15 years old and
11 the drivers are barely making ends
12 meet.

13 Your plan will have a
14 disproportionate effect on the poorer
15 and low income individuals. Mike
16 Gentile pointed out earlier your
17 target congestion reduction has
18 already been reached because COVID --
19 because of COVID and the hybrid work
20 situation.

21 So congestion pricing is not
22 even needed because COVID decreased
23 congestion.

24 In addition electric vehicles
25 will negate the so-called concern with

1 air pollution. You have not
2 adequately studied the unintended
3 consequences and how your plan will
4 redistribute congestion.

5 All the models you propose are
6 theories or hypothesis. There are no
7 actual data. You look at the cost of
8 building the infrastructure, it's not
9 fair for drivers to shoulder a heavier
10 financial burden for transit riders.
11 You are mandating that drivers from
12 outside the district unfairly
13 subsidize New York's mass transit
14 infrastructure. It is not fair, it is
15 not equitable. It is outrageous. And
16 many of you work for the MTA so of
17 course, you would want it because it
18 would benefit you.

19 It is a money grab jammed down
20 our throats with unintended
21 consequences that disproportionately
22 affect the disadvantaged and
23 insensitive.

24 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
25 your remarks.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 LD: Thank you.

2 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

3 Our next speaker is Robert
4 Bolowsky, followed by Thomas Neubauer.

5 Our next speaker, the 210th to
6 sign up, is Thomas Neubauer, followed
7 by Angel Rodriguez Jr.

8 Our next speaker is Angel
9 Rodriguez Jr., followed by Michael
10 Torres.

11 The next speaker is Michael
12 Torres, followed by Isabella
13 Hernandez.

14 The next speaker is Isabella
15 Hernandez, followed by Mark Berger.

16 The next speaker is Mark Berger,
17 followed by Angel Paredes.

18 The next speaker is Angel
19 Paredes, followed by T'wana Denard.

20 The next speaker is T'wana
21 Denard, followed by Konstantin
22 Shushkovsky.

23 The next speaker is Konstantin
24 Shushkovsky, followed by Kofi Afriyie.

25 The next speaker is Kofi

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

197

1 Afriyie, followed by Andy Wong.

2 The next speaker is Andy Wong,
3 followed by Carolyn Davis.

4 The next speaker is Carolyn
5 Davis, followed by Anonymous Karim.

6 The next speaker is Anonymous
7 Karim, followed by Sergei Lishchenko.

8 The next speaker is Sergei
9 Lishchenko, followed by Erik Pinto.

10 The next speaker is Eric Pinto,
11 followed by Alphonso Anderson.

12 The next speaker is Alphonso
13 Anderson, followed by Seth Doby.

14 The next speaker, the 225th to
15 sign up, Seth Doby, followed by Grace
16 Marrero.

17 The next speaker is Grace
18 Marrero, followed by Dario Cremades.

19 The next speaker is Dario
20 Cremades, followed by Enrique Quezada.

21 The next speaker is Enrique
22 Quezada, followed by Cheryl Boyland.

23 The next speaker is Cheryl
24 Boyland, followed by Karen Laureano.

25 The next speaker is Karen

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 Laureano, followed by Joseph Muto.

2 The next speaker is Joseph Muto,
3 followed by Sandra Flores.

4 The next speaker is Sandra
5 Flores, followed by Aly Mohamed.

6 The next speaker is Aly Mohamed,
7 followed by Richard Osman.

8 The next speaker is Richard
9 Osman, followed by Paul Mankabadi.

10 The next speaker is Paul
11 Mankabadi, followed by Andres Canot.

12 The next speaker is Andres
13 Canot, followed by Tomas Santana.

14 The next speaker is Tomas
15 Santana, followed by Yan Gershkovch.

16 The next speaker is Yan
17 Gershkovch, followed by Elizabeth
18 Currey.

19 The next speaker is Elizabeth
20 Currey, followed by John Buckholz.

21 The next speaker is John
22 Buckholz, followed by Ahmad Saeed.

23 The next speaker is Ahmad Saeed,
24 followed by Aglaia Davis.

25 The next speaker is Aglaia

1 Davis, followed by Ralph Saro.

2 The next speaker is Ralph Saro,
3 followed by Dan Anicito.

4 The next speaker is Dan Anicito,
5 followed by Heron Douglas.

6 The next speaker is Heron
7 Douglas, followed by Steven Omeis.

8 The next speaker is Steven
9 Omeis, followed by Margaret Basileo.

10 The next speaker is Margaret
11 Basileo, followed by Raghunandan
12 Ankolekar.

13 The next speaker is Raghunandan
14 Ankolekar, followed by Mamadou Diallo.

15 The next speaker, the 250th to
16 sign up, is Mamadou Diallo, followed
17 by Susan R.

18 MAMADOU DIALLO: Thank you so
19 much. Thank you for having this panel
20 to discuss about the congestion
21 pricing, I really appreciate it and,
22 you know, so we could go and give
23 our -- just some --

24 (Technical interference.)

25 -- I think it should be not be a

1 goal. It should be true if they don't
2 mention -- first of all, we have so
3 many electric cars now coming in.
4 They should have the California
5 mandate in New York State. Be like
6 okay, 2030-something, all cars should
7 be electric, you know, something like
8 that.

9 Now, we can go ahead and talk
10 about --

11 (Technical interference.)

12 MR. WOJNAR: Mamadou, why don't
13 you try calling back in.

14 We'll move on to Susan R,
15 followed by Vijay Nyack.

16 The next speaker is Vijay Nyack,
17 followed by Tobias Russo.

18 The next speaker is Tobias
19 Russo, followed by Robert Gilpin.

20 The next speaker is Robert
21 Gilpin, followed by Tyrone Murray.

22 The next speaker is Tyrone
23 Murray, followed by Antonio Cerqueira.

24 The next speaker is Antonio
25 Cerqueira, followed by Michal Samuels.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

201

1 The next speaker is Michal
2 Samuels, followed by Rafael Santos.

3 The next speaker is Rafael
4 Santos followed by Jessica
5 Jean-Baptiste.

6 The next speaker Jessica
7 Jean-Baptiste, followed by Rafael
8 Salazar.

9 The next speaker is Rafael
10 Salazar, followed by Geraldine
11 Fredericks.

12 The next speaker is Geraldine
13 Fredericks, followed by Michele Sarno.

14 The next speaker is Michele
15 Sarno, followed by John Bailey.

16 The next speaker is John Bailey,
17 followed by Dameanna Johnson.

18 JOHN BAILEY: Yes, I'm unmuted.

19 Good evening and thank you. My
20 name is John Bailey. I'm owner and
21 operator of Bailey Coach located in
22 Spring Grove, Pennsylvania. We're
23 approximately 180 miles from New York
24 City. I'm a second generation out of
25 a three generation travel and

1 transportation business. I'm also
2 immediate past chairman of the
3 Pennsylvania bus Association located
4 in the state of Pennsylvania.

5 My family has transported tens
6 of thousands of tours to the City of
7 New York over the decades, since the
8 1940s. Although I support the efforts
9 to address the congestion in the city,
10 I'm very concerned by the options
11 proposed by the Environmental
12 Assessment and the limited time
13 available to review the documents and
14 participate in the process.

15 New York City is a national
16 tourism and commuter destination and
17 any congestion relief or pricing
18 models need to take into consideration
19 concerns of interested parties beyond
20 the local geographic area. Operations
21 like mine are critical to any
22 congestion relief model because we
23 take cars off the road. Plain and
24 simple. And motor coaches often are
25 the only form of transportation

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 available to low-income and
2 underserved communities.

3 Several options proposed in New
4 York Central Business District Tolling
5 Program, would include tolling buses,
6 motor coaches like mine and many other
7 operators in adjoining states. This
8 process is moving too quickly. You're
9 not allowing sufficient time and
10 conducting sufficient outreach to the
11 many transportation operators who
12 serve the city on a daily, weekly and
13 monthly basis.

14 There are hundreds of operators
15 like me that come from beyond New York
16 City, Connecticut, New Jersey,
17 Pennsylvania, Maryland, District of
18 Columbia and many more. I urge you to
19 slow down this process, broaden your
20 outreach beyond the state to ensure
21 providers of mass transportation, both
22 public and private to provide actual
23 congestion relief, are not subject to
24 this proposal and that we are exempted
25 from tolling cost. Plain and simple,

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

204

1 motor coaches need an exemption from
2 this. Thank you very much.

3 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

4 Next speaker is Dameanna
5 Johnson, followed by Luis Gamboa.

6 The next speaker is Luis Gamboa,
7 followed by Rodney Carter.

8 The next speaker is Rodney
9 Carter, followed by Jeffeey Tuller.

10 The next speaker is Jeffeey
11 Tuller, followed by Ira Gershenhorn.

12 The next speaker is Ira
13 Gershenhorn, followed by Irshad Karim.

14 The next speaker, the 270th to
15 sign up, is Irshad Karim, followed by
16 Atta Panyin Young.

17 Irshad, you can unmute.

18 IRSHAD KARIM: Hello.

19 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can hear
20 you.

21 IRSHAD KARIM: Thank you.

22 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can hear
23 you. Please proceed.

24 IRSHAD KARIM: I just want to
25 start with the procedural point. I've

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 stayed on for, I don't know, three and
2 a half hours now. I find it
3 surprising that while I appreciate the
4 commenting period that there are only
5 a handful of these hearings and they
6 were all scheduled the last week of
7 August. And I'm out of the country
8 next week, this is the only
9 opportunity that I have.

10 I am both a resident of this
11 Central Business District as well as
12 work in the district. I don't use a
13 car to commute, so I'm not going to
14 speak to that. But I do bike to work
15 and I do appreciate all the protected
16 bike lanes that the MTA has provided.

17 I do, though, want to reiterate
18 a point that others have made for an
19 exemption for residents. I have to
20 keep a car because my mom who lives
21 outside the district, has dementia,
22 she can't drive. She can't I have to
23 go up two to three times a week to
24 help her grocery shop and just assist
25 her with her sort of daily living

1 activities. She has a health
2 caregiver, but there are limitations
3 on that as well.

4 I try to time my visits to my
5 mom so I'm not doing it during peak
6 traffic times. I'm doing it off
7 traffic times, and to be charged for
8 that seems contrary to the point of
9 congestion pricing.

10 In addition to a resident
11 exemption, I also think that there
12 should be more pricing differentiation
13 for off-peak and weekend tolls. I
14 have friends, I've got family, I've
15 got a daughter in Brooklyn in addition
16 to my mom in the Bronx. I have
17 friends outside the district in the
18 suburbs, and I don't want them to have
19 to pay a toll to visit me, you know,
20 to come in for dinner or on the
21 weekend to pay a \$2 difference.

22 The congestion on the weekends
23 and in the evening is just not at the
24 same level as business hours. And I
25 don't see why there is a toll at all

1 during the off-hours.

2 Finally, I have to mention that
3 I'm a little skeptical of the
4 business impact. In the Central
5 Business District, I patronize a lot
6 of restaurants, there's theaters,
7 there's a lot of cultural attractions.
8 And I'm concerned there will be an
9 adverse impact on those businesses in
10 my neighborhood and as well as
11 throughout the district if -- if the
12 -- particularly the off-peak tolls are
13 not reduced.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

16 Our next speaker is Atta Panyin
17 Young, followed by Theresa Collins.

18 Next speaker is Theresa Collins,
19 followed by Felix Ottenwalder.

20 Next speaker is Felix
21 Ottenwalder, followed by Robert Last.

22 Our next speaker is Robert Last,
23 followed by Flori P.

24 Our next speaker, 275th to sign
25 up, is Flori P, followed by Anwaar

1 Malik.

2 The next speaker is Anwaar
3 Malik, followed by Arita Tirmizi.

4 Please proceed.

5 ANWAAR MALIK: Yeah, businesses
6 in the CB area don't pay tolls to
7 operate, so why as a Uber driver
8 should I be paying to -- paying tolls
9 because this is my business. But my
10 business just moves around. But when
11 you come to think about it, businesses
12 don't pay tolls, right, over there?
13 So as a driver we actually help New
14 York City move. We kept it moving
15 during the pandemic peak, but never
16 once were we appreciated for our
17 suffering or losses. Never once were
18 we asked what do we want. We helped
19 the MTA make hundreds of millions of
20 dollars since 2018. Yet, here we are
21 still robbed like it's okay.

22 It's a shame that not anyone
23 gives a damn about us and keeps
24 stressing us with more payments and
25 bills. The whole world has upgraded

1 their whole subway system. Yet, here
2 MTA is just robbing money and letting
3 people die in their trains.

4 Last but not least, I would like
5 to say MTA has failed hardworking New
6 Yorkers. You all should be ashamed of
7 yourselves. You failed big time and
8 will keep failing. Thousands of us
9 will lose our livelihoods.

10 The MTA's own Environmental
11 Assessment states that it will be FHV
12 and taxi drivers who will ultimately
13 pay the price with significantly fewer
14 trips, less pay and loss of jobs. And
15 the pathetic part is that MTA has not
16 fixed the subway system, so how do
17 they plan on getting everyone to work
18 on time. Shit, at least do something
19 about being protected before robbing
20 us.

21 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

22 Our next speaker is Arita
23 Tirmizi, followed by Larbi Aitaabou.

24 Our next speaker is Larbi
25 Aitaabou, followed by Sonam Lama.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

210

1 LARBI AITAABOU: All right. I
2 think I got this.

3 MS. FLAX: We can hear you.

4 LARBI AITAABOU: Great. Thank
5 you. I'm just going to go right into
6 the point, present myself very quickly
7 right here. My name is Larbi
8 Aitaabou. I'm a TLC license driver
9 and also a FHV driver and also IDG, or
10 Independent Driver's Guild, member.
11 I'm just going to jump in right here.

12 Congestion pricing should be
13 fair and affordable across the
14 industry. One sector of the industry
15 should not receive an exemption, while
16 others do not. All livery taxis, and
17 FHV driver should all be subject to
18 the same rules and fees. You propose
19 giving taxis exemptions for additional
20 surcharges, but not FHV's.

21 The irony here is that FHV serve
22 out of borough communities of color,
23 not taxis. And there was a time, and
24 still probably, when the taxi industry
25 regularly discriminated against

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

211

1 customers based on geographic
2 discrimination.

3 Do you want a repeat of this
4 reprehensible practice? No, you
5 don't. But I don't know how you think
6 about it. So not only will this make
7 FHV unaffordable to these communities,
8 but you will now incentivize
9 discriminatory practice against them.

10 This is an absolute madness.
11 All rules and surcharges must be fair
12 across the board. The additional
13 congestion tax proposal come as
14 rideshare drivers are already in an
15 economic crisis. Rideshare drivers
16 were hit hard by the pandemic; stuck
17 with car payments and insurance bills
18 they could no longer afford to pay.

19 As business slowly began to
20 return, drivers have struggled to make
21 ends meet, unprecedented gas prices
22 and expenses not to mention inflation.
23 In recent survey of more than
24 thousands rideshare drivers, IDG,
25 Independent Drivers Guild, found that

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

212

1 nine in ten rideshare drivers are
2 unable to afford basic living
3 expenses, and more than half are
4 struggling to afford food. Adding
5 additional taxes on this already
6 struggling (sic).

7 I want to mention one thing, I
8 know I have 30 seconds left. But
9 also, all these other companies, such
10 as Amazon, FedEx and all these
11 companies, they are blocking the road
12 of Manhattan. I live in Manhattan,
13 they are blocking the road and you are
14 not charging them a penny. No one is
15 charging. The city is not charging
16 them a penny. And this is a very
17 shameful of this agency to only target
18 people like me, minorites and people
19 of color.

20 Thank you.

21 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

22 Our next speaker is Sonam Lama,
23 followed by JingSheng Lin.

24 SONAM LAMA: Hello. Can you
25 hear me, guys?

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

213

1 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

2 SONAM LAMA: Thank you,
3 everyone, for giving this opportunity.
4 My name Sonam Lama. I'm driver, and
5 advocate from the TLC driver. I
6 myself is a TLC driver So why everyone
7 is so interested to rob us. Uber
8 company, all these app companies take
9 more commissions from us. TLC make
10 money from us, the state, the federal
11 rob all our taxes.

12 And MTA, we are giving you guys
13 \$2.75 already. Why are you guys
14 robbing us, driving us -- working day
15 and night when we help you build this
16 New York City community better after
17 this COVID.

18 When there was a shortage on the
19 staff with the MTA bus and train, who
20 do you guys think gave all these ride
21 to the first responders, it is us, all
22 this. We put our life at risk for you
23 guys and most of you, whoever are
24 here, you might have taken the ride
25 with us, right, the Uber or Lyft. We

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 have the same drivers.

2 So why are you guys so, you
3 know, into robbing us, making money
4 out of us. We are not a sugar daddy
5 for you guys. If you do that, how can
6 we survive and how can you guys make
7 money from us? So this congestion
8 price is something should be exempt
9 from us, especially FHV drivers.

10 We are never recognized and we
11 are the backbone of New York City that
12 runs and keep 24 hours. So -- and
13 adding to the point, as an Uber driver
14 and Lyft driver, I give ride to the
15 service animal people, the people who
16 have the service animal, you know, the
17 people who have disable animal, the
18 disabled, my fellow drivers are
19 helping them. We include all kinds of
20 passengers and patients in our car and
21 give them ride.

22 It is a way for us to support
23 our family. Most of us are immigrant,
24 we have to send money back home too,
25 great winner for them. And each

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

215

1 dollar definitely -- it definitely
2 like, you know, like effect us, so
3 please make us not pay these kind of
4 fees.

5 Instead, add some money to us so
6 we can make for our family. And DOT,
7 I'm a big fan of DOT. But agent that
8 you have, it sucks. They give \$100,
9 \$115 tickets. You guys already made
10 some money from us. It's time to give
11 us the money, not to give start with
12 this congestion price. Take from the
13 billionaires who are in Wall Street
14 and Midtown people, not from us.

15 Thank you.

16 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

17 Our next and 281st speaker on
18 the list is, JingSheng Lin, followed
19 by Mamadou Diallo.

20 JINGSHENG LIN: Hello. Can you
21 hear me?

22 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

23 JINGSHENG LIN: All right. So
24 yes, my name is JingSheng Lin. And,
25 you know, FHV drivers, we've been

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

216

1 paying the congestion price already.
2 Ever since the law passed back in 2019
3 in January, they are telling us we
4 have to pay \$2.75 as a FHV driver and
5 that's if you go driving around below
6 60th Street, Manhattan.

7 Out of that whole time, we've
8 been paying congestion prices even
9 when there was not a single congestion
10 during the pandemic. During the
11 pandemic, we still were moving people
12 around. And during that time, where's
13 the congestion? Everybody was off,
14 people still needed to go around and
15 we're still paying the congestion
16 prices, riders are still paying the
17 congestion prices.

18 What has the city done? What
19 improvements have been made? MTA
20 buses, there's still signal problems
21 -- subway stations, there's still
22 signal problems. None of that
23 changed. During that whole time,
24 throughout the years, every single
25 year, MTA has been able to bring

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

217

1 another \$300 million per year just
2 from the taxi drivers and FHV drivers
3 of this congestion price.

4 What has that \$300 million per
5 year gone to? Where did it go? That
6 is the main question that I want to
7 know. Because all these fees, there's
8 not single improvement. Roads are not
9 even being fixed over there and all
10 you guys do is construction and all
11 you guys add is more bus lanes, more
12 bike lanes and where the hell all the
13 drivers going to go? Of course,
14 there's going to be more accidents on
15 the road because of that. You know,
16 cyclists, I'm sorry, but there is a
17 place for them to ride and they still
18 go all over the road. They fell like
19 they own the city, they own the city
20 streets.

21 This congestion price makes no
22 sense. It doesn't provide in a safer
23 way. None of that. All it does is,
24 it creates more congestion. Right.
25 And the reason why I'm saying that is

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

218

1 because now you're going to have
2 people circling around looking for a
3 ride to get into Manhattan and there's
4 going to be more rider discrimination,
5 and that's going to be another thing
6 that drivers have to face.

7 This is not fair for the
8 drivers, this is not fair for anybody
9 around. And if this does get passed
10 on to the riders, how is that fair for
11 the riders? They still pay for the
12 MTA congestion charge, but where does
13 that go? Does that improve their
14 service? No, it doesn't.

15 This is not right. Exempt the
16 riders, exempt the drivers. We are
17 here as human beings. We have to make
18 a living to provide for our family.
19 Not only back home, but for families
20 here. We are here to provide a
21 service to the working-class, to any
22 class in New York City. We are here
23 to support everybody but if this
24 congestion bill passes, then we are
25 totally screwed.

1 Okay. Thank you and I yield the
2 rest of my time.

3 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

4 Our next speaker is Mamadou
5 Diallo, followed by Mathos Sangare.

6 MAMADOU DIALLO: Hello. Can you
7 guys hear me?

8 MS. FLAX: Yes. This time it's
9 better so far.

10 MAMADOU DIALLO: I appreciate
11 it.

12 Okay, so, you know, I have to,
13 you know, I feel like history repeat
14 itself now. Okay. America was built
15 based on the back of slavery, poor
16 people. Let's go back, same old
17 thing, same story. The big guy never
18 get taxed. The little guy have to get
19 taxed. Same thing.

20 You have people with no income,
21 you got people -- literally people
22 struggling now. And this is the
23 middle of pandemic. Pandemic has not
24 even gone yet and now the MTA coming
25 out with congestion. Let's be very

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

220

1 serious about that part.

2 The second part that I want to
3 talk about, the cyclist, I love them.
4 We are supposed to share the road.
5 All of us have to on the street
6 because of our citizens, you know, the
7 pedestrian was here before a car came.
8 I don't mind seeing cyclists on the
9 street. I drive taxis, I drive Uber
10 and Lyft and I don't mind playing
11 bicycle around us, that's okay with
12 us.

13 But the thing is this continues
14 to really think about, this plan is
15 very discriminatory. I live in the
16 Bronx. Branches are already suffering
17 with pollution. You're going to have
18 X amount of pollution. It's so sad
19 you only focus on Central District.
20 We don't matter. Okay. Everybody
21 matter, not just that area of New York
22 City matter. The five boroughs is
23 going to also be polluted because all
24 the drivers going to be driving around
25 not coming to the midtown district

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

221

1 because of congestion pricing. So all
2 lives matters. Stop all this
3 pollution -- because this is MTA
4 leaning towards pollution, but guess
5 what, it's a money grab scheme. This
6 is a money grab scheme.

7 All you guys on the board, all
8 your salaries is going to be raised.
9 You guys want the bill to pass because
10 you're going to have more money in
11 your pocket. You guys going to have
12 more money in your pocket. You guys
13 sitting over here looking pretty,
14 blinking, all that. Stop it. Stop
15 it. I barely make \$50 dollars a day.
16 You guys need to stop this, this is
17 ludicrous. No congestion prices, it's
18 nonsense.

19 We all deserve the right to move
20 around Manhattan freely. We already
21 pay enough taxes, these guys is
22 already paying double. If you double
23 park your car a little bit, they give
24 you \$150 tax -- on DOT. Let's be
25 serious, this is ludicrous.

1 Congestion pricing, please stop
2 it. It's nonsense, it's
3 discriminatory, all lives matter.
4 Talking about pollution down there,
5 it's nonsense. What about the
6 pollution in the Bronx, what are you
7 going to do with the pollution in the
8 Bronx? All right? So you're gonna
9 see heavy traffic around.

10 Come on now. This is nothing
11 but a scheme. MTA, we know the games,
12 I see you all in MTA. Most of you
13 don't even do work, they just stand
14 around. So come on, let's be really
15 real about this. This is ludicrous.
16 Come on, MTA.

17 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
18 Mathos Sangare, followed by Arita
19 Tirmizi.

20 Our next speaker is Arita
21 Tirmizi, followed by Judith Dahill.

22 Our next speaker is Judith
23 Dahill, followed by Lisa Mangal.

24 Our next speaker is Misa Mangal,
25 followed by Marvin Lowe.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

223

1 Our next speaker is Marvin Lowe,
2 followed by Patrick Mclaughlin.

3 Our next speaker is Patrick
4 Mclaughlin, followed by Dina Ruiz.

5 Our next speaker is Dina Ruiz,
6 followed by Eric Bell.

7 Our next speaker is Eric Bell,
8 followed by Stephen Paul Miller.

9 Our next speaker is Stephen Paul
10 Miller, followed by Ibrahima Barry.

11 Stephen, you may unmute yourself
12 and begin your remarks.

13 STEPHEN PAUL MILLER: Okay.

14 It took a while to find myself.

15 I -- a few years ago the
16 dividing line was 86th Street and I
17 know you might have had some reasons
18 for lowering it to 60th Street, but I
19 think the most important thing is that
20 we should all do our part. If you
21 really need money and this is a way to
22 raise the money, the Upper West Side
23 and the Upper East Side should want to
24 be part of the whole scheme, if it's a
25 good scheme or even if it isn't, you

1 know.

2 It also seems to me that -- I
3 live on the Lower East Side. There's
4 not more traffic on the Lower East
5 Side than the Upper East Side or parts
6 of Brooklyn. So the sense for
7 Manhattan, if the scheme made any
8 sense at all, would have something to
9 do with charging a toll on these side
10 bridges. Which would be unfortunate,
11 you know, sort of turning bridges into
12 payrolls, which emotionally hurts me.

13 It seems to me there was
14 something in the original 1898 New
15 York Charter about providing easy
16 access between the boroughs. You
17 know, of course, I see your point and
18 guess polluting cars are terrible.
19 But, you know, maybe you're fighting
20 the last war in a way, you know, it's
21 just today the California mandate and
22 electric cars.

23 It seems to me that if you were
24 serious about discouraging pollution,
25 there would be some sort of exemption

1 for electric cars. I know you would
2 argue that they create congestion
3 also. Wait, I think that I have not
4 used all my time. I really could use
5 more time.

6 I just want to say that it's a
7 shame that you really don't care about
8 the collateral damage. Obviously,
9 there is a lot of people with a lot
10 damage of collateral damage and you
11 just don't care. It might
12 be anecdotal to you, but it's real.
13 And I think there are other ways to do
14 this.

15 What about universal
16 implementation? What about everybody
17 chipping in? If this was so
18 important, why are you hermetically
19 sealed from taxation in general? You
20 know. And the very notion of this, I
21 don't get it. It seems like --

22 Anyway, you know, you don't
23 answer any questions here. You just
24 like proverbial psychotherapists
25 listening to everyone. It would be

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

226

1 better to have two minutes and have
2 you answer something, rather than you
3 just be sitting there.

4 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
5 remarks.

6 STEPHEN PAUL MILLER: Say it
7 again.

8 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

9 STEPHEN PAUL MILLER: Really?

10 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker, and
11 290th speaker on the list, is Ibrahima
12 Barry, followed by Betsy Plum.

13 Our next speaker is Betsy Plum,
14 followed by Douglas Gordon.

15 BETSY PLUM: Good evening. My
16 name is Betsy Plum. I'm here tonight
17 on behalf of Riders Alliance New York
18 Grassroots Organization of Subway and
19 Bus Riders. I'm here to voice our
20 strong support for implementing a
21 robust congestion pricing program as
22 quickly as possible.

23 Public transit is the beating
24 heart of our city. It is a core piece
25 of bringing about an equitable

1 recovery in New York. And what we
2 need at this moment is a transit
3 system that works and that working and
4 middle-class New Yorkers can depend
5 on. The only way we can see a
6 reliable transit system delivered for
7 riders is with this program, with
8 congestion pricing. Congestion
9 pricing is the single biggest piece of
10 funding, \$15 billion for the MTA
11 capital plan.

12 Without the revenue, riders will
13 continue to experience daily subway
14 delays caused by an ancient signal
15 technology in an outdated system.
16 Riders who depends on elevators will
17 continue to face a subway system that
18 is nearly impossible to navigate, with
19 accessible stations few and far
20 between and elevators too frequently
21 out of service. And riders will
22 continue to experience buses that are
23 unreliable and maddeningly slow stuck
24 behind gridlock traffic.

25 Congestion pricing has the power

1 to deliver overwhelming positive
2 environmental impacts by reducing car
3 congestion, by clearing the air of
4 excessive vehicle exhaust and by
5 raising funds that will be invested
6 delivering cleaner transportation for
7 millions of New Yorkers.

8 Moreover, it's a progressive
9 means of raising revenue from those
10 who can afford the cost of car
11 ownership and traveling by car into
12 the business district. We have no
13 other choice, our collective futures
14 depend on congestion pricing.

15 We call upon the governor and
16 the MTA to do everything in their
17 power to implement congestion pricing
18 quickly and fairly and for the federal
19 government to understand that for
20 nearly five decades, congestion
21 pricing has been the answer. Its time
22 has come and we must see it
23 implemented.

24 Thank you.

25 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

229

1 Our next speaker is Douglas
2 Gordon, followed by Basia Osowski.

3 Our next speaker is Basia
4 Osowski, followed by Jonelle Wright.

5 Our next speaker is Jonelle
6 Wright, followed by Jamal Moe.

7 Our next speaker is Jamal Moe,
8 followed Christine Negra.

9 Our next speaker is Christine
10 Negra, followed by Akinwole Killanin.

11 Our next speaker is Akinwole
12 Killanin, followed by Juliet Kadlecek.

13 JULIET KADLECEK: Can you hear
14 me?

15 MS. FLAX: Yes.

16 JULIET KADLECEK: I am Juliet
17 Kadlecek. I'm a single mother of two
18 school-aged children and a resident of
19 the Central Business District living
20 in subsidized housing. Though I
21 qualify for subsidized housing, I do
22 not qualify for the tax credit offered
23 with the congestion pricing scheme. I
24 also worked for a subsidized housing
25 community in Northern Westchester

1 County.

2 And therefore, I'm a reversed
3 commuter with public transportation
4 times equal in current costs, car
5 versus public transport with the
6 Metro-North. Yet, my commute time, if
7 I use public transport, would be
8 double. And having two school-aged
9 children, this makes it pretty much
10 impossible. The -- but my personal
11 situation aside, I support a fair and
12 equitable application of the
13 congestion pricing in New York City.

14 In a paper by the Institute of
15 Transportation Studies by UC Davis in
16 December of 2020, which addressed
17 equitable congestion pricing, cities
18 around the world have been able to
19 provide equity while adapting a
20 congestion pricing scheme that
21 provided for the residents living
22 within those congestion pricing
23 districts.

24 London offers a 90 percent
25 discount with a ten-pound annual

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

231

1 registration fee. Milan has 43 entry
2 and exits, followed by a two-euro fee,
3 much lower than the out-of-district
4 residents. And even places that don't
5 offer these benefits to residents,
6 they do restrict the timing of the
7 fees being charged.

8 I think that these things need
9 to be considered for all residents.
10 To say somebody who lives below 60th
11 Street now has an additional charge
12 just because they already own a car --
13 I mean, I own a car. I pay for
14 parking so -- because after driving
15 around with my children for, you know,
16 over an hour and receiving a 99-dollar
17 parking ticket because I was two
18 minutes late to move because I kids
19 didn't want the cereal I put out in
20 the morning, like it was crazy.

21 And I'm just thinking like -- I
22 decided oh, I can pay for four tickets
23 in one garage monthly fee, plus a tax,
24 plus my New York City tax. And now
25 I'm going to be charged when I go one

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

232

1 block from my garage to the FDR every
2 time I leave to take the kids out of
3 the district or to go to my office.

4 I -- it just seems crazy that
5 residents aren't being more seriously
6 considered in this plan. And I wish
7 and hope and urge that you review the,
8 you know, global agendas of other
9 congestion schemes and consider them
10 when you present your final plan.

11 Thank you.

12 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

13 Our next speaker is Arthur
14 Keeler, followed by Kathryn Tannert
15 Niang.

16 Our next speaker is Kathryn
17 Tannert Niang, followed by Chris
18 Castillo.

19 Our next speaker is Chris
20 Castillo, followed by George Pilieri.

21 CHRIS CASTILLO:

22 MS. FLAX: You may begin your
23 remarks.

24 CHRIS CASTILLO: Hi. My name is
25 Chris Castillo. I live on the Lower

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

233

1 East Side. I've been a resident of
2 New York City most of my life. I'm
3 disabled and I do have a car. And
4 unfortunately, I can only get around
5 in a car. Mass transit is not readily
6 available to me here, and going up and
7 down stairs is very difficult for me.
8 I take care of my mother as she is 93,
9 who lives in Rockland County. So I
10 travel up to her at least twice a week
11 to help her with shopping and whatever
12 else she needs.

13 So it's very difficult for me to
14 pay an additional tax that's --
15 would -- you know, as a credit and
16 then wait until the end of the year to
17 get it back. Unfortunately, I do not
18 have that kind of money to shell out
19 for a car and for insurance and for
20 registration and another additional
21 tax, and then be charged to come back
22 to where I live to come sleep at
23 night.

24 It's unreasonable and unfair and
25 discriminatory against disabled and

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

234

1 elderly people to pose this tax since
2 I pay New York City taxes all my life.
3 I don't see anybody paying taxes for
4 the bike riders that go back and forth
5 our streets and go in middle of our
6 streets and disobey traffic
7 regulations. Nothing happens with
8 them, but you want to penalize people
9 who own a car because you think they
10 are rich. Which most of the people I
11 know who have a car in the city are
12 not rich, especially where I live.

13 If you want to reduce emission,
14 you can put in another million trees
15 like Bloomberg did and you can lower
16 the emissions that way. It's just
17 very unfair that this has to happen.
18 And if you're going to burden the
19 people with congestion pricing, at
20 least make it fair and suitable for
21 everyone, not just for the wealthy and
22 the people who have paid multiple
23 taxes. I mean, it's just unfair. I'm
24 sorry.

25 I hope everybody contacts their

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

235

1 representative and fights this. Thank
2 you very much.

3 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

4 The next speaker is George
5 Pilieri, followed by Bhairavi Desai.

6 The next speaker is Bhairavi
7 Desai, followed by Jason Anthony.

8 The next speaker is Jason
9 Anthony, followed by Kate Slevin.

10 JASON ANTHONY: Good evening,
11 everyone. Jason Anthony from the
12 Amazon labor union.

13 A couple of things that we have
14 to consider: One, you have Amazon
15 employees that work in the fulfillment
16 center in the west shore of Staten
17 Island that commute by mass transit,
18 either drive from all different parts
19 of the city, even from New Jersey from
20 the Goethals, Verrazano and from
21 different parts of the city and even
22 the Verrazano.

23 If you're not a Staten Island
24 resident, you have to pay 20 -- almost
25 \$20 round trip. And interestingly

1 enough, the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge
2 is the most expensive toll by far in
3 New York State. Have that in mind.
4 And if we come from New Jersey, from
5 all tollings, in other words from the
6 GWB south, everybody will be affected.

7 And keep in mind, the Hudson
8 River Tunnels, if we have another
9 catastrophe just like Sandy the whole
10 northeast corridor will be affected.
11 So keep that in mind while considering
12 the tolling. In other words, consider
13 something like dynamic tolling that
14 they have in Central Florida. So they
15 charge by the amount of traffic. So
16 they don't charge overnight the amount
17 of traffic that we deal with
18 overnight. Especially, I live in
19 Brooklyn, I see too much traffic on
20 Flatbush Avenue and I see too much
21 traffic too on 34th Street.

22 And please have more of these
23 hearings throughout the months of
24 September and October.

25 So I yield the rest of my time.

1 Thank you very much.

2 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

3 Our next speaker is Kate Slevin,
4 followed by Arita Tirmizi.

5 Our next speaker is Arita
6 Tirmizi, followed by David Flaherty.

7 ARITA TIRMIZI: Yes. Can you
8 hear me?

9 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

10 ARITA TIRMIZI: Yes. My name is
11 Arita Tirmizi and I'm an organizer of
12 IDG, I represent Independent Drivers
13 Guild. I'm also a parent of seven
14 children, with a disabled child. And
15 I'm a for-hire vehicle driver.

16 I wanted to speak certain topics
17 about having a disabled child and with
18 the MTA not providing enough
19 facilities for people with
20 disabilities on wheelchairs. There
21 are many stops on train stations that
22 don't have the accessibility for
23 children or adults with disabilities
24 that can go up and down.

25 So as a parent, I have to take a

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

238

1 taxi for my child. But having to pay
2 such congestion pricing makes it way
3 more difficult, especially for the
4 disabled community. Because even if
5 I'm a FHV driver or the person that
6 I'm picking up, somebody has to be
7 responsible for this price to be paid.
8 So this is something very unfair that
9 this is happening.

10 This is like being double taxed.
11 Because as a FHV driver, we're also
12 facing so many restrictions. We have
13 only five boroughs that we can work
14 from. There are so many restrictions.
15 We don't get work outside of the five
16 boroughs, and then we're going to
17 restrict further things in Manhattan.

18 And you have to understand, the
19 inflation, there's inflation just --
20 why are we putting congestion pricing,
21 why when the pandemic hit, who were
22 they asking to become essential
23 employees, the FHV drivers, the taxi
24 drivers. They were the ones that
25 became the essential drivers and they

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

239

1 were giving protocol to the essential
2 employees as doctors and nurses.

3 The city also asked us that if
4 we -- without even getting paid, they
5 wanted us to drive them, and we put
6 our lives at risk. But what did we
7 get in return, we're not getting
8 anything in return as FHV drivers.

9 I'm speaking about all the people who
10 were driving, all the essential
11 employees. We were labeled as
12 essential employees also. But what
13 are we getting in return, we're
14 getting another congestion pricing to
15 come over our head.

16 Are we not aware? Are we
17 oblivious of what our inflation rates
18 are going? We're not getting any
19 money extra to pay for our rent.
20 Everything is so much blocked. How do
21 we support our families? Look at the
22 gas prices, we're not getting any
23 stimulus. Nothing.

24 But I just want to thank you for
25 letting us speak. And I hope this

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

240

1 goes in favor, at least consider to
2 keep certain people, like essential
3 employees, we should have some
4 exemptions. The request that they
5 asked us to give during the pandemic,
6 we should be given the same respect
7 back.

8 Thank you, my name is Arita
9 Tirmizi. I'm from IDG.

10 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

11 Our next speaker is David
12 Flaherty, followed by John Doe.

13 Our next speaker is John Doe,
14 followed by Raul Rivera.

15 John, you may unmute. Please
16 begin your remarks.

17 JOHN DOE: I really am
18 disappointed in the MTA. I see a lot
19 of the people on here have green
20 screens. I just want to know, is that
21 because you guys are not in the office
22 and therefore, you don't have to
23 travel to work every day and you don't
24 have to commute into the office, which
25 is, I believe, down the block from the

1 Staten Island Ferry, which is free.
2 So those people from Staten Island
3 don't have to pay to commute into the
4 city, but I have to pay \$23 on top of
5 the bridge, on top the gas just to get
6 in from Brooklyn because you people
7 want to take more money to waste it.

8 None of you on the board are
9 getting paid \$60,000. For you to
10 think that \$60,000 is enough of a
11 limit so people don't have to pay.
12 \$60,000 is nothing, especially if it's
13 a combined house income. That's
14 ridiculous. For you to think that
15 this is okay and that you can run away
16 with this cash grab without
17 consequences, you people need to
18 understand that we the people have the
19 power and we're going to come for you
20 at the election time.

21 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

22 Our next speaker is Raul Rivera,
23 followed by Paul White.

24 Our next speaker is Paul White,
25 followed by Golam Talukder.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

242

1 Our next speaker is Golam
2 Talukder, followed by Drew S.

3 Our next speaker is Drew S,
4 followed by Samuel Pan.

5 Our next speaker is Samuel Pan,
6 followed by Patrick Johnson.

7 Our next speaker is Patrick
8 Johnson, followed by Don S.

9 Patrick, you may begin your
10 remarks.

11 Patrick, you are unmuted but we
12 cannot hear you.

13 We still can't hear you.

14 We'll move to our next speaker.
15 If you move to a different audio,
16 we'll have to come back to you because
17 we can't hear you.

18 Our next speaker is Don S.,
19 followed by Eric Bischoff.

20 Our next speaker is Eric
21 Bischoff, followed by Kathy Francis.

22 Our next speaker is Kathy
23 Francis, followed by Lincoln Palmer.

24 Our next speaker is Lincoln
25 Palmer, followed by the 320th speaker

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

243

1 on the list, Ivan Ventura.

2 Our next speaker is Ivan
3 Ventura, followed by Muhammad Bilal.

4 Our next speaker is Muhammad
5 Bilal, followed by Joseph Toronto.

6 Our next speaker is Joseph
7 Toronto, followed by Jose Paulino.

8 Our next speaker is Jose
9 Paulino, followed by John Banzer.

10 Our next speaker is John Banzer,
11 followed by Austin Pferd.

12 Our next speaker is Austin
13 Pferd, followed by Kendra Hems.

14 Our next speaker is Kendra Hems,
15 followed by Josef B.

16 Our next speaker is Josef B.,
17 followed by Nathan Stodola.

18 Our next speaker is Nathan
19 Stodola, followed by our 330th speaker
20 on the list, Tess Harkin.

21 NATHAN STODOLA. Hi. Can you
22 hear me?

23 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

24 NATHAN STODOLA: Great.

25 My name is Nathan Stodola and I

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 live in Windsor Terrace in Brooklyn.
2 I also submitted my testimony in
3 writing because I didn't know if I'd
4 make it in. But thank you for the
5 opportunity to present it tonight. I
6 don't own a car and I rely on public
7 transportation to get to work in
8 Manhattan, to take weekend excursions
9 with my family on commuter railroads,
10 and to visit friends in other
11 boroughs.

12 I'm here to push my support for
13 the CBD Tolling Program. By
14 disincentivizing drivers, this program
15 will reduce greenhouse gas emissions
16 and improve local air quality.
17 With fewer drivers, remaining drivers
18 will experience much less traffic and
19 delay, as will our notoriously slow
20 buses.

21 By providing funds, the program
22 will help keep New York City's Metro
23 system operating smoothly and give it
24 money to expand capacity. It is
25 important to minimize exceptions or

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

245

1 otherwise the tolls for the remaining
2 toll payers will simply have to
3 increase. So I firmly support the
4 Plan A or G worksheet.

5 I actually really like that you
6 propose the idea of the flat fee for
7 trucks as well because I heard a great
8 point before, people can take trains
9 but packages can't. So I think both
10 Plans A and G are worth considering.
11 As the largest city in the United
12 States, New York deserves the best
13 transit system, and the CBD tolling
14 system can help the MTA accomplish
15 that.

16 Thank you.

17 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker is Tess Harkin,
19 followed by Patrick Johnson.

20 Our next speaker is Patrick
21 Johnson, followed by Tod Maisel.

22 PATRICK JOHNSON: Yes, can you
23 hear me?

24 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

25 PATRICK JOHNSON: Okay. Great.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

246

1 I'm very sorry about that. I just
2 wanted to talk about congestion
3 pricing.

4 I'm a middle class New Yorker.
5 I'm a stagehand with a 4,000-member
6 union. I just wanted to talk about
7 the guy in the Bronx who said about a
8 bike lane on the Verrazano Bridge.
9 The Verrazano Bridge is three miles
10 long with a steep grade. No one who
11 could commute to work every day is
12 going to be able to ride over the
13 Verrazano. The Staten Island borough
14 president said there was 500 crashes
15 plus on the Verrazano Bridge last
16 year. We got major problems here
17 before congestion pricing. Okay.
18 That's number one.

19 I really think that the White
20 House should be involved here because
21 this is an east coast thing here.
22 This is going to affect economy, this
23 is going to affect lives, this is
24 going to affect big banks and
25 corporations and Wall Street. This is

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

247

1 not just something to be played with
2 lightly here. This is not a joke.

3 I mean, where do these people
4 think people are going to go for the
5 big money? How are you going to get
6 employees into Manhattan, who are
7 going to wash dishes and cook food and
8 do, you know, jobs. I mean, people do
9 these jobs. I mean, people have to
10 get to these jobs.

11 And I wanted to talk about --
12 the guy complained about slow buses
13 and deliveries, people double parked.
14 This study, this data that they got
15 for congestion pricing to raise 15
16 billion, this was before outdoor
17 dining, this was before they took away
18 all the commercial loading zones in
19 the city. Okay? They're saying by
20 law, they have to do congestion
21 pricing.

22 By law, the Staten Island Ferry
23 is supposed to run every half hour,
24 every half an hour, by law. Okay.
25 It's been a law for like the last

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

248

1 three years. They break the law
2 constantly. There is no penalties.
3 New York City DOT is an embarrassment.
4 I'm not even going to go there. Okay?
5 They're an embarrassment and it's in
6 this whole thing here. All right.

7 And I'd like to see somebody go
8 from the MTA, I'd like to see somebody
9 from DOT, from the government, I don't
10 see Kathy Hochul in here. I don't see
11 Eric Adams in here. I'd like to see
12 them go to 60th Street in Manhattan
13 and 5th Avenue and go see the outdoor
14 dining structure on 60th Street
15 between 5th Avenue and Madison and see
16 how much of it takes away from truck
17 parking. And then see the guy with
18 the coffee cart, with his car full of
19 coffee cups and garbage taking away
20 the whole parking lane there -- I mean
21 the left turning lane, so now you get
22 traffic backing up onto Madison.
23 Okay. This is a big problem.

24 There's so much things that can
25 be solved that are so easily done,

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

249

1 that it's pathetic that this is what
2 we're wasting -- we're putting all our
3 efforts to. All right.

4 I'm going to be at all of these
5 congestion pricing meetings. You will
6 not -- you will be seeing more of me.
7 Let me see. Let me see. The yellow
8 taxi industry, destroyed. You guys
9 destroyed it. You let Uber -- Uber
10 should not be doing pick ups from like
11 a pick up on like 55th and 5th to go
12 drive somebody down to the West
13 Village. That should be a yellow taxi
14 job. That's got to stop immediately.

15 I'm going to be here all week.
16 All week I'll be doing this. The
17 woman from the Bronx was very upset.
18 Eric Adams should hear how upset that
19 woman from the Bronx was, and so
20 should Kathy Hochul.

21 I'll see you at the next
22 meeting. Thanks so much. Have a
23 great night.

24 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

25 Our next speaker is Tod Maisel,

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 followed by Felicia Park-Rogers.

2 Our next speaker is Felicia
3 Park-Rogers, followed by Stone Yee.

4 FELICIA PARK-ROGERS: Hi, good
5 evening. My name is Felicia
6 Park-Rogers and I'm with the regional
7 transit advocacy and policy
8 organization Tri-State Transportation
9 Campaign. And tonight I want to join
10 with those in support of congestion
11 pricing.

12 The key to ensuring safer, more
13 reliable, efficient and accessible
14 public transportation, as well as
15 cleaner air, less traffic congestion
16 and safer roads, is through a swift
17 implementation of congestion pricing.
18 It is absolutely imperative for the
19 USDOT, the state and the city to
20 support the program's implementation.
21 Congestion pricing is expected to
22 generate 15 billion dollars, thus
23 allowing the MTA to complete its
24 essential capital program to improve
25 long-standing issues plaguing our

1 public transit systems.

2 With that said, after review of
3 the recent draft of the EA, we do call
4 on the state and the city to act
5 swiftly to mitigate any potential
6 negative effects that congestion
7 pricing may have on environmental
8 justice communities located in New
9 York City's outer boroughs. The
10 Environmental Assessment lists seven
11 potential tolling scenarios to
12 investigate potential impacts. Almost
13 all tolling scenarios achieved the
14 necessary funding goals and we're glad
15 for this.

16 Tolling the Manhattan CBD will
17 lead to reduced traffic entering the
18 area with the net benefit in
19 congestion reduction for the whole
20 region. Daily truck traffic in
21 Manhattan's core would decline
22 anywhere from 21 percent to 81
23 percent, meaning thousand of trucks
24 will no longer drive through
25 Manhattan. The diversion of these

1 trucks has been accounted for through
2 truck-reduction programs outlined in
3 the Environmental Assessment.

4 Any discounts, crossing credits,
5 and exemptions will lead to higher
6 toll rates. If more exemptions are
7 allowed, higher toll rates will lead
8 to more traffic reduction in the
9 Manhattan CBD, but will also lead to
10 increased traffic diversions including
11 increases along the Cross Bronx and
12 Staten Island Expressway.

13 Depending on the scenario,
14 potential adverse impacts turn up
15 along the Staten Island Expressway and
16 Cross Bronx. The MTA will need to
17 mitigate these impacts as it creates
18 the final program. This is eminently
19 doable and should not become a reason
20 to stop congestion pricing.

21 The MTA's current transition
22 toward electrifying its fleet through
23 deploying zero-emission buses will
24 reduce pollutant emissions in
25 neighborhoods traditionally

1 underserved and those most affected by
2 poor air quality and climate change,
3 such as the South Bronx.

4 The MTA has developed a new
5 environmental justice scoring
6 framework that will help actively
7 conceptualize and incorporate the
8 electrification deployment phasing
9 process. Later this year, when
10 electrical buses are received and the
11 MTA's next procurement of battery
12 electric buses, the MTA prioritize the
13 Kingsbridge depot and Gun Hill depot,
14 both affecting Upper Manhattan and the
15 Bronx.

16 In conclusion, I strongly
17 support implementing congestion
18 pricing in combination with swift
19 prioritization of mitigation measures
20 and any area identified to have any
21 potential negative impacts.

22 Thank you.

23 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

24 Our next speaker is Stone Yee,
25 followed by Dorothy DiLullo.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 STELLA YEE: My name is Stella,
2 S-T-E-L-L-A.

3 Thank you for sharing the plan
4 and allowing the public to provide
5 input. I'm American and my ethnicity
6 is Chinese. I was an avid user of
7 public transportation. But due to the
8 rise in crime, especially to the Asian
9 community, I resorted to using my car
10 most of the time.

11 I do reside in the Business
12 District and find it appalling that
13 individuals living in the zone will be
14 charged a toll, or any other
15 individual be charged a toll. It
16 would be advantageous to examine the
17 way MTA uses the funding received and
18 eliminate wasteful spending in the
19 unnecessary overtime pay and
20 corruption.

21 Adding a new revenue stream will
22 not address the systemic issues within
23 the MTA. Using the guise of
24 environmental impact will not address
25 the true underlying issues which is

1 waste and corruption. The solution is
2 to fix the current system, not create
3 additional revenue streams that will
4 line the pockets of various
5 individuals. I'm sure anyone within
6 the MTA executives will not be paying
7 a penny into this pricing. You'll be
8 exempt because you'll be using
9 government-funded cars.

10 Also consider public
11 transportation reliable. Well, almost
12 on a daily occurrence, there's an
13 attack on a commuter using train,
14 buses. And there are delays. Betsy
15 Plum who represents the riders, you
16 say congestion pricing is the way to
17 go; well, it is not. Fixing what is
18 broken is the way, not pouring
19 additional funds into a broken system.

20 I agree with individuals on this
21 platform stating this pricing system
22 impacts the low middle incomers more
23 than any other class. I agree with
24 the official if elected into Congress
25 to repeal this plan. I also agree

1 with Lee Bergman and his commitment
2 regarding the lack of safety using
3 public transportation.

4 We need to improve the public
5 transportation, that needs to occur
6 first. We have not exhausted other
7 options before congestion pricing.
8 How can you increase ridership if the
9 systemic issues have not been
10 addressed?

11 Thank you for the opportunity to
12 share my thoughts.

13 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

14 Our next speaker is Dorothy
15 DiLullo, followed by Al Al.

16 Our next speaker is Al Al,
17 followed by Howard Birnbaum.

18 Our next speaker is Howard
19 Birnbaum.

20 Our next speaker is Howard
21 Birnbaum, followed by Borislav
22 Borisov.

23 Howard, you may proceed.

24 HOWARD BIRNBAUM: Hello, good
25 evening. How are you?

1 I'm against this whole thing
2 because it's unfair for those four
3 boroughs to have to pay twice every
4 time. So I'm against this whole
5 thing.

6 Thank you for your time. Have a
7 good evening.

8 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

9 Our next speaker is Borislav
10 Borisov, followed by Joseph Tedeschi.

11 Our next speaker is Joseph
12 Tedeschi, followed by Madeleine
13 Rumely.

14 Our next speaker is Madeleine
15 Rumely, followed by Shirelle Nix
16 McKay.

17 MADELEINE RUMELY: Hi. My name
18 is Madeleine. I'm a native New
19 Yorker. I'm a mom of a two year-old.
20 I work full-time. I live in Brooklyn,
21 I was raised in Washington Heights and
22 I commute to work in the -- by Time
23 Square.

24 I have been riding the subway
25 pretty much every day since the 1980s

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

258

1 and I fully support congestion
2 pricing. I now live in the middle of
3 Brooklyn and I find that I wait
4 sometimes so long for the subway and
5 the amount of connections and the
6 amount of delays or subways just are
7 not running that I bought a bike last
8 year after never biking in the city at
9 all because I thought it was too
10 dangerous. And it is because as a
11 pedestrian, last year, my son was hit
12 by a car and almost killed.

13 But anyway, I now bike with him
14 on dangerous New York City streets
15 because I find that it's my only way
16 of getting around, I don't own a car.
17 And I urge that we support congestion
18 pricing because we need to have better
19 subway access for everybody. I don't
20 have money for a car, I don't pay for
21 Uber. I know many of my neighbors
22 feel the same way.

23 I see those here who own homes
24 and who are crying poverty, even
25 though they also own cars, because

1 they haven't been paying their fair
2 share and now they need to pay their
3 fair share. The people who have been
4 paying for this are the people who
5 can't afford to, who have been waiting
6 way too long for equal access to be
7 able to get around their city.

8 And we all deserve the right to
9 be able to have access to
10 transportation in New York City and
11 it's never going to be by cars. If we
12 all rode a car, it would be impossible
13 for New York City to function. And I
14 think even the drivers all know that.
15 It doesn't matter who you are, we need
16 to make sure that we get
17 transportation that's funded, that
18 works for older people, people with
19 disabilities and others, like myself,
20 who have a very hard time using our
21 public transportation system.

22 And the solution is not cars.
23 The solution is a better, modern, well
24 funded transportation system. The
25 subway is statistically safer than

1 driving. We all know that pedestrian
2 deaths are very high. There's been at
3 least 100 people that have died on New
4 York City streets just this year. Far
5 fewer than -- any instances of danger
6 on the subway.

7 I also want to say as a member
8 of the Park Slope Civic Council and of
9 CB 6 in Brooklyn that this has wide
10 support in my district.

11 Thank you very much for your
12 time and I hope that we pass this as
13 soon as possible.

14 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

15 Our next speaker is Shirelle Nix
16 McKay, followed by Tom Fox.

17 Our next speaker is Tom Fox,
18 followed by Scott Sloat.

19 Our next speaker is Scott Sloat,
20 followed by Dana Affleck.

21 SCOTT SLOAT: Hello?

22 MR. WOJNAR: Please proceed.

23 SCOTT SLOAT: I would just like
24 to say that I think it's sort of
25 surprising -- disappointed, actually,

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

261

1 that the MTA has not spoken more on
2 serious efforts to balance their
3 budget and create cost savings before
4 coming for congestion pricing.
5 Instead, all one hears is the need for
6 more money and more money.

7 I think this is sort of
8 symptomatic of a corporation out of
9 control and with the lack of a sense
10 of fiduciary responsibility to the
11 people that it's meant to serve.

12 Additionally, I think that the
13 city and the MTA are unable to provide
14 safe and reliable service. So many
15 people have switched to bikes rather
16 than the subways due to the issues of
17 cleanliness and safety. I think that
18 needs to be addressed and resolved
19 before you can expect to increase
20 ridership.

21 I think it's kind of shocking
22 also that it hasn't really been
23 addressed, but lately, you sort of see
24 more and more reports of the decreased
25 speed of crosstown traffic due to

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

262

1 congestion. However, I think it
2 should be noted that over the past few
3 years, the city, the DOT, created
4 congestion by reducing lanes available
5 for traffic, by creating turn lanes,
6 parking, bike lanes, and restaurant
7 outdoor dining.

8 Yes, outdoor dining was needed
9 in the pandemic. But as we all know,
10 that seems to be evident. These
11 blocked lanes who created the
12 congestion and increased the numbers
13 of double-parked delivery trucks as
14 there's literally nowhere else for
15 them to park. In many cases, what
16 were five to six lane avenues have
17 been reduced to two lanes plus a turn
18 lane; such as 7th Avenue coming off of
19 Central Park South or 8th Avenue
20 around 34th Street.

21 I would question how independent
22 the study panels actually were. I
23 think everyone is aware of how any
24 report can be altered or data
25 manipulated to present the desired

1 outcome.

2 I think perhaps a more
3 reasonable starting point would be to
4 implement this with the trucks and the
5 commercial vehicles; Amazon, FedEx,
6 UPS, these giant companies that are
7 using the lanes and create much of the
8 traffic, rather than imposing upon
9 everyday citizens.

10 With this all being said, I
11 think this is a scheme and it's unfair
12 and it needs to be further studied.
13 If this does go through, then there
14 should be no exemptions for any
15 government, MTA or DOT employees. If
16 it's good enough for your citizens to
17 pay, it's good enough for you too as
18 well.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

21 Our next speaker is Dana
22 Affleck, followed by Touhami
23 Benmessaoud.

24 Please proceed, Dana.

25 DANA AFFLECK: Thank you. I

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

264

1 wanted to start by saying I am sharing
2 my comments because I'm strongly in
3 favor of congestion pricing. However,
4 I should say that it's for a whole
5 variety of reasons. We need to reduce
6 traffic in the city for climate
7 reasons, we need to reduce it so that
8 people can get around and access the
9 CBD equitably. However, and we need
10 to fund the MTA to make the changes
11 that are necessary to support working
12 middle class families and folks with
13 disabilities.

14 However, I strongly also believe
15 in a just transition. And a just
16 transition must center jobs and
17 justice in frontline and working
18 communities while we transition our
19 economies and our infrastructure to
20 meet the climate goals that we need to
21 have a future we can all live in.

22 It's clear to me that the
23 architects of this plan have not done
24 a good enough job to engage with
25 frontline and working class people.

1 And the idea that someone who has a
2 car can afford to pay a congestion
3 price up to \$23 is absurd. The idea
4 that, you know, the federal poverty
5 line is a good place to draw a line of
6 someone's ability to drive a car and
7 be able to pay this congestion pricing
8 is also absurd.

9 We should be actually thinking
10 about what is practical when we think
11 about someone living in New York City,
12 in any of the boroughs or the
13 surrounding areas where we have
14 workers that commute into New York
15 City.

16 So, I -- I do want to support
17 congestion pricing. I want that noted
18 on the record and I want it to be
19 very, very clear that exemptions must
20 be designed to ensure an actual just
21 transition to the people that live in
22 this city, support this city and keep
23 this city running.

24 There are enough corporations
25 and millionaires and billionaires to

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

266

1 go around in New York City that can
2 very easily fund these sorts of
3 schemes and they should not be
4 disproportionately harming
5 working class folks and low,
6 middle-class folks.

7 Yes, I want -- I've heard from
8 everyone tonight and I've been
9 listening all night and I really
10 understand why this is freaking out
11 people who rely on their cars to work
12 and live in this city and the outer
13 boroughs.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. WOJNAR: The next speaker is
16 Touhami Benmessaoud, followed by Yuki
17 Endo.

18 The next speaker is Yuki Endo,
19 followed by Lavicke Quincy Jones.

20 The next speaker is Lavicke
21 Quincy Jones, followed by Shmuel
22 Avital.

23 The next speaker is the 351st
24 sign up, Shmuel Avital, to be followed
25 by Gregory Dreifus.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

267

1 The next speaker is Gregory
2 Dreifus, followed by Kamol Sarwar.

3 GREGORY DREIFUS: Hello, can you
4 hear me?

5 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.
6 Please proceed.

7 GREGORY DREIFUS: I'm calling in
8 -- I think a lot of these sessions
9 don't totally reflect the average
10 person. It's the type of person to
11 show up at ten p.m. on an evening in
12 the middle of a workweek and I -- I
13 want to give voice. I'm a
14 suburbanite, I live in Nassau County
15 and I'm in strong support of
16 congestion pricing and I want to give
17 voice to that support to that.

18 As a suburbanite, most New
19 Yorkers don't own cars, that point has
20 been made before this evening and the
21 vast majority of people entering the
22 CBD travel by transit. We need to
23 prioritize those average New Yorkers.

24 Rather than thinking about
25 exemptions I would encourage the MTA

1 to think about other implementation
2 questions about why it took so long to
3 implement congestion pricing to get
4 this priority out the door.

5 Environmental impact was done
6 but what was the environmental impact
7 of waiting to do such a long review of
8 congestion pricing and how can those
9 delays be lessened into the future.
10 People have brought up the problem of
11 how MTA uses its money. I think that
12 is no small thing. And I think it's
13 not a side issue to congestion
14 pricing.

15 If people had more trust in how
16 the MTA spent its money, it would go a
17 long way in fostering but in for
18 congestion pricing with the remaining
19 doubters. So I think it's crucial
20 that the MTA think critically about
21 using the funds that come from
22 congestion pricing more economically,
23 more efficiently and to invest cross
24 borough and north to south as a Long
25 Islander Transit.

1 I was very pardoned by Governor
2 Hochul's interborough express idea to
3 move between Queens and Brooklyn. I
4 would also love to see greater transit
5 options north and south across Long
6 Island, across Nassau County, Suffolk
7 County, across Westchester, expand
8 transit access so that people don't
9 have to own a car to live in New York
10 City.

11 People should not have to own a
12 car. People should be able to get
13 around without one and that's what
14 congestion pricing should be about.
15 That means using the money
16 economically and that means raising
17 the funds to improve transit options,
18 transit reliability, transit speeds.

19 I support congestion pricing,
20 please get this done. Have a good
21 evening.

22 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

23 The next speaker is Kamol
24 Sarwar, followed by Adam Phillips.

25 The next speaker is Adam

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

270

1 Phillips, followed by Christopher
2 Sanders.

3 The next speaker is Christopher
4 Sanders, followed by Zaire Baptiste.

5 The next speaker is Zaire
6 Baptiste, followed by Tom Kaczorowski.

7 The next speaker is Tom
8 Kaczorowski, followed by John Law.

9 The next speaker is John Law,
10 followed by Kawas Tarigan.

11 The next speaker, the 360th to
12 sign up is, Kawas Tarigan, followed by
13 Megan Dyer.

14 The next speaker is Megan Dyer,
15 followed by MD Hussain.

16 The next speaker is MD Hussain,
17 followed by Greyson Paris.

18 The next speaker is Greyson
19 Paris, followed by Shawn Johnson Jr.

20 The next speaker is Shawn
21 Johnson Jr. followed by Harry
22 Malakoff.

23 The next speaker is Harry
24 Malakoff, followed by Nana Ampofo.

25 The next speaker is Nana Ampofo,

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

271

1 followed by Morgan Adzei.

2 The next speaker is Morgan
3 Adzei, followed by Ahmad Ali.

4 The next speaker is Ahmad Ali,
5 followed by Tamekia Flowers-Ball.

6 The next speaker the 370th to
7 sign up, Is Tamekia Flowers-Ball,
8 followed by Jamaal King.

9 The next speaker is Jamaal King,
10 followed by Allegra LeGrande.

11 The next speaker is Allegra
12 LeGrande, followed by Danny Sena.

13 ALLEGRA LEGRANDE: Hello.

14 MR. WOJNAR: Hello. You may
15 proceed.

16 ALLEGRA LEGRANDE: Thank you.
17 My name is Allegra LeGrande. I am a
18 resident of Inwood. I live adjacent
19 to the Kingsbridge Bus Depot.

20 I am strongly in support of the
21 congestion pricing plan in general but
22 I have deep concerns about the I-95
23 corridor including not only the Cross
24 Bronx but also the part that crosses
25 Manhattan and in particular I'm just

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

272

1 worried about extra congestion related
2 to the George Washington Bridge.
3 Already uptown we have a lot of
4 children that suffer from asthma at a
5 disproportionate high rate, including
6 my own child and I want to make sure
7 that our air quality is taken into
8 full consideration. I'm a little bit
9 perplexed as to why there's going to
10 be monitoring for two years and we're
11 not presented in the environmental
12 assessment statement already with
13 ozone and particulate matter modeling
14 already.

15 If we know the volume of trucks,
16 why don't we have the modeling output
17 already and projections for how much
18 exactly our air quality is going to be
19 -- deteriorated.

20 With that in mind I'm excited
21 about the prospect of having electric
22 buses but I have to tell you that most
23 the diesel vehicles that I see Uptown
24 are not buses, they're actually
25 trucks. And I'm perplexed why there

1 is not some sort of an incentivization
2 scheme to get more electrified diesel
3 engines in general, not limited to the
4 buses.

5 I would also like to see mass
6 transit made easier for folks in
7 living in the five boroughs. For
8 instance, in my neighborhood, we have
9 easy access to the Metro-North, but in
10 practice, no one takes the Metro-North
11 because it's three times the cost of
12 taking the subway.

13 Why haven't plans that would
14 make the cost equivocal for taking the
15 Metro-North with Long Island as to
16 taking the subway? Why haven't those
17 plans been presented as part of the
18 overall congestion pricing with the
19 goal of decreasing the number of
20 people who rely on other vehicles to
21 commute into the city.

22 Also, I'd like to see more
23 incentivization for cycling and other
24 micromobility-type transportation. If
25 people are not going to be taking

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

274

1 cars, what are they going to be doing?
2 I think that the Environmental Study
3 and plan's study did not go far enough
4 with the carrot portion, making it
5 easier for people to bike, easier for
6 people to take scooters and other
7 non-car options.

8 I'd also like to see the
9 congestion pricing, therefore, not
10 limited to the CBD but congestion
11 pricing in general for the entire five
12 boroughs with a zoned approach so that
13 we don't disproportionately bear the
14 burden of the deleterious air quality
15 Uptown in and the outer boroughs and
16 having the Central Business District
17 have decreased congestion.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

20 The next speaker is Danny Sena,
21 followed by Leah Strock.

22 The next speaker is Leah Strock,
23 followed by Evelyn David.

24 Leah Strock.

25 Leah, once you're unmuted,

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

275

1 you're can begin.

2 We'll come back to Leah.

3 The next speaker is Evelyn
4 David, followed by Joseph Leiding.

5 The next speaker is Joseph
6 Leiding, followed by Alexis Bruno.

7 The next speaker is Alexis
8 Bruno, followed by Michael Huarachi.

9 The next speaker is Michael
10 Huarachi, followed by Jenny Lee.

11 Go ahead, Michael.

12 Michael, we'll have to go back
13 to you.

14 The next speaker is Jenny Lee,
15 followed by Sam Streeter.

16 The next speaker is Sam
17 Streeter, the 380th sign up, to be
18 followed up by Charlene Burke.

19 The next speaker is Charlene
20 Burke, followed by Jay Erlich.

21 The next speaker is Jay Erlich,
22 followed by Avi Bortnick.

23 The next speaker is Avi
24 Bortnick, followed by Mika White.

25 The next speaker is Mika White,

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

276

1 followed by Ronald Simoncini.

2 The next speaker is Ronald
3 Simoncini, followed by Ned Day.

4 The next speaker is Ned day, the
5 followed by Michelle Grossman.

6 The next speaker is Michelle
7 Grossman, followed by Luanne Konopko.

8 MICHELLE GROSSMAN: Hi. Can you
9 hear me?

10 MR. WOJNAR: Yes. Please
11 proceed.

12 MICHELLE GROSSMAN: Hi. I both
13 live and work in the CBD and am
14 against congestion pricing. I'll be
15 focusing today on the lack of
16 transparency in this public review and
17 comment process. At future hearings,
18 I'll touch on my concerns and
19 solutions.

20 On August 10th, the notice of
21 availability for the environmental
22 assessment and public hearings was
23 released with the cut off -- just four
24 days after labor day. The 868-page
25 report was released as summer is

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

277

1 winding down, a popular time for
2 vacationing and downtime.

3 As I mentioned, I both live and
4 work in the CBD and I haven't seen a
5 single attempt for this to be
6 publicized on the grounds to the
7 people -- to the people this will
8 greatly impact. Most people who I
9 spoke to had no idea this is a thing
10 and no idea they were being asked, as
11 a member of the public, for their
12 feedback. Speaking for myself, I have
13 a job commitment and wasn't able to
14 read the 868-page report in full that
15 was released just 15 days ago.

16 If the public opinion was truly
17 desired, perhaps more time and notice
18 to read through so many materials
19 would have made sense. Perhaps it
20 would have made sense to ask the
21 question, have the review and feedback
22 with a strategic mindset as in not
23 driving during a one-week window
24 during the final moment when people
25 are either checked out or gearing up

1 for back to school.

2 Perhaps this was all very
3 strategic as in the broader public's
4 opinion and feedback is not actually
5 desired in this whole process.

6 I share all of this because
7 there is a serious lack of
8 transparency, planning and faith or a
9 combination of those things that's
10 going on here and those are critical
11 qualities for an endeavor like this.
12 I'm calling on the MTA to actually
13 work in the best interest of the very
14 people in the community they plan to
15 rely on to generate the revenue needed
16 to meet their budget shortfalls. My
17 elected official will be hearing from
18 me as well. I have the benefit
19 of going almost last. Of the 67
20 people who spoke, only 24 percent, 16
21 people were totally for, only 47
22 against and four people we for but
23 with strong exceptions to the current
24 plan. Anyone who self-identified as
25 elderly is against it. Business

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

279

1 owners, immigrants, disabled people,
2 caretakers, essential workers, taxi,
3 FHV drivers are against this.

4 If I'm being blunt, those who
5 have commented for this have an air of
6 privilege. Meanwhile, others who are
7 speaking as their livelihoods and
8 lives depend on it because they do.
9 Please take all that feedback
10 seriously. And to those with the
11 talking point of as minimal exemptions
12 possible, what do you want the
13 elderly, disabled, caretakers, those
14 who are driving for medical
15 appointments, like chemo, low but not
16 low enough income people, what do you
17 want them to do, they won't survive.
18 I provide this feedback in good faith
19 and I hope it's taken as such.

20 Thank you for your time.

21 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

22 Our next speaker is Luanne
23 Konopko, followed by Leah Strock.

24 LUANNE KONOPKO: Can you hear
25 me?

1 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

2 LUANNA KONOPKO: Thanks for
3 giving us the opportunity to weigh-in
4 and staying to hear us all.

5 I've had a love-hate
6 relationship with Manhattan for many
7 decades. First, as a city resident
8 and straphanger and then as a Long
9 Island resident and now, as a resident
10 of Rockland County. And I've
11 experienced firsthand the increase of
12 congestion and decrease in air
13 quality, so I understand the need for
14 some sort of a program. However, I
15 second everything Assemblyman Lawler
16 has already said.

17 This is unfortunately grossly
18 unfair to Rockland County residents in
19 particular. I'm speaking in the
20 first-person, but please know that I'm
21 also speaking for all of my neighbors.

22 The first and most significant
23 point I'd like to make is that I
24 already personally subsidize the MTA.
25 This is through the Metropolitan

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 Commuter Transportation Mobility Tax.
2 This tax is imposed on every employer
3 within the Metropolitan Commuter
4 Transportation District, which
5 includes Rockland County and it
6 includes the self-employed; so it
7 comes directly out of my pocket not
8 from some corporate coffer. So as a
9 Rockland County resident, the CBD toll
10 would effectively tax me twice for the
11 same thing that I can't even use.

12 Living in the northern most end
13 of the county, I have no practical
14 public transportation options into the
15 city. While Westchester, Connecticut,
16 Long Island and even parts of New
17 Jersey have once received rides into
18 Manhattan with a high frequency of
19 runs. Buses into and out of the PA
20 bus terminal aren't even a viable
21 option because from my town, service
22 has been greatly reduced since June
23 2021. And when operating, the bus
24 ride is two hours one way and if I
25 should miss the bus home, later runs

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

1 are fewer and far between. So when I
2 need to get into Manhattan, I really
3 have no choice but to drive and I pay
4 a significant toll already to do so.

5 As illustrated earlier, the vast
6 majority of drivers originate from
7 within the immediate vicinity of the
8 CBD. A great number do have a variety
9 of public transportation options
10 available to them and many don't pay
11 to drive into Manhattan like I already
12 do. Further, unlike drivers of
13 delivery trucks or for-hire vehicles,
14 I do not continuously drive around the
15 city adding to the pollution and
16 congestion. I drive directly to and
17 from a parking garage on the West
18 Side. The fee, for which I must add,
19 also includes a high city tax.

20 Finally, if I had to pay the CBD
21 toll, I feel I would just be
22 supporting the habits of more
23 well-to-do individuals, who actually
24 have public transit options who don't
25 mind paying the toll. They will

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

283

1 continue to drive or be driven into
2 and throughout the city no matter what
3 the cost.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

6 The next speaker Leah Strock,
7 followed by Sol Green.

8 Leah Strock.

9 The next person is Sol Green --

10 LEAH STROCK: Hi, hi. Can you
11 hear me?

12 MR. WOJNAR: Yes. Please
13 proceed.

14 LEAH STROCK: Thank you for
15 dealing with me.

16 I live on the Lower East Side.
17 I have lived here almost all my life.
18 What you call the Central Business
19 District is actually not a central
20 business district. Where I live, it
21 is actually not business at all. This
22 is where we live. And so, what you're
23 doing is you're putting us in this
24 business district even though this is
25 residential. So I really have an

1 issue with that.

2 I know you're fashioning this
3 after London. People who live in
4 London where there is the congestion
5 charges are exempt from that area.
6 And come on, we have to face it, the
7 people who live in -- from 60th Street
8 below, it is not us that's causing all
9 of the congestion. You know that and
10 we know that.

11 Second of all, and I hear what
12 people are saying about cyclists and I
13 find this really ableist because I'm a
14 65-year-old woman and I find it more
15 and more difficult to take public
16 transportation. I do it, but I have
17 to go really slowly. And, you know,
18 people are in a rush and it becomes
19 more and more dangerous.

20 Our subway system is really not
21 set up for anyone who can't move
22 rapidly. And we do have a lot of
23 elderly people in this area. And over
24 the years, our taxes have just gone up
25 and up and up. And putting this

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

285

1 congestion charge on top of this is
2 just going to make it so the people
3 who are, you know, middle-class and
4 working-class are going to have to
5 just leave the city. And what you're
6 going to end up with is you're going
7 to end up with a whole Manhattan full
8 of billionaires who come here
9 sometimes. They don't care about the
10 congestion charge because they're
11 going to just pay it anyway.

12 So I think that you really need
13 to look at having some exemptions,
14 especially for people who live in this
15 area. So every time I move my car,
16 I'm going to get charged. I work a
17 lot, sometimes on the outer boroughs
18 so I'm not even in rush hour in
19 Manhattan.

20 I mean, think about it, the
21 people who live below 60th Street who
22 have cars are very minimal and the
23 ones that they do, we are not the ones
24 that are causing all this congestion
25 and I think that you really need to

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

286

1 pay attention to that.

2 All right. Thank you.

3 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

4 Our next speaker is Sol Green,
5 followed by Michael Huarachi.

6 SOL GREEN: Hello. Can you hear
7 me?

8 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.
9 Please proceed.

10 SOL GREEN: I'm sorry, I was
11 having technical difficulties.

12 Hi. I'm Sol Green from
13 Brooklyn. I work as a volunteer --
14 not work, I volunteer for an
15 organization that has 800 volunteers.
16 We service basically communities --
17 two communities in Brooklyn, Borough
18 Park and Williamsburg. Last year, we
19 served 43,000 calls taking people to
20 hospitals and doctor appointments.
21 And people who go for treatment for
22 cancer, et cetera, and therapy, we're
23 mainly concerned where we come into
24 the city we're not there to park.
25 We're just taking people to hospitals,

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

287

1 dropping them off and picking them up.

2 I want to make sure our service
3 does not get disrupted by having to
4 pay the congestion pricing fees. We
5 have people who rely on this
6 transportation, they cannot take
7 public transportation. And
8 essentially, we trade money for the
9 MTA by not using the Access-A-Ride,
10 which is a nightmare for people that
11 have to take that, traveling with
12 other people.

13 And I also see that the federal
14 government is involved in this. I
15 know that the federal government
16 covers volunteers' expenses for
17 voluntary work -- so want to know if
18 they would pick up the tab and give
19 credits for the toll that is we have
20 to pay if this comes through.

21 Thank you for listening.

22 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

23 Our next speaker is Michael
24 Huarachi, followed by Edward P.

25 MICHAEL HUARACHI: Hello.

1 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can hear
2 you.

3 MICHAEL HUARACHI: First of all,
4 I want to thank all the panelists for
5 being here for five hours listening to
6 everybody complain. Thank you very
7 much, it really means a lot to us.

8 I've lived in the district for
9 over 20 years. I'm from New Jersey
10 originally. I'm familiar with
11 driving. I do rent a car every now
12 and then, so I know how that feels, as
13 frustrating as it can be to drive into
14 the district. I also donate my time
15 to plant street trees, over 300 street
16 trees in the area. I donated my time
17 with Port Authority. I'm familiar
18 with Colleen Chattergoon, Mr. Carey's
19 counterpart at the New York City DOT.
20 I look forward to doing a lot of work
21 with everybody here in the next
22 upcoming meetings.

23 I fully endorse congestion
24 pricing. Let's remember that this
25 must be one tool in the toolbox and it

1 must be part of an arsenal to combat
2 climate change. It must include no
3 exemptions or as few as possible.
4 This can be part of the toolbox which
5 should include also loading zones. I
6 know this is beyond the purview of
7 this project, expanding red lights,
8 speeding acoustic cameras, digitized
9 and streamlined into every traffic
10 light across all five boroughs.
11 Car-free Broadway 24/7, 365, the
12 entire stretch separating east from
13 west traffic.

14 We're talking about enforcing
15 the illegal 53-foot tractor ban that's
16 already not enforced. Creating a
17 placard corruption force that is
18 citizens enforced. Removing -- most
19 importantly I would say, removing the
20 NYPD from traffic enforcement,
21 implementing citizens enforcement.
22 Run more buses and trains. Right. A
23 lot of us are complaining about the
24 trains, the subways are not reliable.
25 I'm not arguing with that. But will

1 the E train get me to JFK, sure. Will
2 it take two hours, okay. But that's
3 something that we can cross that
4 bridge when we get there. Right.
5 Let's put the horse before the
6 carriage, not the carriage before the
7 horse.

8 Let's shrink the delivery
9 fleets, NYPD, FedEx, USPS, UPS,
10 Amazon, et cetera. Implement those
11 off-peak hours, as somebody said
12 earlier. Connect a fully protected
13 dual-lane biking lane network, abolish
14 parking minimums. Containerize trash,
15 replacing parking spots. More street
16 seats, more dining structures.

17 This is the opportunity for the
18 panelists to shape your legacy through
19 design and implementation of the
20 country's first and most influential
21 urban transportation projects in the
22 country. I live in the city. I work
23 in the city. I take the subway and I
24 keep this city running.

25 Thank you, and thank you for

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

291

1 your time.

2 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

3 The next speaker is Sylvia Lin,
4 followed by Sunny.

5 Sylvia Lin.

6 Sylvia, we'll come back.

7 The next speaker is Sunny,
8 followed by Ari Aronowitz.

9 SUNNY: Hello. Can you hear me?

10 MR. WOJNAR: Yes. Please
11 proceed.

12 SUNNY: I do want to support
13 congestion. But until you guys can
14 explain why we pay for roads, why we
15 pay for tunnels and pay for bridges,
16 now we have to pay for transit riders
17 as well, why do drivers have to pay
18 for train riders. My next door
19 neighbors are not going to pay for my
20 housework. President Biden gave you
21 guys money already, don't tell me you
22 already spent it. I hope you spent it
23 wisely.

24 I'll give you money only under
25 one condition, I want somebody to ask

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

292

1 Allison, Rick, Lou, what did you do
2 with the 50 cents you raised on the
3 transit riders to clean up the
4 subways? You didn't clean it up at
5 all, at all. Where did that 50 cents
6 go? And transit riders should be the
7 ones paying, not us. If anything,
8 let's compromise, let's both pay. Why
9 do drivers have to only ones have to
10 pay? I find that unfair.

11 For structure repair, you got
12 money from Biden, and I still don't
13 understand where that went. And I
14 will agree with MTA if they open their
15 book and find out where all the money
16 went, then I'll pay, I have no
17 problem. But we must know where all
18 the money went.

19 You guys take money for cleaning
20 up subways, this, that, whatever.
21 I -- this time, I see everybody's
22 against -- the ones that are
23 against -- with congestion pricing,
24 next time you guys raise 75 cents on
25 them and they start complaining that

1 they want our support, we won't
2 support them.

3 And I agree with -- said that
4 congestion pricing should be only in
5 Wall Street. That is Central Business
6 District. That's where all the
7 businesses are. Not where residents
8 live. I find this very ridiculous. I
9 think it's completely unthought
10 process that's going on. Go back to
11 the table and come up with a
12 reasonable price at least. Okay.
13 I'll be with you, come up with a
14 reasonable price. \$23, that's
15 ridiculous.

16 Biden, again, I'll repeat, Biden
17 has already given you money. Why do
18 you want to attack us? We can't
19 afford it. Like I said, open up the
20 MTA books and find out where all the
21 money went, and then we'll talk about
22 supporting you guys.

23 Thank you very much.

24 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

25 Our next speaker is Ari

1 Aronowitz, followed by Anonymous
2 Speaker 1.

3 Our next speaker is Anonymous
4 Speaker 1, followed by Lourdes Aquino.

5 ANONYMOUS SPEAKER 1: Thanks,
6 everyone, for your time. My name is
7 Sara. I'm a born and bred New Yorker.
8 I was born in Manhattan, lived in the
9 Bronx until the age of ten, and most
10 of my adult life in Manhattan. I
11 currently live in the mid-60s on the
12 West Side.

13 I have several concerns with
14 this plan and I implore the Federal
15 Highway Administration to reject the
16 CBD Tolling Program as currently
17 proposed by the MTA. A genuine
18 congestion reduction plan would be
19 collaborated upon and jointly proposed
20 by the various city and state agencies
21 beyond the MTA, such as those who
22 oversee construction sites,
23 restaurants, sanitation activities,
24 and the plethora of items that
25 contribute to congestion around the

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

295

1 city, as well as the roadway
2 authorities and whatnot. These all
3 contribute to congestion, it's not
4 just cars.

5 I'll try to focus my concerns on
6 suggestions that haven't already been
7 made. I'm an ardent supporter of all
8 environmentally conscious measures
9 locally and globally. However, this
10 proposal is a false promise of reduced
11 congestion, especially given the
12 projected single-digit percentage
13 reduction in vehicular use, and it's
14 just a guise for funding the MTA.

15 I'm all for improving our
16 transit infrastructure. New York has
17 the widest transit infrastructure, one
18 of, in the world. But the MTA needs
19 to be first federally audited and to
20 also pursue alternative and stable
21 funding sources, or to get
22 semi-privatized with a private equity
23 infusion or a turnaround investor or
24 maybe Michael Bloomberg should take
25 over and turn it around.

1 Here are my concerns: All that
2 the current proposal is going to do is
3 further divide New York City,
4 literally and metaphorically. It's
5 going to move congestion into Northern
6 Manhattan, into Queens, and Northern
7 New Jersey as drivers avoid the
8 business district.

9 My biggest concern that I
10 haven't heard about all night is the
11 impact to traffic in particular just
12 north and just south of 60th Street.
13 It's going to create a border within
14 Manhattan, that makes no sense.
15 Especially given the vast majority of
16 Manhattanites -- or Manhattan's
17 residential neighborhoods, excuse me,
18 are north of 60th Street. I'm
19 concerned about the traffic, the noise
20 and the air quality.

21 I also think any comparison to
22 other cities implementation of
23 congestion-reducing efforts is
24 disingenuous. In particular, any
25 comparison to Singapore. So if the

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

297

1 MTA passes muster and the only way is
2 for citizens to fund the MTA, then we
3 need to widen the area and decrease
4 the cost. Widen it to the entire five
5 boroughs, that should be the
6 congestion pricing zone. Have you
7 ever seen traffic in Brooklyn or
8 Queens or by the airports --

9 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
10 your remarks.

11 ANONYMOUS SPEAKER 1: All city
12 residents should be exempt and all
13 trucks that support essential services
14 should be exempt.

15 Thank you.

16 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

17 Our next speaker is Lourdes
18 Aquino, to be followed by Sylvia Lin.

19 LOURDES AQUINO: Good evening
20 and thank you for allowing us to have
21 the platform to share our thoughts
22 regarding this congestion pricing.
23 I'm sure everyone has had a long day,
24 but we all know external customer
25 service is just as important in

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

298

1 internal customer service. So again,
2 I thank you so much for staying on
3 this late.

4 You know, I'm a native New
5 Yorker and I grew up with getting
6 around the city by train or bus. I
7 have no problem with the MTA in that
8 regard. However, I have a few
9 concerns that I'd like to share. And
10 after I have listened to other
11 people's opinions, I can understand
12 all sides, right, so there are three
13 sides. Right. So we have the MTA's
14 position on congestion pricing, those
15 for congestion pricing, right, and
16 then those who are not for congestion
17 pricing.

18 I'm somebody who makes lemonade
19 out of lemons, so I go with the flow
20 and I try to figure out how to work.
21 Right. All New Yorkers figure that
22 out, we face daily obstacles every
23 single day.

24 And I do agree with
25 environmental benefits. I have a

1 daughter and I want the best future
2 for her, and all the other youth as
3 well, they're the ones that are going
4 to save the world. Right. But the \$9
5 to the 23-dollar fee is really -- I
6 normally don't do these kind of
7 things, I speak in front of people, I
8 have my colleagues I talk with. But
9 for this level, I feel like, you know,
10 what's going to be done is going to be
11 done. Right. And it is good to speak
12 up and that's how, you know, everybody
13 can see each other's sides and how
14 choices affect each other.

15 I lived in Lower Manhattan for
16 40 years. I could understand the
17 traffic issues, I hated it, around
18 Grand Street, it was tremendous.
19 Right. And then, I love bikes. But,
20 you know, the bike lanes came. You
21 know, I heard a couple of people make
22 comments. Then it went two lanes to
23 one lane, I caught myself, not having
24 road rage but a little like -- you
25 know, they're cutting people off,

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

300

1 there's no room. I get it, right,
2 it's normal, we're human.

3 But I moved in 2020, not because
4 of the pandemic, but because where I
5 live became extremely dangerous. I
6 grew there in the '80s, in the '90s, I
7 never thought I would leave, right,
8 but I had to. And then, you know,
9 Manhattan wasn't as affordable as
10 normal, right, I wish I made more
11 money. But, you know, next life,
12 right, maybe I'll become a MTA panel
13 board member like you.

14 But every day, the point is I
15 drive my daughter to school on East
16 4th Street. I take the BQE. I have
17 to get there, to her school, by 8:15,
18 then I have to be at my job by 8:30 in
19 Lower Manhattan right by City Hall.
20 You know, I'm sure somebody will say
21 hey, get up earlier and take the
22 train, whatever, you know, everybody
23 has an opinion. But if I took the bus
24 or train, which I tried before, from
25 my daughter's school to my job, I

1 don't make it there on time. And I
2 don't want to be one of those
3 employees that create problems.

4 So all I really want to ask all
5 of you, is that please take a -- I
6 know people say no exemptions, but
7 please take people into like me and
8 working families like me into
9 consideration. Charge us the same fee
10 that you do for the train, to get on
11 the train. My husband takes the
12 train, that's what I want to let you
13 know, every day he takes the train.
14 So we're in support of it, but
15 please -- and I know that some of you
16 look tired, I can see all the -- Will,
17 I see he's been looking different
18 ways. You know, I'm on Zoom meetings
19 too, I know when you lose -- and
20 there's been a lot of talk. But
21 please, all of you, women, men, take
22 into consideration --

23 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
24 your remarks.

25 LOURDES AQUINO: -- hardship.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

302

1 Thank you so much and have a
2 good evening.

3 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

4 Our next speaker is Sylvia Lin,
5 followed by Stefania Cupelova.

6 Our next speaker is Stefania
7 Cupelova, followed by Roy.

8 Our next speaker is Roy,
9 followed by James Lee.

10 ROY: Hello?

11 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, Roy, please
12 proceed.

13 ROY: I just wanted to say like
14 the 15 billion dollars for capital --
15 raised for the capital program, it
16 really goes towards paying for the
17 MTA, which has not been able to keep
18 up with its payments to support its
19 own infrastructure, to support its
20 own -- I mean, look at 2011, you guys
21 made half of what the operating budget
22 was just out of -- you can't support
23 yourself out of tolls -- I mean out of
24 fares from the subway.

25 So really, it's all about, you

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

303

1 know, being able to meet the operating
2 budget without depending on the state,
3 which you often do, to bail you out.
4 And really, what this money is going
5 to go towards, like a lot of people
6 have mentioned before, just things
7 that really we don't need. Repairs
8 that just continues -- continue to
9 happen every three, five years, ten
10 years. And it really, like the MTA
11 just needs to be re-envisioned,
12 re-imagined, I think. We need a much,
13 much newer more modern system. I
14 don't think the 15 billion dollars is
15 going to do it, what it's going to do
16 is it's going to keep the problems.
17 It's just like patching the problems
18 up.

19 And it's really unfair, I think,
20 for people to be paying that toll, for
21 the, you know, the working families
22 especially to be paying that. You
23 know. Because one way or another,
24 we're going to pay for it, whether
25 it's the tolls or it's through the

1 state subsidies that you guys get,
2 through the federal moneys you guys
3 get. One way or another, we're paying
4 for it. And now we're paying twice
5 for it, it's ridiculous. It's
6 ridiculous. I don't think it's fair
7 at all.

8 I think the no-action
9 alternatives should take place instead
10 until a better plan. And also, like
11 coming out of the pandemic, come on.
12 Like after two years of being hammered
13 by the pandemic and now you guys are
14 going to introduce this plan that's
15 going to take jobs from people, from
16 the taxis, from the Ubers, that's
17 going to -- it's just disastrous.
18 Disastrous timing, horrible timing.

19 And that's my time. Thank you.
20 And thank you for sticking around
21 until 10:00 at night. It's crazy.
22 You guys are crazy.

23 Thank you.

24 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

25 Our next person, the 400th

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

305

1 person to sign up, is James Lee, to be
2 followed by Jeremy Zaida.

3 JAMES LEE: Good evening. Jimmy
4 Lee. I'm a resident of Jersey City,
5 New Jersey. You may have recently
6 seen that the New Jersey Turnpike
7 proposes a five billion-dollar
8 widening of the New Jersey Turnpike
9 extension that runs from Newark
10 through Jersey City to the Holland
11 Tunnel. Here in Jersey City and
12 Hudson County, opposition to this
13 project is strong and widespread
14 because the region is already full of
15 dangerous, polluting cut-through
16 traffic and it would be preposterous
17 to funnel additional traffic to Hudson
18 County and New York City.

19 In fact, with the support of the
20 broad coalition of local community
21 organizations, the cities of Hoboken
22 and Jersey City both recently
23 unanimously passed resolutions
24 opposing this terrible project.
25 Regarding taxes, the residents of

1 Hudson County already pay a heavy and
2 burdensome tax.

3 While we are an economically
4 vibrant and diverse region, we also
5 suffer from some of the worst air
6 quality in New Jersey due to the
7 immense amount of cut-through traffic,
8 including truck traffic that is headed
9 to or from the Lincoln and Holland
10 Tunnels.

11 The American Lung Association
12 rates our air quality an F. This
13 pollution, the asthma bills, learning
14 loss suffered from the particulate
15 pollution, as well as the related road
16 dangers are already an unfair tax on
17 our communities. And so, with that
18 bit of context, I would like to
19 express strong and full support for
20 swift implementation of congestion
21 pricing.

22 I do want to express a few
23 concerns. I am concerned about the
24 lack of improvements to good
25 alternatives for crossing the Hudson

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

307

1 River. The Path Train schedules on
2 nights and weekends are a running
3 local joke. While the Lincoln
4 Tunnel's dedicated bus lane is the
5 most successful in the entire United
6 States, it only serves the morning
7 weekday commuters. And the Holland
8 Tunnel currently has no bus lanes, and
9 realistically would also require NYC
10 DOT to coordinate with New Jersey
11 Transit on usage of bus stops and
12 planning of routes.

13 I would also like to revisit
14 allocating a ten-percent share of
15 revenue not only to Metro-North and
16 Long Island Rail Road, but also to New
17 Jersey Transit and improve Path
18 service. Last, I'm worried that if
19 congestion pricing provided enough
20 revenue but did not reduce traffic
21 enough, I worry that the effort would
22 end there. I urge that the effort
23 would continue to truly have an impact
24 on vehicle miles traveled within this
25 Central Business District.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

308

1 In Hudson County, a majority of
2 which do not commute by car, I believe
3 are strong supporters of congestion
4 pricing as is. I think if you
5 reconsider the problem a -- problem
6 and not just a New York State problem,
7 congestion pricing would be even more
8 of a no-brainer and a sell to the
9 region.

10 Thank you for your time.

11 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

12 The next speaker is Bessi Ng,
13 followed by Sylvia Lin.

14 The next speaker is Sylvia Lin,
15 followed by Jeremy Zaida.

16 SYLVIA LIN: Hi. Can everyone
17 hear me?

18 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can hear you.

19 SYLVIA LIN: Hi. I'm Sylvia
20 Lin. I disagree with the tolling
21 program -- vehicles entering
22 Manhattan. I think it's a terrible
23 idea and I hope we can overrule this
24 decision.

25 I've lived in Manhattan my whole

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

309

1 life, I moved to Brooklyn. I still
2 commute into Manhattan. I was always
3 a public transportation girl, I ride a
4 bike and now I own a car only because
5 one reason. I find public
6 transportation unsafe due to the
7 pandemic and, you know, let's not
8 forget the bad service that's ongoing,
9 work and detours on the weekend. You
10 know, the only benefit I really see is
11 the MTA benefiting from this. You
12 know, I don't really see any, you
13 know, goals for anyone else other than
14 the MTA benefiting from this.

15 I think the MTA should really
16 focus on people not paying the ride or
17 people who are -- I should really say
18 maybe MTA should focus on bringing
19 riders back by making it cleaner,
20 safer and a quicker way to travel.
21 Another reason why I start owning a
22 car now is not because I have money to
23 afford it, because it's easier to
24 travel with, right, it's safer to
25 travel with. You know, MTA is making

1 it a lot more transportation-wise.
2 But in terms of getting from one
3 district to another, it takes forever.
4 So that's definitely not another way
5 to travel, right.

6 And when we look at pollution
7 problem, I mean, we're moving towards
8 hybrid and electrical cars within the
9 years or so, right, so why can't we
10 look at that direction? If we're
11 looking at the traffic issues right
12 now, the number of vehicles on the
13 road, it's really the grid line that's
14 created on the road that's making
15 these traffic happening. And, you
16 know, extra bike lanes added and I
17 think that's the congestion part.

18 And I honestly think traveling
19 should be a choice, it really
20 shouldn't be just us focusing on just
21 the MTA. You should have a choice of
22 how you travel; you can bike, you can
23 drive, you can take the MTA. I still
24 take the MTA regardless.

25 So that's my -- that's all I got

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

311

1 to say. Thank you.

2 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

3 We've reached the final two
4 speakers on the list. After they've
5 been called, we will call the names of
6 all speakers who we previously called,
7 but did not speak yet. If you've
8 joined the Zoom under a name that is
9 different from the one you used when
10 you signed up to speak, please
11 identify yourself in the Q&A function.

12 You may also request to speak
13 anonymously.

14 Our next speaker is Jeremy
15 Zaida, followed by Alpha Bah.

16 Our next speaker is Alpha Bah.

17 You may unmute and begin your
18 remarks.

19 Please unmute and begin your
20 remarks.

21 Alpha, if you're unable to
22 unmute yourself, we will be going to
23 the next speaker.

24 We have now called all the
25 speakers once and will call those who

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

312

1 haven't spoken yet a second time.

2 Our next speaker is Senator
3 James Skoufis.

4 Our next speaker is Beatriz
5 Bofill.

6 Michael Smith.

7 Jonathan Peterson.

8 Gil Franco.

9 Andrew Fine.

10 Jonathan Blair.

11 Daniel Hernandez.

12 Kay Cardona.

13 Frank Tufano.

14 Michael Adler.

15 Ross Perlin.

16 Silvano Ferrin.

17 Tommy Rutkiewicz.

18 Jennifer Barretta.

19 Again, if you have heard your
20 name called but you've joined the Zoom
21 under a name that is different from
22 the one you used when you signed up to
23 speak, please identify yourself in the
24 Q&A Function.

25 You may also request to speak

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

313

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anonymously.
Gilda Aronson.
Anderson Blackman.
Fred English.
Nicole Nurse.
Isaac Perez.
Joshua Bienstock.
Michael Murray.
Isabella Rieke.
Anthony Nichols.
Vladimir Malinsky.
Henry Kim.
Daniel Geary.
Gregory Bishop.
Sonia Figueroa.
Suzette Mcleod.
Israel Kaufman.
Dana Dennis.
Chris Collins.
Sharon Lee.
Henry Schaier.
Christopher Colon.
Cindy Patterson.
JeanDarcel Michel.
Lauren Secular.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

314

1 Chris Doyle.

2 John Chamberlin.

3 DJ.

4 DJ, you may unmute and begin
5 your remarks.

6 DJ: Hello?

7 MS. FLAX: We can hear you.

8 DJ: Hi. So yes, to chime in on
9 discussion, I think the congestion
10 pricing is a tough bit, because I
11 drive for a living as well, and I feel
12 this will create a tale of two cities
13 where essentially those who live in
14 Manhattan who could afford to live in
15 Manhattan or those who can afford to
16 travel will not be bothered it, and
17 those of us who struggle will
18 basically won't be able to have a
19 living or simply travel throughout
20 Manhattan.

21 Some may believe why don't you
22 just get a education and get a great
23 job. But between my wife and I, we
24 have four degrees. Three bachelor's
25 and a master's, and we have a child in

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

315

1 Far Rockaway and we're expecting a
2 second. So it's not simply about, you
3 know, education leads to affordability
4 due to great job opportunity. That's
5 not always the case for everyone.

6 I enter into the driving
7 industry thinking it was going to be a
8 temporary thing. I left supply chain
9 major with budget management, I was
10 working with one of the biggest
11 cosmetic companies in the world. And
12 yet, as I mentioned, I joined this
13 thinking it was temporary, but I've
14 been driving for six years. We're hit
15 with so many high costs on the
16 pandemic, my cost of gas doubled. The
17 tolls. I pay three times as much for
18 registering my vehicle than my wife
19 does. And I have to do it yearly,
20 where she has to do it every two
21 years.

22 So honestly, I'm pretty sure
23 somebody else mentioned -- that's my
24 baby crying in the background. I'm
25 pretty sure others have mentioned

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

316

1 that, you know, they paid into the MTA
2 system multiple times through the 2.75
3 that they have to pay -- I forget the
4 name of it -- per ride and then we're
5 also asked to do this again, which is
6 what \$17 or \$24, that's astronomical.
7 And people are just trying to have an
8 honest living.

9 And I believe it shouldn't be --
10 as the previous person mentioned, it
11 shouldn't be a forced decision of
12 whether or not you take the MTA or
13 not, I think it should be an option.
14 And if the MTA's failing, then it's
15 really the MTA's problem and they need
16 to restructure their business. If MAC
17 is failing, Apple isn't forced to
18 conjugate to the business of MAC. So
19 if the industry is failing, they need
20 to replan, restructure and revamp
21 itself.

22 That's my time.

23 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

24 Next on the list of speakers who
25 have not commented yet:

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

317

1 Kat Harley.
2 Renee Kinsella.
3 Xuepeng Pang.
4 David Tenenbaum.
5 Jinah Lim.
6 Austin Celestin.
7 Michael Gross.
8 Christopher Gomez.
9 Maria Del Pilar.
10 Jennifer Harvey.
11 Michael Dumas.
12 Ian Robinson.
13 Alexander Frank.
14 Wendy Pincus.
15 Erica Levin.
16 Felicia Sparkman.
17 Eric Martz.
18 Quanda Francis.
19 Tensae Andargachew.
20 James Ofalo.
21 Maritza De Leon.
22 Dunton Black.
23 Chayse Pena.
24 Tai Lau.
25 Harmanpreet Singh.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

318

1 Steve Neeren.
2 David Stern.
3 Richard Calabro.
4 Frederick Courvoisier.
5 Tuhin Khan.
6 Wassim Rikabi.
7 Tim Schnurr.
8 MR. WOJNAR: Jessica Guity.
9 Murtaza Munir.
10 Jeffrey Zack.
11 Sumiko Ito.
12 Joel Antonio Cespedes Rodriguez.
13 Jon Lindenbaum.
14 Milwood Hughes.
15 Jesus Urena.
16 Anthony Duran.
17 Malik Francois.
18 Christopher Pierro.
19 Sean Gerlis.
20 Tiffany Zhang.
21 Deno Lufo.
22 Stephen Burke.
23 Roland Levin.
24 Robert Schweit.
25 Arlene Curinga.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

319

1	Judi Edwards.
2	Marcel Kaganovskaya.
3	Gerald Adames.
4	Krzysztof Klewinowski.
5	Ranjeet Singh.
6	John Samoilis.
7	Abdelkader Frikha.
8	John Damato.
9	Bryce Shuman.
10	Octavia Williams.
11	Joel Samuel.
12	Daysi Cuevas.
13	Mukul Biswas.
14	Abdul Wadud.
15	Anika Richman.
16	Marietta Viera.
17	Sandra Fleming.
18	Neal Williams.
19	Robert Arnone.
20	Seydou Sangare.
21	Ibrahim Sedrak.
22	Hassan Ali.
23	Johny Smith.
24	L. Medina.
25	Uzma Gul.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

320

1	AnnMarie Carbonneau.
2	Edgar Rodriguez.
3	Joseph Sutkowi.
4	Howard Spector.
5	Susan Lee.
6	Mary Ann Ceron.
7	Stephen Kalaj.
8	Andrew Otoole.
9	Jason Seo.
10	Donald Davis.
11	Neil Cooper.
12	Reva Ambrose.
13	Daniel Feldman.
14	Daniel Tainow.
15	Jaspal Sidhu.
16	Bill Feinberg.
17	Sheldon Sud.
18	Jim Reyes.
19	Imran Khan.
20	Stuart Keller.
21	Jean Hahn.
22	Rey M.
23	Patricia McSharry.
24	Matthew Hopkins.
25	Andrew Krug.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

321

1 Devon Edwards.

2 Ray Dries.

3 Kabir Javaid.

4 Christina Santos.

5 Thomas Maguire.

6 Martin Weinberg.

7 Tom La Guidice.

8 Alex Shehovsov.

9 Steven Kent Abraham.

10 Joseph Labetti.

11 MS. FLAX: If you hear your name
12 called or if you had joined the Zoom
13 under a name that is different from
14 the one you used when you signed up to
15 speak, please identify yourself if the
16 Q&A function.

17 Our next speaker is Jesus Urena,
18 followed by Giovannia Esquivel.

19 Jesus Urena we're trying to
20 promote you to speaker. Please
21 accept. You joined, you should be
22 able to unmute yourself and begin your
23 remarks.

24 JESUS URENA: Okay. Perfect.

25 I'm an individual and I lived in

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

322

1 New York approximately 40-something
2 years and I find it very disturbing
3 that the MTA would be in charge of
4 something like this. It seems like
5 it's somewhat a money grab, like
6 everybody else is speaking.

7 I understand we're trying to
8 protect the environment. But at the
9 same token, it's only the people that
10 have vehicles that are being punished
11 for this. I don't make a lot of
12 money. But whatever little money I
13 had, I was able to purchase a vehicle.
14 I live in a two-fare zone in Queens
15 Village, New York, and the busing
16 system, the MTA, has literally taken
17 over the roadway, as well as
18 bicyclists. But yet, the motor
19 vehiclists are responsible for
20 maintaining the roadways.

21 DOT has failed to maintain
22 proper roadways for vehicles, bus, and
23 bicyclists. There's no one ticketing
24 these bicyclists that's going the
25 opposite direction, going out of their

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

323

1 way to get into accidents with motor
2 vehiclists. But yet, the motor
3 vehiclists are the ones with the
4 burden.

5 This is really a burden on every
6 class citizen in New York City.

7 You've strangled New York to a point
8 where everybody's leaving New York due
9 to the nickel and dime-ing of
10 everything that we have in New York.
11 MTA, you're at fault for wasting the
12 funds that you received. You've been
13 given a bailout from the federal
14 government during the pandemic. You
15 still received funds from everybody
16 that was getting monthly passes during
17 the pandemic.

18 You failed to maintain the
19 subway system cleanliness, you allow
20 the homeless to live in there. To all
21 my constituents and to all my regular
22 citizens of New York City need to
23 understand, all you people, the MTA,
24 the DOT and also you, the federal DOT
25 is responsible for this.

1 And I leave it at that. We need
2 to change who we elect into office.
3 Thank you.

4 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

5 We are currently at number 200
6 on our list of speakers and we'll
7 continue to call the list. If you
8 would like to speak but have not heard
9 your name called yet, please indicate
10 that in the Q&A function. Again, if
11 you're waiting to speak please
12 identify yourself in the Q&A function.

13 Robert Aracena.

14 Richard Catalano.

15 Ciro Luno.

16 Naomi Pemberton.

17 Prakash Parmar.

18 Aliza Gregory.

19 Shane Harris.

20 Robert Bolowsky.

21 Thomas Neubauer.

22 Angel Rodriguez.

23 Michael Torres.

24 Isabel Hernandez.

25 Mark Berger.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

325

1 Angel Paredes.

2 T'Wana Denard.

3 Konstantin Shushkovsky.

4 Kofi Afriyie.

5 Andy Wong.

6 Carolyn Davis.

7 Anonymous Karim.

8 Sergei Lishchenko.

9 Erick Pinto.

10 Alphonso Anderson.

11 Seth Doby.

12 Grace Marrero.

13 Dario Cremades.

14 Enrique Quezada.

15 Cheryl Boyland.

16 Karen Laureano.

17 Joseph Muto.

18 Joseph, you may unmute yourself

19 and begin your remarks.

20 JOSEPH MUTO: Hello, hello. Can
21 you hear me?

22 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

23 JOSEPH MUTO: Hi, everyone.

24 First of all, I just want to thank you

25 for enduring this long marathon. I'll

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

326

1 try to keep it quick. I just want to
2 tell you guys to stay strong, don't
3 give into the car fetishes. I hear
4 people complaining here that these
5 policies are punishing drivers. I say
6 good, they should be punished.

7 New York is a town that should
8 belong to pedestrians, cyclists, and
9 public transit riders. That is how
10 the vast, vast majority of this city
11 gets around and the policies should
12 favor those people. If I had it my
13 way, I would go even further than this
14 policy, I would ban private cars
15 entirely from all of Manhattan. Look
16 how nice the 14th Street busway is.
17 That's wonderful, you should be doing
18 that all over the city. I don't know
19 why you haven't expanded that yet, but
20 I'm hoping that when congestion
21 pricing comes into effect, that New
22 York City will be like that. You see
23 buses moving quickly, you see
24 pedestrians crossing streets, they're
25 not afraid of getting mowed down by

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

327

1 some lunatic in a private car. I
2 think that's wonderful, that's what
3 the city should be.

4 I live in Bay Ridge. I actually
5 own a car. I don't think I've ever
6 driven it into Lower Manhattan.
7 There's no need to do that, we have
8 wonderful public transportation here.

9 I saw my Congressman Nicole
10 Malliotakis spoke, I just want her to
11 know that she doesn't speak for me.
12 She's wrong, Bay Ridge -- everyone I
13 talk to in Bay Ridge supports this
14 policy, I think people are onboard
15 with it.

16 All that said, if we do grant
17 you guys this power, I would say
18 there's also maybe a new
19 responsibility on your end as well.
20 Please, dear God, fix the trains, fix
21 the buses. They should be fast, they
22 should be safe, they should be clean.
23 I live on the R train, I take it all
24 the time. I like taking the train, I
25 prefer taking the train to driving.

1 But it's -- you know, it's slow, it's
2 kind of a joke.

3 So fix it, that's all I ask.
4 But, you know, other than that, just
5 stay the course, push this thing
6 through. The whole city is counting
7 on it, it's going to make the city a
8 better place to live.

9 So thank you very much.

10 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

11 We'll continue calling names
12 from the list. If you haven't heard
13 your name called and want to speak and
14 have not already indicated that to us
15 in the Q&A function, please do let us
16 know in the Q&A function.

17 Sandra Flores.

18 Ally Mohamed.

19 Richard Osman.

20 Paul Mankabadi.

21 Andres Canot.

22 Thomas Santana.

23 Yan Gershkovch.

24 Elizabeth Currey.

25 John Buckholz.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

329

1	Ahmad Saeed.
2	Aglaia Davis.
3	Ralph Saro.
4	Dan Ancito.
5	Heron Douglas.
6	Steven Omeis.
7	Margaret Basileo.
8	Raghunandan Ankolekar.
9	Susan R.
10	Vijay Nyack.
11	Tobias Russo.
12	Robert Gilpin.
13	Tyrone Murray.
14	Antonio Cerqueira.
15	Michal Samuels.
16	Rafael Santos.
17	Jessica Jean-Baptiste.
18	Rafael Salazar.
19	Geraldine Fredericks.
20	Michele Sarno.
21	Dameanna Johnson.
22	Luis Gamboa.
23	Rodney Carter.
24	Jeffeey Tuller.
25	Ira Gershenhorn.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

330

1 Atta Panyin Young.

2 Theresa Collins.

3 Felix Ottenwalder.

4 Robert Last.

5 Flori P.

6 Mathos Sangare.

7 Judith Dahill.

8 Lisa Mangal.

9 Marvin Lowe.

10 Patrick Mclaughlin.

11 Dina Ruiz.

12 Eric Bell.

13 Ibrahima Barry.

14 Douglas Gordon.

15 Basia Osowski.

16 Jonelle Wright.

17 Jamal Moe.

18 Christine Negra.

19 Akinwole Killanin.

20 Arthur Keeler.

21 Kathryn Tannert Niang.

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

24 Kathryn, you may unmute yourself
25 and begin your remarks.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

331

1 You appear to be unmuted, but we
2 can't hear you. We'll have to come
3 back to you. You might want to try
4 changing -- we can see you. Do you
5 want to try speaking?

6 KATHRYN TANNERT NIANG: Can you
7 hear me?

8 MS. FLAX: Yes. Now we can hear
9 you.

10 KATHRYN TANNERT NIANG: You hear
11 me?

12 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

13 KATHRYN TANNERT NIANG: Okay.
14 Thank you for including me. I know
15 this is very late. I signed up. I am
16 a member of the district. I'm a
17 cyclist. I have been a resident of
18 the Lower East Side for more than 40
19 years. I am also a driver of a
20 vehicle, and I feel very strongly that
21 your plan is incomplete.

22 I was very disappointed with the
23 presentation this evening, which I
24 felt there was a lot of gaps in the
25 information that was -- would be very

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

332

1 helpful to me. But I feel, right now,
2 that your approach to this is a new
3 form of redlining, which will
4 disproportionately proportionately
5 impact residents of the district.

6 Congestion is not the problem of
7 my neighborhood. It's not the problem
8 of people who live and reside and have
9 businesses below 60th Street in
10 Manhattan. It is the problem of the
11 people who come in here. I live in --
12 on the Lower East Side and I see all
13 of the cars who come in from New
14 Jersey on Saturday -- you know, on
15 Friday and Saturday night to go to
16 dinner, to go to clubs.

17 I do not have a place to park in
18 my own neighborhoods. I've already
19 moved my car to Queens, and your plan
20 doesn't even allow me to understand
21 whether or not I would be subject to
22 congestion pricing going over the
23 Queensboro Bridge.

24 The -- your plan is incomplete.
25 For all of the different scenarios

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

333

1 that you proposed this evening, you
2 did not, you know, really come up with
3 scenarios for ordinary New Yorkers who
4 live in this district who might have
5 to contend with that congestion
6 pricing.

7 I wholly reject it as something
8 that is oppressive to me as a
9 long-time resident who has already --
10 you know, a civil servant living in
11 New York, serving the people of New
12 York, paying taxes through the nose,
13 local, state and federal. But you
14 would impose more tax on me for me to
15 have a car, why shouldn't I have a
16 car? Why should I not be able to have
17 a car to go places around the country
18 where public transportation will not
19 currently take me? It's absurd.

20 I should be able to live here
21 and enjoy having a vehicle, enjoy
22 being able to park wherever I need to
23 park, and not have to compete with
24 people who are coming from outside the
25 city. Why should this --

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

334

1 MS. FLAX: Please complete your
2 remark.

3 KATHRYN TANNERT NIANG: -- be
4 imposed on me?

5 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

6 George Pilieri.

7 Bhairavi Desai.

8 BHAIRAVI DESAI: Good evening.

9 My name is Bhairavi Desai. I'm the
10 executive director of the New York
11 Taxi Workers Alliance. We are a proud
12 organization of over 25,000 taxi and
13 FHV drivers, and we're really offended
14 by the fact that your own report says
15 there are going to be massive job
16 losses for this workforce. And yet,
17 you have not recommended exemptions
18 for drivers in all of these scenarios,
19 you know, you're going to upend the
20 lives of one of the largest
21 workforces. In fact, the biggest
22 private sector workforce in the State
23 of New York. A workforce that is
24 predominately immigrant and is already
25 on the edges of the economy.

1 Fundamentally, what this comes
2 down to is you're saying to an entire
3 group of drivers that when we're in
4 the middle of the pandemic and, you
5 know, the subways and the buses aren't
6 running, drivers are good enough to
7 risk their lives and serve the public.
8 But now when you need money, you're
9 willing to risk them and leave them
10 pretty much destitute.

11 The idea that your solution that
12 you would waive a 70-dollar bus
13 driver's exam is just so incredibly
14 insulting to a workforce that works
15 incredibly hard, serves a million
16 people every single day, puts their
17 lives on the job, they're 30 more
18 likely to be killed on this job, 80
19 times more likely to be robbed on this
20 job, they deserve to be treated with
21 dignity and respect and their labor
22 deserves to be valued and recognized
23 as central to the transportation
24 network of our city.

25 Having said that, you also must

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

336

1 recognize yellow cab drivers have been
2 paying a congestion fee, a 50 cents
3 per trip since the year 2009. Since
4 2019, they've been paying an
5 additional \$2.50. That's \$3 as of
6 today. On Uber and Lyft trips,
7 there's \$2.75.

8 Your own report says that the
9 companies would be all right, but it's
10 the drivers that would face massive
11 job losses. This industry has still
12 not recovered. More than half,
13 60 percent of the cabs are not even
14 back on the streets yet. People have
15 high debts on the medallion that
16 they're still trying to pay off, while
17 only 11 percent of Uber and Lyft cars
18 are not back on the streets yet. Each
19 driver is making 41 percent less trips
20 today than pre-pandemic and they get
21 paid by the trip, not by the hour.

22 You must go back to the drawing
23 board. Drivers need to be exempted,
24 you cannot put this on their backs.
25 They deserve to be treated with

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

337

1 dignity and your plan does not do
2 that.

3 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

4 As a reminder, this is the
5 second call for speakers who were
6 unable to speak when their name was
7 first called. If you would like to
8 speak, please identify yourself in the
9 Q&A.

10 Kate Slevin.

11 David Flaherty.

12 Raul Rivera.

13 Paul White.

14 Golam Talukder.

15 Drew S.

16 Samuel Pan.

17 Don S.

18 Eric Bischoff.

19 Kathy Francis.

20 Lincoln Palmer.

21 Ivan Ventura.

22 MR. WOJNAR: Go ahead, Ivan.

23 IVAN VENTURA: Hey, how you guys
24 doing today? Definitely some of you
25 guys definitely look tired.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

338

1 I'm a driver in New York City.
2 I've been doing this for, I think too
3 long now, maybe going on -- I started
4 in '08 driving Uber and Lyft. I've
5 done over 30,000 trips in New York.

6 My argument is very simple. You
7 guys are not thinking about the
8 drivers. You guys, at the beginning
9 of this, during the pandemic when the
10 MTA shut down, you guys were
11 encouraging yellow cabs and TLC
12 drivers to come out and move all these
13 other people when you guys shut down.
14 So at that point, we're essential.
15 Now, we ain't even that. We're way
16 less than essential drivers than
17 anything.

18 You know, my biggest concern is
19 you guys have gotten over a billion
20 dollars since 2019, open up your
21 books. Let us see where the money
22 went. You know, if you guys want to
23 start trimming the fat, you guys got
24 to start trimming the fat within the
25 MTA because you guys don't know how to

1 budget your money for anything.

2 If I failed in my business, I
3 would have to move on and start
4 something else. You guys have to let
5 an independent contractor come in and
6 run you guys to profitability because
7 you guys have no idea what the value
8 of a dollar is.

9 Besides that, let me let you
10 guys know that that e-mail on waiving
11 \$70 for FHV drivers who lose their
12 jobs and become bus drivers, that's
13 great. What about the older FHV
14 drivers who don't have GEDs or don't
15 have high school diplomas, what are
16 you going to do with them? You want
17 them to clean the buses, the MTA, the
18 train stations. Maybe you guys do
19 need the help, but where's the money
20 going to come from? You guys have no
21 money.

22 You know, what you guys failed
23 to realize is that over a 16-month
24 span when the recession for drivers
25 started, nine drivers committed

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

340

1 suicide. You guys are leading the way
2 for more drivers to lose their job,
3 not know how to provide food for their
4 families and eventually some might
5 commit suicide.

6 You guys have to go back to the
7 drawing board and figure it out. If
8 you guys can't do it with over the
9 billion of dollars that we contributed
10 to you guys, you guys ain't going to
11 be able to do it with \$17, \$23. It
12 doesn't matter what number you put.

13 You know, you guys increased the
14 tolls. I live in Staten Island, I pay
15 three tolls before I ever get to the
16 city. Imagine what happens when the
17 \$23 hike comes in. You guys have to
18 look at us and understand that during
19 the pandemic we've delivered over
20 53 million meals for free, basically.
21 You guys, TLC paid us. We delivered
22 53 million meals. At that time --

23 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
24 your remarks. Thank you.

25 Muhammad Bilal.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

341

1 Joseph Toronto.

2 Jose Paulino.

3 John Banzer.

4 John Banzer?

5 JOHN BANZER: Can you hear me?

6 MR. WOJNAR: Please go ahead.

7 JOHN BANZER: Hi, how are you.

8 My name is John R. Banzer. I'm a
9 running candidate for governor and
10 I've been very upset with what has
11 gone on throughout the pandemic.

12 As a mentally ill person, I
13 watched my contemporaries be stuffed
14 in the corpse bridges and my other
15 contemporaries be worked to death.
16 And I'm staring at restaurant boxes
17 right now, which are very little more
18 than -- just a rat parade. I'm
19 sitting outside of the Music Inn,
20 which is a landmark place for I, as a
21 comedian -- by the way, they made
22 comedy illegal during the pandemic,
23 but it was allowed for bands to go on.

24 I watched my business collapse
25 from a psychiatric facility before the

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

342

1 pandemic started and got into theater
2 March of 2020, so I've been -- it's
3 been a hard road. So you got to know
4 this, I can't put my tools on the
5 train because I had to live at my
6 parents at 32 because I'm broken now.

7 I'm trying to get back into art
8 and this is the only functional part
9 of therapy I have. And with this
10 congestion charge, I can't come into
11 the city and do little things around
12 the theater so I can barely keep my
13 head above water. And I've watched
14 people not come back and I will do
15 anything and treat anybody who tries
16 to take more money out of my pocket as
17 a hostile enemy.

18 I love doing comedy. I love
19 performing art, I love helping --
20 doing -- all these people -- I love
21 driving my friends home when they're
22 drunk. That's something I also have a
23 right to do with a car.

24 This is a money grab in so many
25 areas because I take my friends home

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

343

1 and I'll get a whole bunch of them to
2 come here and tell you how many of
3 them we got home safely. But I can't
4 do that when I have to pay \$120 a week
5 to just go and express myself freely.

6 So I got to let you know that
7 this is a non-starter from anybody on
8 the island because then I'm trapped.
9 This isn't the peninsula. I don't
10 care what the Supreme Court rules.

11 Oh, and by the way, what color
12 is the first woman that's going to be
13 arrested for not paying to go to work,
14 that's my biggest concern. Who goes
15 to jail for not paying to go to work?
16 Is it going to be one of you guys who
17 had \$90,000 just waived away, you
18 know, no problem, keep your pension.

19 I'm never paying any money to go
20 do art in the city, so you're going to
21 have to contend with every single
22 artist and we love doing what we're
23 doing and we commute hundreds of
24 thousands of miles just to come
25 entertain and make people laugh, for

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

344

1 nothing a lot of the times.

2 I really need you to understand
3 that there's a lot more in danger than
4 what's on paper. It's the ancillary
5 things that make this city inherently
6 valuable. Why where there's more
7 languages spoken in Queens than
8 anywhere else on earth and we wonder
9 why so many new words pop up around
10 here. That's what's in danger and I'm
11 not going to take it. We're not going
12 to pay a dime and you're going to have
13 to send an army to come take me to
14 jail for not paying, come try and do
15 this.

16 Thank you for your time. Please
17 have a good night.

18 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

19 The next speaker is Raul Rivera.

20 RAUL RIVERA: Good evening, can
21 you hear me?

22 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

23 RAUL RIVERA: Good evening. My
24 name is Raul Rivera. I'm a native New
25 Yorker. I'm a New York City TLC

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

345

1 driver and I oppose the congestion
2 pricing.

3 I'm 52 years old. When I was a
4 young teenager, I worked for various
5 law firms in the city. I did my
6 deliveries on foot and I know my city.
7 I know Manhattan. I was born in the
8 Bronx but I worked all my life in
9 Manhattan.

10 I see all the streets that have
11 been closed. I'm 52 years old. I see
12 street after street after street being
13 closed. If you keep closing streets,
14 you're going to get congestion.

15 I'm ordering all elected
16 officials to stop saying that we have
17 a congestion problem. It's obvious
18 that we're going to have one if you
19 continue to close the streets. It's a
20 overreach not only to go and try to
21 put a toll on one or two bridges, you
22 went and got all four bridges.

23 It's a job-killer. It's going
24 to decimate the taxi industry. Listen
25 to the director from Taxi Workers

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

346

1 Alliance she said it -- I mean, she
2 couldn't say it any better than
3 myself, it's a job-killer. You have
4 to understand that.

5 I was at a rally today at 42nd
6 Street and Park Avenue. They kept
7 talking about safety, how is it going
8 to be safe, it's going to be safe.
9 Pedestrians are going to be safe. We
10 have to educate the New Yorker how to
11 cross the street.

12 They try to use safety for
13 everything. For safety, we're going
14 to start taxing you, we're going to
15 take your money. I say no to
16 congestion pricing today, tomorrow,
17 forever.

18 We're sending money to other
19 countries when that money could be
20 used here. So I ask you guys, reach
21 out to the Biden of Brooklyn and have
22 the Biden of Brooklyn call the Biden
23 of Washington and tell him that we
24 need the money here. Stop sending
25 money to other countries, stop

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

347

1 stealing from the drivers here, the
2 workers here.

3 Again, we oppose congestion
4 pricing.

5 Thank you for your time.

6 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

7 A reminder, if you have joined
8 the Zoom under a name that is
9 different from the one you used when
10 you signed up to speak or if you did
11 not sign up to speak but would like
12 to, please identify yourself in the
13 Q&A function.

14 Austin Pferd.

15 Kendra Hems.

16 Josef B.

17 Tess Harkin.

18 Todd Maisel.

19 Dorothy DiLullo.

20 Al Al.

21 Borislav Borisov.

22 Joseph Tedeschi.

23 Shirelle Nix McKay.

24 Tom Fox.

25 Touhami Benmessaoud.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

348

1 Lavicke Quincy Jones.

2 Shmuel Avital.

3 Yuki Endo.

4 YUKI ENDO: Yeah.

5 MR. WOJNAR: Please proceed, we
6 can hear you.

7 YUKI ENDO: I oppose congestion
8 pricing. I oppose congestion pricing
9 because they still adding -- already
10 have to pay toll. And they still
11 adding other -- propose toll for MTA
12 and The Port Authority of New York New
13 Jersey of Bridges and Tunnel -- the
14 bridges. Also if -- fire trucks,
15 ambulance, law enforcement vehicle --
16 I should not pay toll to access
17 Manhattan, including the police
18 responding, tow trucks and then --
19 also should not pay the toll either.

20 Nothing -- has to pay toll to
21 access each other but to go into the
22 city -- going to be longer.

23 Congestion pricing -- my vehicle
24 -- for the first responder responding.
25 Also congestion pricing on New York

1 City DOT -- tow your cars delay to
2 public buses.

3 Congestion pricing -- for you
4 authority workers -- bus has to access
5 bus for the business.

6 I do not support any non-MTA
7 commuter buses, including the charter
8 buses from out of New York City have
9 to pay toll and any of Bridges and
10 Tunnel own by the MTA will also
11 decrease also DOT. And if I have --

12 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

13 We're nearing the end of our
14 second call for speakers who were
15 unable to speak when their name was
16 first called. Again, if you would
17 like to speak please identify yourself
18 had the Q&A.

19 Kamol Sawar.

20 Adam Phillips.

21 Christopher Sanders.

22 Zaire Baptiste.

23 Tom Kaczorowski.

24 John Law.

25 Kawas Tarigan.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

350

1	Megan Dyer.
2	Jasmine Vasquez.
3	MD Hussain.
4	Greyson Paris.
5	Shawn Johnson Jr.
6	Harry Malakoff.
7	Nana Ampofo.
8	Morgan Adzi.
9	Ahmad Ali.
10	Tamekia Flowers-Ball.
11	Jamaal King.
12	Danny Sena.
13	Evelyn David.
14	Joseph Leiding.
15	Alexis Bruno.
16	Jenny Lee.
17	Sam Streeter.
18	Charlene Burke.
19	Jay Erlich.
20	Avi Bortnick.
21	Mika White.
22	Ronald Simoncini.
23	Ned Dey.
24	Edward P.
25	Ari Aronowitz.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

351

1 Stefania Cupelova.

2 Bessie Ng.

3 Alpha Bah.

4 Alpha, if you're there, you can
5 unmute and proceed.

6 ALPHA BAH: I'm having trouble
7 with my internet. Can you guys hear
8 me?

9 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can hear
10 you.

11 ALPHA BAH: Oh. Perfect.

12 Okay. I have a little concern,
13 okay, so I'm looking at the panel, I
14 think this congestion is a scheme, is
15 a redlining. Definitely, it's racist.
16 I'm looking at the panel, all I'm
17 seeing is descendant of European
18 American. All right. I don't see no
19 Asian American on the panel, I don't
20 see it. I don't see no African
21 American on the panel. Maybe
22 there's -- I don't --

23 (Technical interference.)

24 MR. WOJNAR: We got a very bad
25 connection.

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

352

1 ALPHA BAH: Hello.

2 MR. WOJNAR: Alpha?

3 ALPHA BAH: Yes, I'm here.

4 MR. WOJNAR: Do you want to go
5 back about ten seconds of your
6 statement, we didn't hear much of the
7 most recent portion.

8 ALPHA BAH: How about now, can
9 you guys hear me now?

10 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, go ahead.

11 ALPHA BAH: Okay. So what I'm
12 saying is this panel is very -- it
13 doesn't represent the body, the makeup
14 of New York City. It's a very
15 handpicked, you're only seeing
16 European American descent. That is --
17 that bothers a lot of folks out here
18 because we all should be included on
19 the panel. That's number one.

20 Number two, this congestion
21 pricing is nothing more than a money
22 grab. It's a scheme, it's a Ponzi
23 scheme. MTA will never do court --
24 have all kind of pandemic --

25 (Technical interference.)

1 -- there is a no -- it's just
2 ludicrous, it's just terrible. If you
3 guys can't handle the MTA, just give
4 it up to private property -- I mean
5 private companies, let them run it
6 since you guys cannot really, really
7 can't -- such thing --

8 (Technical interference.)

9 -- we don't just want to have
10 nothing but white folks, to be honest,
11 to be on the panel. We don't have
12 black folks, Asian folks, Chinese,
13 Mexican, Japanese, Arabs, everyone.
14 We just always see the same body, that
15 doesn't represent all of us here --
16 thank you.

17 MR. WOJNAR: Okay. Thank you.

18 ALPHA BAH: Yeah, get it fixed,
19 equal representation for all of us,
20 not just white folks. It's not fair.
21 All right.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

24 Jeremy Zaida.

25 Jeremy, if you could --

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

354

1 JEREMY ZAIDA: Hi there. Can
2 you hear me?

3 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.
4 Please proceed.

5 JEREMY ZAIDA: Hi. My name is
6 Jeremy Zaida. I'm a resident of
7 Manhattan, not in the CBD. I strongly
8 support congestion pricing, trying to
9 take the bus around here is
10 impossible, mostly because of the
11 traffic. And less people driving into
12 the CBD means less people not only in
13 my neighborhood but in the outer
14 boroughs as well.

15 I also want to thank all of you
16 for being here, especially for the
17 interpreters, thank you.

18 I just really hope that, first
19 of all, whenever you are hearing
20 somebody's name being called, you're
21 realizing that this is somebody who
22 your plan is affecting, and I want you
23 to take your role in the city
24 seriously. Because a lot of times
25 that you hear the complaints the MTA

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

355

1 is not properly budgeting what they
2 have, that needs to be a priority.

3 We need to fix the subway
4 system, that is very important. Same
5 thing with DOT, fix the streets too,
6 they're not safe for pedestrians,
7 they're not safe for bicyclists, they
8 slow down the buses. We need more bus
9 lanes like the 14th Street busway.

10 I work right at 14th and 6th, I
11 see the affect that it has on the
12 surrounding community, and I see how
13 much better it is having the
14 accessibility for all different modes
15 of transportation, not just cars being
16 prioritized in this city. It really
17 is frustrating seeing how much money
18 and time and effort the city puts into
19 making things easier for people who
20 drive cars when that's where the vast
21 majority of people in this city do not
22 have a car.

23 The best day of my life was
24 being able to get rid of a car because
25 I moved here to New York City. Being

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

356

1 able to live in the city without a car
2 is a privilege, and we need to be able
3 to encourage more people to use public
4 transit. That means in better service
5 in all ways. But I do support
6 congestion pricing and it will be able
7 to make our streets safer. I think it
8 needs to go further in the future.

9 So on a technical note, I do
10 want to say that in the environmental
11 report, I think that Scenario G is the
12 best. Having it be simple, one toll
13 across all vehicle classes and no
14 exemptions makes it easier for people
15 to understand.

16 That's another thing that MTA
17 needs to get right, there's a lot of
18 misunderstanding about what the CBDTP
19 is all about, how it will affect
20 people. If you hear people citing the
21 23-dollar toll all the time thinking
22 that that is the baseline, that's
23 always going to be that, you guys need
24 to do a much better job of
25 communicating with the people in this

1 city and surrounding areas so that
2 people understand what you're actually
3 proposing.

4 Thank you for listening. Have a
5 great rest of your night.

6 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you for
7 participating.

8 That concludes our second run
9 through the list of tonight's
10 speakers.

11 MR. OLIVA: Thank you all for
12 joining us this evening.

13 For those who did not do so
14 already, we encourage you to take our
15 short survey via the QR code or link
16 currently being displayed. The link
17 can also be found in the Q&A section
18 of the Zoom.

19 For details about upcoming
20 hearings, please visit the project
21 website at mta.info/CBDTP or call the
22 Public Meeting Hotline at (646)
23 252-6777.

24 As a final reminder, in addition
25 to the virtual public hearings, there

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 25, 2022

358

1 are several other ways you can provide
2 comments on the Environmental
3 Assessment through September 9, 2022.
4 We encourage the public to comment via
5 the CBDTP website, where you can also
6 find the latest project information
7 and sign up to stay informed via
8 e-mail.

9 You may also e-mail comments to
10 CBDTP@mtabt.org, send them via mail to
11 CBD Tolling Program, 2 Broadway, 23rd
12 Floor, New York, New York 10004, or
13 call (646) 252-7440.

14 Comments may also be provided
15 directly to the Federal Highway
16 Administration via email to
17 CBDTP@dot.gov, or via mail to FHWA,
18 New York Division, RE: CBDTP, Leo W.
19 O'Brien Federal Building, 11A Clinton
20 Avenue, Suite 719, Albany, New York
21 12207.

22 The time is currently 11:42 p.m.
23 This concludes our hearing. Thank you
24 again for your participation.

25 (TIME NOTED: 11:42 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF NEW YORK)

:SS

COUNTY OF QUEENS)

I, MAKEDA EDWARDS, a Notary Public within and for the State of New York, do hereby certify:

That the witness whose examination is hereinbefore set forth was duly sworn and that such an examination is a true record of the testimony given by such witness.

I further certify that I am not related to any of these parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am not in any way interested in the outcome of this matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand on this 25th day of August, 2022.

Makeda Edwards

MAKEDA EDWARDS