

In Re CBDTP Congestion Pricing Program Environmental Assessment
Public Hearing
August 27, 2022

1 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT CONGESTION PRICING PROGRAM

2 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PUBLIC HEARING

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4 VIDEO CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM

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6 DATE: AUGUST 27, 2022

7 TIME: 10:01 A.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
Officer

5

6 Nichola Angel, Vice President TBTA

7

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

9

10 William Ullom, Deputy Director of Traffic
Engineering and Planning for New York City
Department of Transportation

11

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

13

14 Monica Pavlik, Project Manager for the Federal
Highway Administration

15

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

17

18 Leah Flax, Moderator

19

20 Michael Wojnar, Moderator

21

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23

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1 MR. OLIVA: Good morning. We
2 will now begin the hearing. Today is
3 Saturday, August 27, 2022. And the
4 time is 10:01 a.m. My name is Lou
5 Oliva, and I will be today'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 206 speakers signed up.
24 Speakers will be called in the order
25 they signed up.

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

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

14 You may also request to speak
15 anonymously. If this is your
16 preference, please indicate this in
17 the Q&A function and we will give you
18 further instructions.

19 Please do not use the Q&A
20 function for comments you would like
21 to submit on Central Business District
22 Tolling Program. Comments can be
23 submitted by visiting mta.info/CBDTP,
24 calling (646)252-7440, send mail to
25 CBD Tolling Program, 2 Broadway, 23rd

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1 Floor, New York, New York 10004, or
2 via email at CBDTP@mtabt.org.

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

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

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1 methods for submitting comments.

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

12 We will now start with opening
13 remarks from Dr. Allison de Cerreño,
14 MTA's Deputy Chief Operating Officer.

15 DR. C. DE CERRENO: Thank you.

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

23 This morning, I am representing
24 the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel
25 Authority and MTA more broadly, and am

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1 joined by Nichola Angel, Vice
2 President of Triborough Bridge and
3 Tunnel Authority and other members of
4 the agency, as well as other
5 colleagues from the other project
6 sponsors for this effort. Nicolas
7 Choubah, Chief Engineer, and William
8 Ullom, Deputy Director of Traffic
9 Engineering and Planning.

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

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

24 Last year, we held ten
25 webinar-style public sessions, nine

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1 similar sessions focused on
2 environmental justice communities, and
3 several meetings each of the
4 Environmental Justice Technical
5 Advisory Group and Environmental
6 Justice Stakeholder Working Group.

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

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

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

24 The rest of the document is also
25 on the website, and you can find a

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1 hard copy of the entire Environmental
2 Assessment at numerous locations
3 throughout 28 counties in New York,
4 New Jersey, and Connecticut. A
5 complete list of locations is also
6 available on the Project website.

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

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

25 Now, let's begin our

1 presentation.

2 [Taped presentation begins -
3 Narrated by Dr. C. De Cerreño.]

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

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

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1 toll.

2 After covering the
3 project-related capital and operating
4 expenses, revenue collected would fund
5 MTA's 2020 to 2024 Capital Program and
6 successor capital programs.

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

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

24 In essence, as someone is coming
25 down the roadway, the detection points

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1 would detect their vehicle and
2 determine how long it should be before
3 they are seen at the next location.
4 Assuming they continue to be seen at
5 each location within the allotted
6 time, no toll would be charged.

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

13 On the right, you can see an
14 example of what the infrastructure and
15 the tolling system equipment would
16 look like. It's predominantly poles,
17 as you see on the right, and mast
18 arms, as you see on the left.

19 Importantly, the tolling system
20 equipment will be clustered and housed
21 in a single-unit enclosure as shown on
22 the bottom.

23 The enclosures are purposely
24 designed to minimize the amount of
25 equipment on the poles and to reflect

1 light in a way that makes them less
2 visible to someone walking or driving.

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

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

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1 quality.

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

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

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

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1 populations, Federal Highway
2 Administration and the project
3 sponsors incorporate an enhanced
4 public outreach and coordination with
5 federal and state resource agencies.

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

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

1 daily by at least ten percent, to
2 create a funding source for capital
3 improvements and generate sufficient
4 annual net revenue to fund \$15 billion
5 for capital projects for the MTA
6 Capital Program, and to establish a
7 tolling program consistent with the
8 purposes underlying the New York State
9 legislation entitled the MTA Reform
10 and Traffic Mobility Act.

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

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

25 Between 2010 and 2019, travel

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1 speeds fell 22 percent in Manhattan
2 Central Business District and local
3 bus speeds have declined 28 percent
4 since 2010. The average speed of
5 Select Bus Service, New York City's
6 bus rapid transit service routes in
7 the Manhattan CBD is 19 percent slower
8 than in the outer boroughs.

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

22 I'll now walk you through the
23 findings of the Environment
24 Assessment. There were two project
25 alternatives that are evaluated in the

1 Environmental Assessment. The
2 no-action alternative in which there
3 is no program to toll vehicles in the
4 Manhattan Central Business District,
5 no comprehensive plan to reduce
6 congestion, and no new annual
7 recurring funding for MTA capital
8 programs.

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

22 The Environmental Assessment
23 explores each of the topics in this
24 chart. The specific chapters that
25 address the analysis for each area are

1 identified here. As you can see, the
2 analysis shows that most of the areas
3 have beneficial effects or no adverse
4 effects, but there are few areas with
5 potential adverse effects. The slides
6 a bit later in the presentation will
7 address each of the areas and identify
8 any mitigation that is needed.

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

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

22 Within the Central Business
23 District Tolling Alternative, there
24 are a number of tolling scenarios that
25 vary in several ways. Modeling these

1 different scenarios helped us to
2 understand the full range of effects
3 of the Central Business District
4 Tolling Alternative since the decision
5 on the actual tolling scenario has not
6 yet been made.

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

16 So let me walk you through.

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

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

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

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

1 entering the Central Business
2 District.

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

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

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

23 Finally, as you move to the
24 bottom, we have the approximate toll
25 rate for autos, small trucks and large

1 trucks that resulted from the
2 modeling.

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

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

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

23 Discounts, crossing credits and
24 exemptions result in the need for
25 higher toll rates. Higher toll rates

1 lead to a greater degree of traffic
2 reduction in the Manhattan Central
3 Business District, but also lead to
4 increased traffic diversions,
5 including increases along the Cross
6 Bronx Expressway and the Staten Island
7 Expressway.

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

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

25 Before we move on, I thought it

1 was helpful to give at least a sense
2 of where are the commuters actually
3 coming from into the Manhattan Central
4 Business District.

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

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

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

1 percent come from counties like
2 Rockland, Morris and Richmond. And
3 roughly four to five percent come from
4 Bergen, Hudson and Westchester
5 counties.

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

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

23 Now we'll go through the effects
24 of each of the topic areas. On the
25 top right of each slide, you'll see

1 that we've identified whether effects
2 are beneficial, not adverse or
3 adverse. In this case, this is the
4 regional effects of transportation.
5 Broadly speaking, all tolling
6 scenarios reduce the number of vehicle
7 entries into the Manhattan Central
8 Business District and reduce vehicle
9 miles traveled in the Manhattan
10 Central Business District.

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

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

1 In the Manhattan Central
2 Business District, VMT decreases
3 anywhere from a little over nine
4 percent to about seven percent.
5 Throughout New York City, the
6 reduction is roughly 1.5 percent to
7 about 0.7 percent and so on down the
8 group.

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

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

1 Drive between East 10th Street and
2 Brooklyn Bridge.

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

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

23 Note the call-out in the upper
24 right and recall what I mentioned
25 regarding tolling scenario G earlier.

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

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

1 location, Macombs Road and found the
2 daily increases in truck traffic in
3 the table to the right. During the
4 same outreach period, the trucking
5 associations also raised their
6 concerns that people can move to
7 transit to avoid the toll. But trucks
8 cannot do this.

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

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

25 The results, as you can see,

1 reduced the diversions along with the
2 relative incremental number of trucks
3 on the Cross Bronx Expressway. Given
4 the concerns raised, the project team
5 decided to include this tolling
6 scenario formerly in the Environmental
7 Assessment.

8 With respect to local
9 intersections, again, there were
10 beneficial effects and adverse effects
11 where mitigation is required.
12 Specifically, most intersections would
13 experience decreases in delay.
14 Tolling Scenarios D, E and F, the
15 high-credit scenarios, have four out
16 of a 102 intersections that
17 experienced adverse effects in the
18 modeling in the form of increased
19 delay at certain times. And you can
20 see them here on the right.

21 Project sponsors will monitor
22 those intersections where adverse
23 effects are identified and implement
24 appropriate signal timing adjustments
25 to mitigate the effect for New York

1 City Department of Transportation's
2 normal practice.

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

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

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

1 with specific thresholds for
2 pedestrian volumes on a specific
3 Station Stair in Hoboken Terminal.

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

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

1 stair to increase capacity.

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

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

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

1 threshold is reached, pedestrian space
2 would be increased and obstructions
3 will be removed or relocated.

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

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

22 With respect to parking, the
23 study found a reduction in parking
24 demand within the Manhattan Central
25 Business District and increased

1 parking demand at subway and commuter
2 rail stations and park-and-ride
3 facilities outside of the Manhattan's
4 Central Business District. But the
5 increase at any individual location
6 would not be large enough to result in
7 an adverse effect from the project.

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

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

24 In terms of energy and noise,
25 again, there are beneficial effects

1 and no adverse effects. With respect
2 to energy, the region would benefit
3 from reductions in regional energy
4 consumption as a result of reductions
5 in the vehicle miles traveled.

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

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

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

1 coordinate to expand the New York City
2 community air survey network of air
3 quality monitors. This will be
4 supplemented by a small number of
5 real-time monitors for particulate
6 matter.

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

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

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

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

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

1 needed for drivers eligible for the
2 credit.

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

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

20 The project sponsors will
21 establish an environmental justice
22 community group that will meet on a
23 biannual basis with the first meeting
24 six months after project
25 implementation to share updated data

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1 and analysis and hear about potential
2 concerns.

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

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

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

24 For those who may not want a
25 commercial driver's license, TBTA will

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

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

21 The construction would occur on
22 streets and sidewalks and take
23 approximately one to two weeks per
24 location. During this time, there
25 would be temporary disruptions to

1 traffic and pedestrian patterns and
2 temporary noise disruptions at nearby
3 land uses such as residences and
4 businesses. The project sponsors
5 would require the contractor to
6 develop and comply with plans and
7 procedures to minimize construction
8 effects.

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

18 On the bottom right, there's a
19 rendering of tolling system equipment
20 that would be placed on existing
21 infrastructure. Again, as noted
22 earlier, the tolling equipment is
23 clustered into those single enclosures
24 to reduce visual impact and cameras
25 would use infrared illumination at

1 night so there would be no visible
2 light needed. The project would have
3 a neutral effect on viewer groups and
4 no adverse effect on visual resources.

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

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

1 Central Park.

2 Tolling technology equipment
3 would be added to the underneath of
4 the existing structure of the High
5 Line. You can see some of the
6 renderings at the bottom here.

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

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

24 There were two final additional
25 enhancements I would like to mention,

1 and again, they were in response to
2 outreach during the early outreach
3 period.

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

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

20 Again, through our conversations
21 and public outreach and particularly
22 with environmental justice
23 communities, we are also committed to
24 prioritizing equity and bus service
25 improvements. New York City's buses

1 serve a greater share of low-income
2 minority households and other modes
3 including subways.

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

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

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

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1 registered and nearly 400 speakers.

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

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

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

1 Environmental Assessment.

2 After the formal comment period
3 closes, there will be a determination
4 whether the action, in this case, the
5 tolling, will result in significant
6 effects.

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

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

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

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

17 [Taped presentation ends.]

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

24 We are gathering public comment
25 today on the Environmental Assessment

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1 for the Central Business District
2 Tolling Program. Comments will be
3 recorded, indexed and responded to as
4 part of the Environmental Assessment
5 process.

6 There are 206 speakers signed up
7 to speak today. Each speaker is
8 limited to three minutes. At the
9 two-and-a-half-minute mark, the clock
10 will turn red and you will hear it
11 beep notifying you that you have 30
12 seconds remaining. We ask that
13 speakers keep their remarks to the
14 three-minute time frame out of respect
15 for all other speakers.

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

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

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

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

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1 wish to use your camera, you do not
2 have to do so.

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

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

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

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

23 Our first speaker is Frank
24 Avila-Goldman, followed by Vaylateena
25 Jones.

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1 FRANK AVILA-GOLDMAN: Can you
2 hear me?

3 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

4 FRANK AVILA-GOLDMAN: Okay.
5 Great. Thank you so much.

6 My name is Frank Avila-Goldman.
7 I live in the LES in affordable
8 housing in the waterfront facing the
9 FDR.

10 According to New York City's
11 Environmental Justice For All report
12 released last year, the LES, the Lower
13 East Side, is an environmental justice
14 area with approximately 28 percent of
15 census tracts living below the poverty
16 line.

17 According to the NYU affirmative
18 report, the Lower East Side,
19 Chinatown, there are approximately
20 15,000 public housing and 5200
21 Mitchell-Lama units in this district.
22 The LES waterfront, specifically
23 speaking, is comprised primarily of
24 subsidized housing; most of which are
25 far from local subway stations.

1 We are a residential community,
2 not a business district and we have
3 limited subway access. My walking
4 commute, for example, is just shy of a
5 mile to Essex Delancey, and the
6 closest rapid bus stop, the M14A, was
7 relocated further away while
8 permitting additional bus stops to
9 residents in private housing.

10 Additionally, Essex Delancey or
11 East Broadway, my local subway
12 stations, they lack elevators and they
13 are not accessible for most seniors or
14 differently abled individuals. I
15 share these details because I wanted
16 to illustrate the transportation
17 issues my community faces.

18 While I understand the merits of
19 congestion pricing, it is entirely
20 unjust to permit a carve-out for
21 vehicular traffic entering onto the
22 FDR as it will exacerbate the noise
23 and pollution emissions to low-income
24 New Yorkers of color who make up the
25 majority of housing stock along the

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1 FDR from NYCHA Smith Houses all the
2 way up to NYCHA Jacob Riis.

3 I'm concerned how little
4 consideration is provided to
5 low-income New Yorkers who continually
6 bear the brunt of the lack of
7 amenities, transportation upgrades and
8 are in direct line of all the adverse
9 pollution affects simply because they
10 needed an affordable place to live.

11 Please reconsider the effects of
12 carve-outs for the FDR and the health
13 effects to my community. Please
14 consider the child hospitalization
15 asthma rates and how permitting
16 carve-outs for the FDR will exacerbate
17 the health of my community. This
18 carve-out won't reduce traffic
19 congestion for our community, it will
20 do the exact opposite.

21 We on the waterfront deserve to
22 be able to open our windows without
23 daily soot coming into our homes. Our
24 fixed-income seniors cannot open their
25 windows to for cooling water from

1 breezes, so they rely on AC units
2 which further drives up their
3 expenses. My community deserves to
4 breathe fresh air just like anybody
5 else.

6 The MTA proposal, as it stands,
7 will effectively exacerbate the
8 environmental justice community I live
9 in provided no benefits likely result
10 in increases to medical goods and
11 services for our senior populations
12 and leave a low-income immigrant,
13 black, brown, Asian community more
14 vulnerable to reductions in air
15 quality. Please, no carve-outs for
16 cars entering onto the FDR.

17 Thank you.

18 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

19 Our next speaker is Vaylateena
20 Jones, followed by Inocencio Lopez.

21 VAYLATEENA JONES: Hi. I'm
22 Vaylateena Jones. I'm speaking on
23 behalf of the Lower East Side Power
24 Partnership.

25 The consequences of not taking

1 medications because of expense in
2 Manhattan Community District 3,
3 including those for heart, blood
4 pressure, and diabetes should be
5 avoided. Medication should not be
6 more expensive for residents of
7 Manhattan Community District 3 if
8 purchased in Manhattan Community
9 District 3.

10 There are no incentives,
11 safeguards or guarantees in plan -- in
12 the plans to field residents from
13 price increases. The Lower East Side
14 Power Partnership advocates for
15 exemptions for vehicles bringing
16 medications to pharmacies in Manhattan
17 Community District 3.

18 Fruits and vegetables are
19 excellent sources of nutrients and
20 vitamins. Fruits and vegetables
21 should not be more expensive for
22 residents of Manhattan Community
23 District 3 if purchased in Manhattan
24 Community District 3. LESPP advocates
25 for exemptions for vehicles bringing

1 fruits and vegetables to Manhattan
2 Community District 3.

3 According to the CBD Tolling
4 Program Environmental Assessment,
5 people concerned about the toll could
6 relocate their place of residence,
7 that's 653. In Community District 3,
8 there's a hot concentrate of senior
9 and low-income housing. Residents
10 will be unlikely to find affordable
11 housing outside the Community District
12 3.

13 The suggestion to relocate
14 supports that congestion pricing for
15 residents of Community -- of Manhattan
16 District 3 is unaffordable. LESPP
17 advocates for exemption for all
18 residents in Manhattan Community
19 District 3. A flat exemption for
20 residents of Manhattan Community 3
21 would be much simpler and direct.

22 It should not cost more to
23 provide services at faith-based
24 institutions, senior programs,
25 community centers, non-profit

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1 programs, et cetera in Manhattan
2 Community District 3. Some of the
3 public transit stations are without
4 accessible subway station. LESPP
5 advocates for exemptions for community
6 service providers who provide services
7 to Manhattan Community District 3.

8 LESPP advocates that transit
9 improvements be made before congestion
10 pricing is implemented. Congestion
11 pricing is totally unaffordable for
12 residents in a zone who do not fall
13 within the 60,000-dollar range. Since
14 the only price reduction is for
15 entering zone overnight and that is
16 still 5 to \$12. Many seniors use
17 their cars during the day for grocery
18 shopping, doctors' appointments and
19 other necessary daily-living tasks.

20 Let's take the scenario that a
21 senior from Community District 3 goes
22 to Queens to purchase a two-week
23 supply of groceries at Shop Rite and
24 also purchase fares, they will be
25 charged \$23 to return over the

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1 Williamsburg Bridge to Community
2 District 3. If they took the
3 Queens-Midtown Tunnel and went to FDR
4 Drive, they would have to pay in
5 addition to the tunnel total 23-dollar
6 charge just to return to the district.

7 Getting gas in Manhattan is
8 extremely limited and just finding it
9 in Manhattan would likely result in
10 zone travel tacking on the congestion
11 price and inflated costs of gas in the
12 zone.

13 Thank you.

14 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

15 Our next speaker is Inocencio
16 Lopez, followed by Michael Murray.

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

19 Our next speaker is Isabella
20 Rieke, followed by Brian Jankowitz.

21 As a reminder, if you joined the
22 Zoom that is different from the one
23 you used when you signed up to speak
24 or if you did not sign up to speak but
25 would like to speak please identify

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1 yourself in the Q&A function.

2 Our next speaker is Brian
3 Jankowitz, followed by John Lee.

4 Our next speaker is John Lee,
5 followed by Donald Howell.

6 Our next speaker is Donald
7 Howell, followed by our tenth speaker
8 on the list, Daniel Flax.

9 Our next speaker is Daniel Flax,
10 followed by Winston Fernandez.

11 Our next speaker is Winston
12 Fernandez, followed by Birain Parikh.

13 Our next speaker is Birain
14 Parikh, followed by Renee Baruch.

15 Our next speaker is Renee
16 Baruch, followed Kyle Burford.

17 Renee Baruch.

18 Our next speaker is --

19 RENEE BARUCH: Good morning.

20 MS. FLAX: Your camera is not
21 on.

22 RENEE BARUCH: Well, I'm going
23 to have to proceed then without it on.

24 I'm the president and founder of
25 New York City Residential Parking

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1 Permit Programs. I am here today
2 because the congestion pricing
3 proposal shifts the traffic and
4 parking and environmental burden from
5 Manhattan's Central Business District
6 to many New York neighborhoods and
7 streets outside the toll zone, where
8 parking and driving are already a
9 nightmare.

10 No one in New York wants to own
11 a car. No one. Many in New York must
12 have cars to get to otherwise
13 inaccessible places of employment, to
14 visit relatives in areas not served by
15 public transport and to manage their
16 lives.

17 Private cars cannot be
18 completely eliminated without a
19 residential parking permit program,
20 the proposed Business District Tolling
21 System is simply irresponsible.
22 Stockholm and London, two of the
23 cities you have so favorably compared
24 to New York both have such systems.
25 Without it, drivers will be encouraged

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1 to enter the city and access public
2 transportation by parking in areas
3 such as Washington Heights, Hamilton
4 Heights, Flushing, Jamaica and near
5 Brooklyn's transport hubs, not to
6 mention, the Upper East and West sides
7 of Manhattan.

8 As a result, this proposal just
9 shifts the congestion burdens to
10 neighborhoods where street parking is
11 already too scarce. Numerous other
12 groups, as well as Commissioner
13 Rodriguez, have called for a
14 residential parking permit program.
15 MTA may not be in the parking
16 business, as its chairman has publicly
17 proclaimed, but to make its Central
18 Business District proposal truly work
19 for all New Yorkers, the MTA should
20 provide a proper foundation, linking
21 it to a new residential parking
22 program.

23 The flaws in the Environmental
24 Assessment of this tolling program,
25 are numerous. But the assessment's

1 methods and conclusions are not worthy
2 of attention without attending first
3 to the impact of the proposal on the
4 rest of New York City's streets.

5 Those streets and those people
6 matter.

7 Thank you very much. My remarks
8 are concluded.

9 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

10 Our next speaker is Kyle
11 Burford, followed by our 15th speaker
12 on the list, Jose Liz.

13 Our next speaker is Jose Liz,
14 followed by Frank Hernandez.

15 Our next speaker is Frank
16 Hernandez, followed by Chris Moody.

17 Our next speaker is Chris Moody,
18 followed by Jay Rash.

19 Our next speaker is Jay Rash,
20 followed by Precious Golston.

21 Our next speaker is Precious
22 Golston, followed by our 20th speaker
23 on the list, Oscar Ortega.

24 Our next speaker is Oscar
25 Ortega, followed by Trevor Sheade.

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

8 Our next speaker is Trevor
9 Sheade, followed by Jose Del Rosario.

10 Our next speaker is Jose Del
11 Rosario, followed by Alan Pena.

12 Our next speaker is Alan Pena,
13 followed by Alexander Sanchez.

14 Our next speaker is Alexander
15 Sanchez, followed by Yoel Mateo.

16 Our next speaker is Yoel Mateo,
17 followed by Robert Friedrich.

18 Our next speaker is Robert
19 Friedrich, followed by Adrian Mercado.

20 Our next speaker is Adrian
21 Mercado, followed by Christopher
22 Reyes.

23 Our next speaker is Christopher
24 Reyes, followed by Gerald Adames.

25 Our next speaker is Gerald

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1 Adames, followed by our 30th speaker
2 on the list, Dima Teploff.

3 Our next speaker is Dima
4 Teploff, followed by Paul Wang.

5 Our next speaker is Paul Wang,
6 followed by Mitchell S. Corber.

7 Our next speaker is Mitchell S.
8 Corber followed by Sylvia Scaglione.
9 Mitchell, you may begin your remarks.

10 Mitchell, you may unmute
11 yourself and begin your remarks.

12 MITCHELL S. CORBER: Okay. I've
13 unmuted myself. I have to rejoin just
14 a minute ago. I started my video,
15 here I am. I think, first of all,
16 most of us are low income in my world.
17 I'm a senior. Of course, I already
18 get some senior discounts, okay and I
19 don't have a car. But I'm furious
20 that Manhattan and New York City is
21 burdening the outside boroughs outside
22 of this district for parking.

23 And of course, people are going
24 to avoid driving into the district
25 and, you know, like park-and-ride

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1 people, and take MTA subway or bus if
2 they can through the district, so that
3 way you'll collect less money. Okay
4 whatever it is.

5 And taxi drivers, I heard that
6 they are not going to be charged but
7 the passengers are going to take the
8 charge. I think that's so ridiculous,
9 even splitting the charge is
10 ridiculous, okay. Uber is already too
11 expensive. So let's say I got a \$9
12 ride without the charge, okay and now
13 it's going to be \$18 to get from here
14 to where I want to go.

15 I'm sure with all the detailed
16 workings of your proposal, so many
17 details, so many of recorded E-ZPass
18 and counters of people entering or
19 even close to entering the area and
20 you say you've compared it to London
21 and Stockholm.

22 Well, here is what's happening,
23 I may not be charged unless I take a
24 taxi or Uber. But what about my
25 girlfriend with a car? She's going to

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1 be freaked out and overburdened but so
2 is the whole city.

3 Thank you.

4 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

5 Our next speaker is Sylvia
6 Scaglione, followed by Bill Weber.

7 Sylvia, you may unmute yourself
8 and begin your remarks.

9 Sylvia, you're currently muted.

10 You can unmute yourself using
11 the microphone icon in the bottom left
12 of your screen.

13 Sylvia, if you're unable to
14 unmute yourself, we'll have to come
15 back to you because we can't hear your
16 remarks.

17 We'll move to our next speaker
18 and try to address these IT issues.

19 The next speaker is Bill Weber,
20 followed Lori Goodman.

21 SYLVIA SCAGLIONE: Hello.

22 MS. FLAX: All right. Bill, if
23 you could please hold we'll take
24 remarks from Sylvia.

25 Sylvia, we can hear you. Please

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1 begin your remarks.

2 Thank you for letting me speak.

3 My name is Sylvia Scaglione and I live
4 in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn, New York.

5 I'm a single, middle-income woman.

6 I'd like the committee to know that I
7 do not consent to new tax on my
8 freedom of movement.

9 My boyfriend lives in the East
10 Village of Manhattan. We take
11 frequent weekend car trips. It
12 appears that there's no off-hours for
13 this exorbitant toll.

14 If this is about reducing
15 congestion, why is there still a toll
16 on weekends, evenings and early
17 mornings? I am 60 years old and he is
18 73 and he lives on Social Security and
19 food stamps. I shouldn't have to pay
20 \$48 just to pick him up and drop him
21 up when we take a car trip.

22 My sister also lives in
23 Manhattan in Chelsea, and I have been
24 picking her up and dropping her off
25 whenever we go to Westchester to take

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1 care of our elderly parents. The days
2 are numbered when I can afford to do
3 this.

4 I don't get anything for money,
5 other than a new exorbitant toll and a
6 reduction of my freedom.

7 Is Manhattan now a shining city
8 on a hill that I can't enter without
9 paying a toll? Why are you having
10 these hearings at a time when so many
11 people who care are away or on
12 vacation? Whose pockets will be lined
13 with my money? That's it.

14 MS. FLAX: Thank you. Our next
15 speaker is Bill Weber, followed Lori
16 Goodman.

17 As a reminder, there will be a
18 brief transition after you're called
19 to speak. Please make sure that once
20 your screen updates, your camera, if
21 desired, and microphone are enabled
22 before you begin your remarks.

23 Bill Weber, followed Lori
24 Goodman.

25 Our next speaker is Lori

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1 Goodman, followed by Mukul Biswas.

2 Our next speaker is Mukul
3 Biswas, followed by Michelle M.

4 Our next speaker is Michelle M.,
5 followed by Hassan Elhelwa.

6 Our next speaker is Hassan
7 Elhelwa, followed by Imran Rabbani.

8 Our next speaker is Imran
9 Rabbani, followed by our 40th speaker
10 on the list, Norman Edwards.

11 Our next speaker is Norman
12 Edwards, followed by Susan Lee.

13 Our next speaker is Susan Lee,
14 followed by Yvette Phillips.

15 Our next speaker is Yvette
16 Phillips, followed by Daniel Pizarro.

17 Our next speaker is Daniel
18 Pizarro, followed by Guy Cowl.

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

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1 Our next speaker is Guy Crawl,
2 followed Thomas H. Donnelly.

3 Our next speaker is Thomas H.
4 Donnelly, followed by Angel Acevedo.

5 Our next speaker is Angel
6 Acevedo, followed by Stuart Keller.

7 Our next speaker is Stuart
8 Keller, followed Michel Salomon.

9 Our next speaker is Michel
10 Salomon, followed by Tashana Watson.

11 Michel, you may begin your
12 remarks.

13 MICHEL SALOMON: Hi, hello. I'm
14 just here to express already that most
15 people are already burdened when it
16 comes financially. And to go ahead
17 and charge people to come enter into
18 Manhattan, which currently I have to
19 travel through.

20 And I've seen your suggested
21 pricing and that's going to add a
22 extra couple of dollars on to tolls I
23 already have to pay just to come back
24 home and that's already through
25 because I live out here in Queens, so

1 you're pricing people.

2 Then I seen that you said if you
3 make under \$60,000, that you guys were
4 going to give a credit or some type of
5 -- I mean, let's be realistic, how
6 many people live in Manhattan that
7 make under \$60,000, that's
8 unrealistic.

9 I believe that if the MTA want
10 to do less congestion, they should
11 actually make their system safer as it
12 is, which is the subways and the bus
13 lines. The need to put more law
14 enforcement up there to maybe catch
15 toll evaders and to also clean up the
16 subways. Because the main reason why
17 people choose to want to have a
18 vehicle is because the subways have
19 gotten horrible. They've turned into
20 the wild Wild West.

21 Nobody wants to ride something
22 that's unsafe. Like the time-wise,
23 it's great because, you know, you're
24 on time. But when it comes to safety
25 and sanitation, it's not there. And

1 you guys need to figure out a way on
2 how to really address that issue
3 because now you're trying to say, we
4 got congestion because, you know, it's
5 too many people driving through and in
6 actuality, you got congestion because
7 you're not making the subways safe or
8 clean. And you're not making the
9 buses safe or friendly.

10 So I say those are the things
11 you should address first because you
12 start adding money on to the typical
13 New Yorker that needs to travel back
14 and forth just to make ends meet.

15 Once you figure those things
16 out, you shouldn't be asking for any
17 more funds. You already get multiple
18 funds from different areas where, in
19 reality, you shouldn't even be getting
20 funds from. You guys are diving into
21 the public's pockets and if you get
22 any types of tax subsidies or money
23 from the government, you definitely
24 shouldn't be asking for any money.

25 There should be a limit on what

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1 you should be reaching for or what you
2 should be striving for when it comes
3 to this situation.

4 Thank you.

5 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

6 Our next speaker is Tashana
7 Watson, followed by our 50th speaker
8 on the list, Nick Drossos.

9 Our next speaker is Nick
10 Drossos, followed by Latae Dorsey.

11 Our next speaker is Latae
12 Dorsey, followed by Noe Rodriguez
13 Carrero.

14 Our next speaker is Noe
15 Rodriguez Carrero, followed by Alvin
16 Arocho.

17 Our next speaker is Alvin
18 Arocho, followed by Tyler Hines.

19 Our next speaker is Tyler Hines,
20 followed by Steve Wang.

21 Our next speaker is Steve Wang,
22 followed by Vincent Rocco.

23 Our next speaker is Vincent
24 Rocco, followed by Kindel James.

25 Our next speaker is Kindel

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1 James, followed by Darrell G. Fulton.

2 Our next speaker is Darrell G.

3 Fulton, followed by Daniela Cetean.

4 Our next speaker is Daniela

5 Cetean, followed by Jose Pichardo.

6 Our next speaker, and 60th

7 speaker on the list, is Jose Pichardo,

8 followed by Cesar Garcia.

9 Our next speaker is Cesar

10 Garcia, followed by Marcin Gornik.

11 Our next speaker is Marcin

12 Gornik, followed by Qiana Raysor.

13 Our next speaker is Qiana Raysor

14 followed by Eunjoo Lee.

15 Our next speaker is Eunjoo Lee,

16 followed by our 65th speaker on the

17 list, Joseph Santeramo.

18 Eunjoo Lee.

19 Our next speaker is Joseph

20 Santeramo, followed by Barbara Hertel.

21 Joseph, you may unmute yourself

22 and begin your remarks.

23 JOSEPH SANTERAMO: Hi. My name

24 is Joseph Santeramo. I'm not

25 advocating for anyone, but I'm just

1 advocating for the regular citizen. I
2 reviewed the information that you
3 presented and just my thoughts on it.
4 Personally I see that you're passing
5 the tolls to truck drivers and other
6 drivers just as well, that basically,
7 you're having them pay for subway
8 infrastructure, when these individuals
9 opted out to not take subway
10 infrastructure in general. That's
11 kind of hubristic in your way.

12 Also I think the MTA is
13 overreaching in their scope of
14 basically, you're trying to like
15 segregate certain people based on
16 their socioeconomic status.

17 So if they're under \$60,000 a
18 year, you're going to give them a tax
19 credit but then you're kind of
20 overreaching where you're asking for
21 information that is pretty unethical,
22 in my opinion. You're also asking for
23 location history because you're
24 basically tracking people based on how
25 long they are going to be in the city

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1 or where they're coming from.

2 And other individuals have said
3 this as well, the subway is basically
4 like a wild west at this point. These
5 individuals opted out not to take the
6 subway because they're afraid.

7 I take the subway on a regular
8 basis. I'm a commuter and I'm a
9 driver as well so I have perspectives
10 from both sides of the aisle. And the
11 subway is no longer as safe how it
12 used to be before the pandemic and a
13 lot of this situation is because
14 there's no enforcement on there.

15 I would like to honestly ask for
16 public information passing like I
17 would invoke the FOIA Act temporarily.
18 Because I want to know where all this
19 money is going that the MTA is
20 receiving because obviously it's not
21 going into subway infrastructure. And
22 I want to know who is doing these
23 independent studies, I would like
24 to see that in public knowledge as
25 well, so people can make informed

1 decisions.

2 You're basically making
3 decisions for us and then on top of
4 that, another reason that I'm against
5 this is that, you're going to cause a
6 lot more traffic on the outer
7 boroughs. I live in Brooklyn, New
8 York, I live in Marine Park. So I'm
9 not really affected so much, but I
10 know individuals that live in Red
11 Hook, Williamsburg, even in Jersey
12 City, these individuals like you
13 stated in your findings, are going to
14 go around just to try to avoid this
15 toll just to go park on the higher
16 levels above 60th Street.

17 So basically you're eliminating
18 lower socioeconomic individuals by,
19 you know, imposing this on people that
20 don't want to be imposed upon.

21 I think that this is not it. I
22 think there should be another way of
23 doing things, but lastly for my
24 remarks, would be the health
25 implications of infrared

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1 infrastructure on individuals that are
2 walking by.

3 That's all for my remarks. I
4 conclude. Thank you.

5 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

6 Our next speaker is Barbara
7 Hertel, followed by Juan Duran.

8 BARBARA HERTEL: Hi. I'm Barbara
9 Hertel. I do support this project. I
10 think it's a good idea that the MTA
11 has a steady stream of money because
12 clearly the state and the city don't,
13 you know, they always grab stuff and
14 everything like that just to be
15 steady.

16 I also think that trucks that
17 are delivering food and are delivering
18 pharmaceuticals to different drug
19 stores and things like that, should
20 have some kind of an exemption or a
21 discount or something like that. But
22 I know that you can do all these
23 things and you'll hopefully do the
24 right thing in giving people discounts
25 who don't have a lot of money.

1 So thank you, that's all.

2 Thanks.

3 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

4 Our next speaker is our is Juan
5 Duran, followed by Steven Riedmuller.

6 Our next speaker is Steven
7 Riedmuller, followed by Ellis Ifill.

8 STEVEN RIEDMULLER: Hello, this
9 is Steven.

10 My comments are -- I'm sorry.
11 I'm working in a motorcycle right
12 now -- are to reflect the opinions of
13 several motorcyclists and many, many
14 thousands of motorcyclists who travel
15 throughout New York City. And that is
16 that.

17 We didn't hear anything in the
18 comments -- maybe I didn't read it --
19 about accommodations inviting
20 motorcyclists to replace the use of
21 cars. Again, if you look at the
22 modeled cities that you referenced
23 before, they all embrace toll-less
24 entry for motorcyclists and the
25 massive impact that that has. You

1 know, motorcycles have a fuel economy
2 between 50 and 125 miles per gallon.

3 Motorcyclists, believe it or
4 not, do not park and idle and run the
5 air conditioning. They take up about
6 one-sixth of the space of an
7 automobile when they park on the side
8 of the road. Another thing is in
9 relation to congestion and environment
10 impact, is that motorcyclists never
11 double park and that double parking
12 causes massive backups throughout in
13 the city and of course, there is
14 additional environmental impact, time
15 lost and everything else.

16 I think motorcyclists are a
17 population of commuters that either
18 have a bad reputation due to the
19 illegal motorcycle use that people see
20 on the news and the mayor running over
21 motorcycles with -- or whoever it is
22 -- running over motorcycles with a
23 bulldozer.

24 The city really has the answer
25 at its fingertips. Invite the

1 motorcyclists, do not toll
2 motorcyclists, invite them and instead
3 of crushing motorcycles that were
4 confiscated from unlicensed, uninsured
5 and illegal riders, the city had the
6 answers right there. Take those
7 motorcycles, distribute them to
8 commuters who want to learn how to be
9 a motorcyclist.

10 Take the motorcycle safety
11 course and really use those
12 motorcycles for the intended impact
13 that this entire initiative is aiming
14 for, which is improved environmental
15 situation, reduction in traffic, you
16 know, not having a massive offset into
17 these communities of color that we
18 hear about being negatively impacted.

19 And there's just so many
20 positive benefits. I really think
21 there should be so much more content
22 about the positive impact of
23 motorcyclists replacing car transport,
24 especially in the city.

25 So I hope there's an incentive

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1 for motorcyclists. I certainly hope
2 there's not a toll on motorcyclists.

3 And that concludes my comments.

4 Thank you.

5 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

6 Our next speaker is Ellis
7 Eiffel, followed by Burton Strauss.

8 Our next speaker is Burton
9 Strauss, followed by Alex Cedeno.

10 Burton, you may unmute yourself
11 and begin your remarks.

12 Burton, you're currently muted.

13 Burton, please --

14 BURTON STRAUSS: I got it.

15 MS. FLAX: You got it.

16 BURTON STRAUSS: Okay. Are we
17 set?

18 MS. FLAX: Yes. Please begin
19 your remarks.

20 BURTON STRAUSS: My name is
21 Burton Strauss Jr. I am Vice Chairman
22 of The New York City Transit Riders
23 Counsel and a member of the Permanent
24 Citizens Advisory Committee to the
25 MTA.

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1 I'm also a regular subway rider
2 and bus rider for many years. I'm
3 here to speak in support of congestion
4 pricing which will vastly improve our
5 transit, city and region, as a
6 representative from New York City
7 Transit Riders around the five
8 boroughs.

9 I know that congestion pricing
10 will be transformative. Long before
11 the Environmental Assessment was
12 released, we already knew the
13 congestion pricing would drastically
14 reduce traffic, improve air quality
15 and fund essential public transit
16 upgrades. The document proves this
17 point with nearly 90 percent of the
18 people who enter the Central Business
19 District getting there without
20 driving.

21 The benefits of congestion
22 pricing far outweigh downsides for
23 drivers. Low income and essential
24 workers overwhelming ride public
25 transit and drivers are on average

1 wealthier than transit riders. Those
2 who will choose to drive will be
3 thankful too when their car trips
4 speed up with fewer vehicles on the
5 road.

6 All transit riders have
7 experienced "delays due to significant
8 malfunctions" and the stations in need
9 of repair or inaccessible stations
10 without elevators. It's not secret
11 the work must be done before we have a
12 21st transit system New Yorkers
13 deserve.

14 The improvement riders
15 desperately need are on the table in
16 the current and future MTA capital
17 plans, but they aren't going to fund
18 themselves.

19 Congestion pricing would bring
20 in the money needed to build a more
21 reliable, resilient transit system,
22 something that our entire region and
23 country will benefit from.

24 State of good repair project
25 like repairing century-old signals and

1 fixing tracks, accessibility
2 improvements that will bring elevators
3 and escalators to almost all stations
4 and expansion projects like Phase 2 of
5 the 2nd Avenue Subway and the
6 Interborough Express, are at risk of
7 delay without congestion pricing
8 funding.

9 Our bus network, the slowest in
10 the nation, will speed up when buses
11 no longer get stuck in traffic. These
12 transit upgrades makeup a vast
13 majority of the people that are in
14 Manhattan. The main purpose of these
15 public hearings is to determine
16 whether congestion pricing will meet
17 its main goals, decreasing traffic
18 congestion, improving air quality and
19 raising one billion dollars annually
20 for the MTA's Capital Program.

21 The Environment Assessment
22 proves that congestion pricing will do
23 just that, while moving us towards a
24 healthier work place and all around
25 city.

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1 As a long-time rider, I know
2 that congestion pricing will vastly
3 improve our transit system and help
4 more people get back on their trains
5 and buses. Thank you.

6 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Alex Cedeno,
8 followed by Chris Doyle.

9 Our next speaker is Chris Doyle,
10 followed by Marisa Searle.

11 Our next speaker is Marisa
12 Searle, followed by Adrienne Leaf.

13 Our next speaker is Adrienne
14 Leaf, followed by David Dean.

15 Adrienne Leaf, you may begin
16 your remarks.

17 Adrienne, please begin your
18 remarks.

19 ADRIENNE LEAF: Good morning.
20 My name is Adrienne Leaf I live in
21 Bayside, Queens. I would like to
22 address the needs of elderly and
23 disabled New Yorkers. My area of
24 Queens would have been what was
25 considered a double fare zone. We

1 have no direct access to subways, we
2 must take a bus and usually it's to
3 the last stop either in Flushing or
4 Jamaica.

5 And many seniors cannot use the
6 subways to get into Manhattan because
7 of all the stairs and the lack of
8 elevators and working escalators.

9 Many utilize the world-class medical
10 facilities in Manhattan.

11 Access-A-Ride often involves long wait
12 times for pick up, which makes it very
13 difficult to arrive on time to your
14 medical appointment or to know what
15 time you will be finished so

16 Access-A-Ride could pick you up and
17 take you home.

18 I think you need to consider
19 reduced fees for people when carpool
20 into Manhattan, as well as elderly who
21 have city-approved handicap stickers.

22 Secondly, you seem to be focused
23 largely on the money that this is
24 going to raise for the MTA, but a
25 major focus also has to be on

1 improving environmental quality and
2 air quality in the city of New York.
3 In this regard, I think that you
4 should consider offering some sort of
5 incentive for people to carpool and to
6 purchase electric vehicles.

7 This is an area in which great
8 gain to be made on the technology and
9 will continue to do so for the next
10 decade and we should be doing
11 everything we can in New York to
12 encourage, drive people that are in a
13 situation, where they're really in the
14 outer boroughs and need help getting,
15 can't into the city and can't
16 necessarily use the subway and we
17 should encourage them and give them
18 incentives to move into hybrid and
19 environmental -- thank you.

20 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

21 Our next speaker is the 75th to
22 sign up is David Dean, followed by
23 Tiwana Lewis.

24 Our next speaker is Tiwana
25 Lewis, followed by H. Black.

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1 Our next speaker is H. Black,
2 followed by Mike Ash.

3 Our next speaker is Mike Ash,
4 followed by Philippe Haussmann.

5 Our next speaker is Philippe
6 Haussmann, followed by Stephon
7 Wallace.

8 Our next speaker is Stephon
9 Wallace, followed buy Michael Golz.

10 Our next speaker is Michael
11 Golz, followed Katya Willard.

12 Our next speaker is Katya
13 Willard, followed by Bhairavi Desai.

14 KATYA WILLARD: My name is Katya
15 Willard. I'm a resident of Brooklyn,
16 New York. I'm here to speak in favor
17 of everything about congestion
18 pricing.

19 I'm very excited to see this
20 happening in New York. I get around
21 New York in many ways, but mostly by
22 bus and by subway. I'm very excited
23 to see improvements to that service
24 that this plan -- the money that this
25 plan will raise will help improve

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1 service for those things that are very
2 important to me for getting around.

3 I want to point out that only
4 two percent of outer borough New
5 Yorkers in poverty drive into the
6 congestion pricing zone in Manhattan
7 for work. And we know that a huge
8 number of those people are not in cars
9 because they are very expensive. They
10 are on the bus, they are on the subway
11 with me, and we owe them, I include
12 myself in that, a better New York and
13 a lot of that is provided by better
14 public transportation service.

15 There is not enough space in New
16 York for everyone to drive. Getting
17 improvements to the subway that this
18 plan will raise will encourage those
19 people in vehicles to get on the bus,
20 or to get on the subway, which are
21 much more efficient for moving people
22 around in this small space that we
23 have.

24 The final thing that I would
25 like to add, I'm very excited to see

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1 the newly-added plan, Plan G, which
2 creates, I believe, the same toll for
3 all differently-sized vehicles and
4 reduces the impact of extra buses on
5 the Cross Bronx Expressway and I
6 believe the BQE as well. I think
7 that's a great plan, I would
8 personally vote in favor of Plan G, if
9 that's the one that it is. I'm very
10 excited to see that option.

11 And the only other thing I would
12 add, I have seen what they've done in
13 London and Stockholm, I've read about
14 it from the amazing documentation that
15 the DOT put out. And one thing I'd
16 like to point out that I thought was
17 great and what's been done, for
18 example, in London is that they charge
19 based on the size of the vehicle as
20 well.

21 I thought the person who spoke
22 about motorcycles was right on point,
23 I would hate if I was on a motorcycle
24 to pay the same as somebody in a
25 Cadillac Escalade. Those things have

1 different dangers to pedestrians and
2 cyclists, they take up different
3 amounts of space. And what we've seen
4 in London, which you guys documented,
5 is that over time people have
6 purchased smaller vehicles in order to
7 pay lower tolls. I thought this was
8 great, I would love to that
9 implemented here as well.

10 Thank you so much for your time.
11 I'm very excited about this, and I
12 also want to say I thought the
13 presentation was really good too, so
14 thank you.

15 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

16 The next speaker is Bhairavi
17 Desai, followed by Jason Anthony.

18 Our next speaker is Jason
19 Anthony, followed by David Zelman.

20 Our next speaker is David
21 Zelman, followed by Abram Morris.

22 Our next speaker is Abram
23 Morris, followed by Chloe Chen.

24 Our next speaker is Chloe Chen,
25 followed by Kuber Sancho-Persad.

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1 CHLOE CHEN: Good morning. My
2 name is Chloe Chen and I'm a policy
3 internet NYLPI, New York Lawyers for
4 the Public Interest, which is a
5 non-profit civil rights organization.

6 NYLPI strongly supports
7 congestion pricing. However, we would
8 like to bring attention to some
9 environmental justice and disability
10 justice concerns of the MTA's
11 proposal.

12 First, the report makes clear
13 that the tolling scenarios with more
14 exemptions will lead to increased
15 traffic on the Cross Bronx Expressway.
16 The deployment of electric buses along
17 the Cross Bronx Expressway is a step
18 in the right direction but doesn't
19 directly mitigate the effect of
20 increased truck traffic and emissions.
21 No environmental justice community
22 should be exposed to increased traffic
23 and emissions.

24 The MTA must further address
25 these impacts and ensure that the

1 tolling program complies with TLC PA
2 (7)(3), which does not allow for any
3 action that disproportionately burdens
4 disadvantaged communities such as
5 those in the Bronx.

6 Second, the back-end tax credit
7 to low-income minority drivers who
8 live in the Central Business District
9 is unworkable. Such drivers can't
10 afford thousands of dollars of tolls
11 upfront and should not be responsible
12 for all the work it takes to apply for
13 and get a tax credit.

14 The MTA must mitigate the
15 impacts on low-income minority drivers
16 by issuing non-revenue generating
17 E-ZPass tags or another mechanism that
18 ensures they do not have to pay the
19 tolls upfront.

20 Third, while NYLPI appreciates
21 the MTA's efforts to minimize adverse
22 effects on persons with disabilities
23 by exempting certain qualifying
24 vehicles from the congestion pricing
25 toll, the exemption must be expanded

1 to all vehicles making Access-A-Ride
2 trips, including taxis and broker
3 vehicles. And the MTA must establish
4 and communicate a specific mechanism
5 for identifying and exempting those
6 vehicles, such as issuing non-revenue
7 generating E-ZPass tags that may only
8 be utilized when the driver is
9 undertaking an Access-A-Ride trip.

10 Four, the proposed exemptions do
11 not include wheelchair accessible
12 for-hire vehicles or wheelchair
13 accessible taxis that are not being
14 used as part of the Access-A-Ride
15 program. This mean the cost of the
16 toll would likely fall on a disabled
17 rider. Under no circumstances should
18 the toll fall on persons with
19 disabilities who are already
20 disadvantaged by the systemically
21 inaccessible public transit system and
22 who are proportionately indigent.

23 The MTA must therefore establish
24 an exemption for all wheelchair
25 accessible taxis and for-hire

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1 vehicles. Not only would this
2 alleviate the burden on disabled
3 riders, but it would incentivize a
4 greater supply of wheelchair
5 accessible vehicles which are sorely
6 needed. Currently, only roughly three
7 percent of for-hire vehicles are
8 accessible, and fewer than 50 percent
9 of yellow cabs are accessible.

10 NYLPI committed to creating a
11 more equitable and sustainable city.
12 While we support the MTA's efforts to
13 reduce pollution and congestion, the
14 program must be implemented in a way
15 that doesn't increase burdens on
16 environmental justice and disability
17 justice communities. We would be
18 happy to work with you to that end.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

21 Our next speaker is Kuber
22 Sancho-Persad, followed by Wilden
23 Dannenberg.

24 KUBER SANCHO-PERSAD: Hello?

25 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.

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1 KUBER SANCHO-PERSAD: My name is
2 Kuber Sancho-Persad. I'm a taxi
3 driver for New York City for last
4 seven years. My dad was a taxi driver
5 for the last 30 years, and passed away
6 in 2017.

7 I just have some things to say
8 about the congestion pricing and about
9 the subway. It's kind of sad that
10 last night I had a passenger in my cab
11 that was of Asian descent and I had to
12 warn her to be careful to take the
13 subway, I actually advise all my
14 passengers to take the subway to go
15 around the city, but if the safety of
16 the subway is not well so they end up
17 having to take taxis or Ubers or even
18 try to avoid the subway.

19 But I think the congestion
20 pricing should exempt taxis because we
21 already have, as the other panelists
22 said before me, that we already have
23 money to -- we have to buy wheelchair
24 vehicles. A lot of the yellow cabs
25 are not 50 percent yellow --

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1 wheelchair vehicles, a lot of us have
2 to buy right now.

3 Because of our overwhelming
4 debt, a lot of us have the cars -- our
5 medallions in storage, we haven't been
6 able to buy our vehicles because they
7 are about \$70,000 initial cost. And
8 then after we not talking about paying
9 for hack up tax stamps. All these
10 kinds of things. You know, we -- the
11 yellow cab has always been paying for
12 MTA's riders.

13 Since 2009, we've been paying a
14 50-cent surcharge. Now I've been
15 paying since 2014. And then after
16 that, in 2019, you guys implemented a
17 2.50 surcharge on all of our customers
18 and we've been paying that. And it's
19 been a double toll for people who come
20 in through the tunnel, people who come
21 in through -- come in through from the
22 airport. And they just come and they
23 ask me what is this congestion fee, I
24 have to tell them it's just a tax for
25 the MTA. Now adding this other

1 congestion fee, how do I explain this
2 to the passengers and customers,
3 they're going to ask me why am I
4 charging two congestion fees.

5 Your congestion price, yes, it
6 models London, but it doesn't model
7 that London exempts the black cars
8 which are equivalent to what the
9 yellow cab and Ubers are. So if you
10 could please look into seeing if you
11 could exempt the yellow cabs and the
12 Uber cars because it would add a lot
13 of strain on us. And it's really
14 insulting that you guys think that
15 waiving a 70-dollar MTA fee to become
16 a bus driver is fair enough that we're
17 going to loss our jobs.

18 Okay. Thank you.

19 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Wilden
21 Dannenberg, followed by the 90th
22 person to sign up, Gerard Ferrer.

23 WILDEN DANNENBERG: Good
24 morning. My name is Wilden Dannenberg
25 and I am a resident of the Bronx and

1 I'm disabled.

2 There are countless reasons of
3 why I am in support of the tolling
4 program, but I'll speak to the one
5 that affects my daily life the most,
6 which is my disability. I hear so
7 often from people claiming to advocate
8 for all disabled people that we will
9 shoulder an unjust burden under this
10 plan. And frankly, I disagree.

11 This plan may final be the first
12 step to bringing some sort of equity
13 to public transit that New York City
14 has been missing since private
15 vehicles have been allowed to dominate
16 our city streets. Not all
17 disabilities look and act alike, and
18 my vision impairment prevents me from
19 driving a car. I must live in a city
20 with good public transit to be a
21 functioning and independent member of
22 the society.

23 Congestion pricing will make my
24 life better. I will be safer crossing
25 streets with few cars, I will breathe

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1 easier too. I'll benefit from faster
2 bus speeds with fewer cars on the road
3 and better headways on buses and
4 trains with money those cars are
5 paying. To have a public transit
6 system that can compete with the
7 travel times of private vehicles,
8 would bring much more equity to a
9 transportation system that still
10 continues to leave many disabled
11 people behind.

12 Having the option of more
13 frequent level boarding buses and
14 safer streets and sidewalks instead of
15 requiring an incredibly expensive
16 private vehicle or putting your trust
17 in a cab driver or a company that
18 doesn't care about you, will make our
19 city better for disabled people.

20 Thanks for your time.

21 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

22 Our next speaker is Gerard
23 Ferrer, followed by Vinod Malhotra.

24 Our next speaker is Vinod
25 Malhotra, followed by Bryan Byrne.

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1 VINOD MALHOTRA: Hello.

2 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can hear
3 you. Please proceed.

4 VINOD MALHOTRA: Hello, sir.
5 Hello, good morning all tolling and
6 MTA officers. My name Vinod Malhotra.
7 I'm giving service to the MTA and New
8 York since 1962 and I'm doing this
9 since 1993.

10 Since 2009, I'm collecting 50
11 cents and since 2019, I collect 2.50.
12 I must collect for MTA like forty
13 thousand since today. And
14 approximately not on this I pay
15 commission for my vendors on this
16 almost \$3,000 from my pocket.

17 So all now since 2012, apps are
18 here, I have very, very difficult time
19 to survive. Even I have filed for
20 bankruptcy in 2021. And thanks to Mr.
21 Chuck Schumer and -- provide this debt
22 forgiveness city have agree to
23 reconstruct my loan at \$200,000. So
24 then I change my mind. I'm able to
25 withdraw my bankruptcy.

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1 Thanks God. Now, why city want
2 toll on yellow taxis, anything below
3 60th Street. I don't know how much it
4 can be. I can't afford any other
5 cent, one dollar add in my expense. I
6 have three kids, all in college and I
7 have -- I have also my daughter's
8 marriage very soon. So again, I beg
9 from you don't toll me, yellow taxi
10 below 60th Street.

11 If this really happen, you may
12 inviting us to resume the suicide
13 again, which is already the ninth
14 driver to commit suicide. So my
15 humble task for you, all of you and I
16 want to continue service to New
17 Yorker. I be made loss job if you
18 tolling us.

19 So please consider no toll on
20 taxi drivers. So we are immigrants,
21 that's true. But we're human beings
22 too, please think twice tolling our
23 yellow taxis. So we can't afford --
24 once it start, I will be out of my
25 job.

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1 Thank you so much. Thank you,
2 panelists.

3 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

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

11 Our next speaker is Bryan Byrne,
12 followed by Thaddeus Alexandria, Jr.

13 Our next speaker is Thaddeus
14 Alexandria, Jr., followed by Lesley
15 Halliday.

16 Our next speaker is Lesley
17 Halliday, followed by Paoyi Chang.

18 Our next speaker is Paoyi Chang,
19 followed by Cristian Munoz.

20 Our next speaker is Cristian
21 Munoz, followed by Patrick Johnson.

22 Our next speaker is Patrick
23 Johnson, followed by Denise Williams.

24 PATRICK JOHNSON: Good morning.
25 I'm here. Can you hear me?

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1 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.

2 PATRICK JOHNSON: Right. I'm
3 back, like I said.

4 Here I am flying the American
5 flag upside down. America is dire
6 distress, especially New York State.
7 We have a no-show president who spends
8 more time at the beach than in office.
9 We have a governor by default, and
10 previously had to deal with a governor
11 who was a corrupt womanizer who had to
12 resign in shame. Since January 2021,
13 the United States of America has
14 committed 13.5 billion dollars to
15 security assistance For Ukraine. The
16 MTA said they only need one billion to
17 secure a 15 billion-dollar capital
18 loan. What is going on in this
19 country?

20 Financial woes have made suicide
21 rates go up in the whole country. It
22 has turned regular people to resort to
23 criminal acts. The real criminals are
24 taking things a step further more and
25 more with little to no penalty thanks

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1 to bail reform.

2 All workforces in the social
3 services, hospitals, schools, et
4 cetera, are understaffed and
5 underpaid. And still, the MTA wants
6 to pillage your income without a vote
7 from the general public. The Biden
8 administration just gave students debt
9 relief; how does that help the
10 nurse/social service worker who has to
11 go into the CBD for 4 p.m. or 5 p.m.
12 and work until 3:00 or 4 a.m., and
13 then they get out of work at 3:00 or 4
14 a.m. and get to take minimal service
15 where crime is at a all-time high in
16 the middle of the night, how does that
17 help the people of the outer boroughs
18 when we're struggling out here
19 already?

20 I hear people talking about the
21 London congestion pricing. Go read
22 the news in London right now. The
23 transit drivers in London are on
24 strike right now at this very moment.
25 Congestion pricing has been there for

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1 years, okay, think of that. Some
2 people say they need the congestion
3 pricing to start a new subway projects
4 and bus lines. How did they build a
5 2nd Avenue line before congestion
6 pricing? How did New York City find
7 hundreds of millions of dollars to
8 start a brand new East River fast
9 ferry service when it's been known
10 that taxpayers are subsidizing these
11 people for multiple dollars on every
12 ride? So taxpayers are already paying
13 for this fast ferry service when the
14 money should have went to what we
15 already have, subways and buses.

16 I'm going to talk about the next
17 few topics so you guys can do some
18 research before I come to the next few
19 meetings. At the next hearing I'm
20 going to discuss the triple cantilever
21 section of the BQE and how New York
22 State DOT and New York City DOT
23 dropped the ball on the cantilever
24 section of the BQE. Look at the
25 congestion in the area, all those

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1 people, all those asthma rates, where
2 is the data on that, there's none.

3 I'm going to talk about -- I
4 already talked about the fast ferry
5 dropping -- again. I'm going to talk
6 about distracted driving. How is New
7 York City DOT going to have its -- let
8 people drive with cell phones on their
9 windshields, like this, right in front
10 of their face and handicap tags and
11 masks and air fresheners? I'll talk
12 visions here as the next topic.

13 Thanks so much. Bye.

14 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

15 Our next speaker is Denise
16 Williams, followed by Constance
17 Stellas.

18 Our next speaker is Constance
19 Stellas, followed by Sudeep Uprety.

20 CONSTANCE STELLAS: Hello.

21 Constance Stellas here.

22 First of all, I'm very touched
23 and moved by the articulate and
24 poignant nature of most of the
25 comments. It gives me a lot of faith

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1 in humanity. However, I am adamantly
2 against no exemptions and mostly
3 against congestion pricing.

4 I live in Midtown, I mean
5 Midtown, 42nd Street. I'm part of the
6 Manhattan Plaza artistic community,
7 which has given so much to the city
8 and allows people of nominal income to
9 thrive and participate in the city. I
10 have a car, a 2006 Toyota, and it is
11 the only way for me to get around.

12 I'm afraid to take the subway, I just
13 can't manage it, and the only reason I
14 have a car is because I can scoot
15 around, do what I have to do, and also
16 get out of the city periodically.

17 In addition to my personal idea
18 that this is a bad idea, there are no
19 residents on your committee to talk
20 about what this actually will
21 impact -- how this will actually
22 impact people. People are talking
23 about the London system or the
24 Stockholm system, well, in both of
25 those countries, the subway is viable

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1 and extremely widespread and even
2 pleasant and clean, which it is not
3 right now.

4 So I think that congestion
5 pricing is a red herring in a mystery
6 novel. It's not the culprit, it's
7 where we kind of think we might
8 improve things. But I do not believe
9 it will be improved, and all of the
10 money that will be gained by these
11 tolls will not solve the problem.

12 For me personally, I can't go
13 out of my parking space and get on
14 42nd Street within the zone without
15 being charged a toll. It would be
16 extremely difficult, if not
17 impossible, to move completely. So
18 I'm with the taxi cab drivers and
19 everyone else who will suffer
20 enormously from this congestion
21 pricing. And I also believe that the
22 residential parking permits are a
23 fabulous idea. So clearly, everything
24 has to be rethought and -- well,
25 that's it. That's all I have to say.

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1 Thank you.

2 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

3 Our next speaker, the 100th
4 person to sign up, is Sudeep Uprety,
5 followed by Fatima Ahmad.

6 SUDEEP UPRETY: Hello.

7 MR. WOJNAR: Hello. We can hear
8 you.

9 UDEEP UPRETY: Good morning. My
10 name is Sudeep Uprety. I've been
11 driving yellow cab and FHV vehicles
12 since 2009. And I'm joining this
13 meeting against the congestion
14 surcharge pricing.

15 During the pandemic, TLC
16 drivers, including taxi and FHV was
17 considered essential drivers and
18 public transporters who helped New
19 York City by delivering essential
20 items to the residents of New York
21 City. Now MTA wants to charge also
22 toll to enter Midtown. MTA has
23 constantly raised price since 2009.
24 We have been -- we are being charged
25 2.75 on surcharge and 2.50 on the

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1 airport surcharge.

2 Yet, MTA never have able to
3 provide a good and safe public
4 transportation to New Yorkers. You go
5 to a subway system underground, it's
6 dirty, it's disgusting, crime rates
7 are high, there are criminals roaming
8 around. How can MTA provide a safe
9 environment for those public
10 transportation people?

11 MTA says like if we implement
12 the congestion surcharge and if the
13 TLC drivers are out of their job, they
14 will provide them a basic training on
15 bus, being a bus driver. How many
16 people will get a chance to be a bus
17 driver since half of the people --
18 majority of the people driving yellow
19 cabs are an immigrant. MTA isn't
20 incompetent, they always take an
21 opportunity to milk drivers like us,
22 like they had been doing that since --
23 but their subway system is garbage.

24 MTA officials, they are inside
25 the office making like \$300,000

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1 annually and they want to charge
2 middle-class immigrants a surcharge
3 again. That is wrong. And imagine
4 like what happens if the delivery
5 drivers, FHV drivers, or taxi drivers,
6 they stop giving a service in
7 Manhattan.

8 Thank you. Thank you a lot. We
9 cannot afford this congestion
10 surcharge pricing. Thank you.

11 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker is Fatima
13 Ahmad, followed by Jose Paulino.

14 Our next speaker is Jose
15 Paulino, followed by Viridiana Choy.

16 The next speaker is Viridiana
17 Choy, followed by Sara Mahmoud.

18 VIRIDIANA CHOY: My name is
19 Viridiana Choy, I'm a Hispanic woman
20 and an actual resident of Manhattan.
21 I want to say thank you for opening
22 these meetings. And also, please
23 listen to the people, please listen to
24 the majority. It's important to
25 listen all the voices and I am deeply

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1 moved by this decision of charging the
2 working people of New York for
3 tolling, it's already expensive.

4 As a low-income family, I'm part
5 of it, I already know, I try not to
6 drive into the district, the business
7 district in Manhattan because it's
8 already expensive, it's already
9 unaffordable. It's not working.

10 Several times in the subway, I'm
11 running away from trains who have like
12 issues, bums, violence, and homeless.
13 Please, seeking solutions are deeply
14 important for this city. Just
15 thinking about charging -- this goes
16 for tolling. Just crossing the bridge
17 is affecting the low-income class that
18 we are the majority. Allowing the
19 high-income class to just drive into
20 these streets is just increasing the
21 cost for all the families who live in
22 the city.

23 I live Upper Manhattan, it's
24 already expensive. We're trying not
25 to drive several times, parking -- and

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1 plus the services in the subway, I've
2 been hearing this same message for
3 years, it will be improvements in the
4 subway, it need update. I don't see
5 any improvements. I wish this money
6 that we pay from our jobs, from our
7 taxes, it's really money invested in
8 the trains. I've been several times
9 using the A, E, C trains and it's
10 miserable being in the most important
11 city around the world and seeing these
12 service.

13 Please listen to the
14 working-class, we're a majority that
15 are against these charges because it's
16 definitely going to rise the prices
17 up. We're already living in an era of
18 inflation. For food or gas, it's
19 already up. And then we have to deal
20 with another tax or another
21 cost-grossing -- the city that we live
22 on is unaffordable.

23 My last message is this, please
24 listen to majority in this meeting and
25 the next public hearing. It's

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1 important we use the process, but
2 please follow what is the need for the
3 well-being of this city and the
4 working-class that we are in New York
5 City.

6 Thank you. Gracias.

7 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

8 Our next speaker is Sara
9 Mahmoud, followed by Felicia
10 Park-Rogers.

11 Our next speaker is Felicia
12 Park-Rogers, followed by Anthony Tuck.

13 FELICIA PARK-ROGERS: Good
14 morning. My name is Felicia
15 Park-Rogers, or afternoon now, and I
16 and with the regional transit advocacy
17 and policy organization Tri-State
18 Transportation Campaign, and today I
19 join with those in support of
20 congestion pricing.

21 Congestion pricing will lead to
22 safer more reliable efficient and
23 accessible public transportation
24 cleaner air, less traffic congestion
25 and safer roads. It is a tried and

1 true policy internationally whose time
2 has come for the United States.

3 For successful implementation in
4 New York City, it is absolutely
5 imperative for the USDOT, the state
6 and the city to support the program's
7 implementation.

8 Congestion pricing is expected
9 to generate 15 billion dollars for the
10 MTA Capital Program to improve
11 long-standing issues plaguing our
12 public transit systems, including
13 upgrading signalization and increasing
14 accessibility. It will also lead to a
15 better functioning and more pleasant
16 streetscape for the residents and
17 workers of Lower Manhattan.

18 The Environmental Assessment
19 lists seven potential tolling
20 scenarios to investigate to potential
21 impacts. Almost all tolling scenarios
22 achieve the necessary funding goal.
23 Tolling the Manhattan CBD will lead to
24 reduced traffic entering the area with
25 the net benefit and congestion

1 reduction for the region. Daily truck
2 traffic in Manhattan's core would
3 decline, based on the scenarios,
4 anywhere from 21 to 81 percent,
5 meaning thousands of trucks will no
6 longer drive through Manhattan. The
7 diversion of these trucks have been
8 accounted for through truck-reduction
9 programs outlined in the EA.

10 Discounts, crossing credits and
11 exemptions will lead to higher toll
12 rates. If more exemptions are
13 allowed, higher toll rates will still
14 lead to more traffic reduction in the
15 Manhattan CBD, but it will also lead
16 to increased traffic diversions,
17 including increases along the Cross
18 Bronx and Staten Island Expressway.

19 Depending on the scenario,
20 potential adverse impacts turn up
21 along both of those roadways. The MTA
22 city and state will need to mitigate
23 these impacts as it creates the final
24 program. This is eminently doable and
25 should not become a reason to stop

1 congestion pricing.

2 The MTA's current transition
3 towards electrifying its fleet through
4 deploying zero emission buses will
5 reduce pollutant emissions in
6 neighborhoods traditionally
7 underserved and those most affected by
8 poor air quality and climate changes,
9 such as the South Bronx.

10 The MTA has developed a new
11 environmental justice scoring
12 framework that will help actively
13 conceptualize and incorporate the
14 electrification deployment phasing
15 process. Later this year when
16 electric buses are received in the
17 MTA's next major procurement of
18 battery electric buses, the MTA will
19 prioritize Kingsbridge depot and Gun
20 Hill depot, both in affected areas.

21 Additionally, the state should
22 prioritize areas in the South Bronx
23 and Staten Island in its electric
24 vehicle charging infrastructure roll
25 out. The analysis and evaluation of

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1 the game-changing capping of Cross
2 Bronx should be set up and prioritized
3 in the state's applications for IIJA
4 funding.

5 In conclusion, I fully support
6 congestion pricing as does Tri-State
7 Transportation Campaign. Thank you.

8 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

9 Our next speaker is Anthony
10 Tuck, followed by Janice Gardner.

11 Our next speaker is Janice
12 Gardner, followed by Julie Tighe.

13 Our next speaker is Julie Tighe,
14 followed by Tamara Thomas.

15 Our next speaker is Tamara
16 Thomas, followed by our 110th sign up,
17 Scott Sloat.

18 Tamara, are you --

19 TAMARA THOMAS: Yup. Here I am,
20 here I am. This is a little hard to
21 figure out, but I'm here.

22 First of all, I'm so glad that
23 some people who obviously are not
24 lifelong New Yorkers are so optimistic
25 about the MTA and their use the funds.

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1 But I'm going to say my piece here.

2 I am Tamara Thomas, I am from
3 Brooklyn, and I am dismayed and
4 disappointed to be here on a Saturday
5 asking the MTA to not fleece
6 middle-income people like myself so
7 that you can line your coffers while
8 helping Manhattanites create urban
9 segregation. Let's call it what it
10 is. You can hide beyond all the
11 environmental reports you like, but
12 the truth is Manhattan has more trees
13 per square mile than any other
14 borough.

15 If your environmentalists were
16 so concerned about clean air, why are
17 we adding this toll to the Cross Bronx
18 Expressway that's been choking the
19 local residents for decades? Why,
20 because the area is not inhabited by
21 resourced white people, that's why.

22 This proposal will force me to
23 pay over \$50 in tolls just to see my
24 breast oncologist and my other
25 doctors. I'm already paying \$23 to

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1 come from Brooklyn into Manhattan, \$33
2 when I factor in metered parking. No
3 other state would add this kind of
4 burden to their residents because of
5 mismanagement.

6 The MTA is a bottomless pit, for
7 those who don't know, that never seems
8 to be able to make good on the money
9 that they do get in this
10 administration, and this is
11 administration after administration.
12 Speaking of mismanagement, how are you
13 going to enforce these fees on drivers
14 with fake license plates, or have you
15 built these into the plan to exclude
16 them by default?

17 I'm a tax-paying New York City
18 resident, why can't people like me get
19 placards, get resident permits? Where
20 is your carve-out for electric
21 vehicles, my husband has an electric
22 vehicle, they're not polluting the
23 streets.

24 Will some of this money improve
25 outer borough transit, where crime is

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1 rampant and MTA operators get
2 assaulted on a regular basis for
3 enforcing basic rules of conduct like
4 not smoking on the bus. Making outer
5 borough residents choose between
6 driving their families safely to
7 appointments or face dangerous subway
8 rides with our children. Shame on
9 you. Shame on all of you.

10 I'm done.

11 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker is Scott Sloat,
13 followed by Mary Anne McElroy.

14 Our next speaker is Mary Anne
15 McElroy, followed by Cerise Ann.

16 Our next speaker is Cerise Ann,
17 followed by Meilyn Espinosa.

18 The next speaker is Meilyn
19 Espinosa, followed by Robert Fatakhov.

20 Our next speaker is Robert
21 Fatakhov, followed by Amel Halper.

22 Our next speaker is Amel Halper,
23 followed by Ivan Ventura.

24 Our next speaker is Ivan
25 Ventura, followed by Shmuel Avital.

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1 Our next speaker is Shmuel
2 Avital, followed by Ali Madu.

3 Our next speaker is Ali Madu,
4 followed by Hannah Kushner.

5 Our next speaker is Hannah
6 Kushner, followed by Glen Bolofsky.

7 Hannah Kushner.

8 Okay. Our next speaker is
9 Robert Fatakhov, followed by Glen
10 Bolofsky.

11 ROBERT FATAKHOV: Hi, guys.

12 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.
13 Go ahead.

14 ROBERT FATAKHOV: Okay. My name
15 is Robert Fatakhov. You mispronounced
16 my last name a little bit.

17 So I'm speaking strongly against
18 the program, the CBD Tolling Program,
19 for several reasons. Number one
20 reason, that's unfair burden on people
21 entering and leaving the city. The
22 city has a skyrocketing garage price,
23 you cannot park anywhere in the
24 daytime. Parking is minimum \$50 per
25 day, some places approaching \$100 per

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1 day. This CBD program will toll us
2 heavier.

3 I go to my doctor appointment, I
4 had foot surgery less than a year ago,
5 my doctor's in Midtown Manhattan,
6 leaving -- coming into the city will
7 cost me over \$100. I'm a middle-class
8 person who really cannot afford that.

9 What embarrasses me about the
10 whole situation is that the MTA just
11 went through with this whole thing
12 without really asking people's
13 opinions, not running any official
14 surveys, just pretty much doing what
15 they want.

16 I've heard the story about the
17 subway systems and the buses getting
18 improved, you know, for years. I've
19 been a New York resident for 30 years.
20 I've seen zero improvement. In fact,
21 I see deterioration only. you know,
22 when you go to a subway, you hear
23 every day about people shooting each
24 other, stabbing. There's no security,
25 there's no safety, half of MTA's

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1 cameras are not working. Yet, every
2 year, the fee for riding the subway
3 increases.

4 We're paying the MTA tax through
5 our New York City income tax. We have
6 the highest income taxes in the
7 nation. We have the worst roads,
8 absolutely horrendous roads, in the
9 entire nation, in the entire country.
10 I have to get like my tires replaced,
11 my wheels replaced annually, spend a
12 lot of money on that. Nobody
13 addresses that.

14 In fact, when you're crossing
15 the Midtown Tunnel and you're coming
16 out on 34th and 35th Streets, there's
17 like a huge Con Edison gas chamber and
18 you start hitting potholes. And then,
19 you know, in your report, it said all
20 of the buses were slowed down since, I
21 think 2020 by 19 percent, the cars
22 slowed down. Well, fix the roads so
23 people don't have to slow down. It's
24 absolutely a shame that the city with
25 the highest taxes have such horrible

1 roads. Like honestly, Manhattan has
2 the worst roads and then you talk
3 about the traffic slowing down. How
4 are the tolls going to fix that, I
5 just don't get it.

6 Also, you're saying the air is
7 going to be cleaner, you know, there's
8 going to be less traffic. Well, you
9 have bike lanes all over the city. We
10 used to have two or three-lane roads
11 and there's increasing cars growing
12 every year. And yet, you're like
13 putting more bike lanes by creating
14 more traffic around the city and not
15 caring about that, but you all of a
16 sudden care about the air by reducing
17 congestion and just putting an unfair
18 toll on all the people who really,
19 really work hard for the money.

20 I just think it's unfair. I
21 don't think it should go through on
22 any level. And plus, that will
23 increase our prices of delivery trucks
24 and stuff like that, everything will
25 go up besides the heavy inflation that

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1 we're experiencing while retaining the
2 same we have.

3 Thank you.

4 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

5 Our next speaker is Glen
6 Bolofsky, followed by Josh Gottheimer.

7 Our next speaker is Josh
8 Gottheimer, followed by Laura
9 Humphrey.

10 Our next speaker is Laura
11 Humphrey followed by Jose Taveras.

12 LAURA HUMPHREY: Hello. This is
13 Laura Humphrey. Can you hear me?

14 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.
15 Please proceed.

16 LAURA HUMPHREY: Okay. Great.

17 So I wanted -- sorry. I wanted
18 to voice my support for congestion
19 pricing. As a life-long New Yorker,
20 all of us know that the MTA is the
21 heart of the city. Without our public
22 transit, the city comes to a grinding
23 halt. But that heart of the city is
24 on life support, and we all know it.
25 I mean, a lot of people brought up

1 safety concerns, but the accessibility
2 issues have been there always.

3 The system is basically
4 crumbling before our eyes, and it is a
5 terrible shame. If this can be part
6 of the solution, then I'm all for it.
7 At the same time, I'd like the MTA to
8 recognize and listen to the concerns
9 that have been brought up. And I
10 think this is really in the transition
11 period.

12 Money will be flowing in through
13 this, but in the meantime, the voices
14 of yellow cab drivers, of essential
15 workers, people with real
16 accessibility concerns, and
17 environmental justice communities need
18 to be heard and accounted for as we
19 hopefully get to a new place in terms
20 of assessable just transit system.

21 I also would encourage in this
22 transition period for the MTA to
23 revision, I guess, its costs.
24 Especially its cost for construction.
25 Hopefully hand-in-hand with all this

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1 money coming in, there's going to be
2 accessibility improvements in the
3 subways, expanded subway services,
4 standard service.

5 But right now, as you all know,
6 we're double or more our counterpart
7 cities all around the world in terms
8 of operating costs and construction
9 costs; and that engenders a lot of
10 distrust that I think you're hearing a
11 lot today. I know that we can fix
12 this, other cities have fixed this,
13 and I encourage the MTA to be
14 transparent in its process of doing
15 so.

16 Thank you very much.

17 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker is Jose
19 Taveras, followed by Manirul Islam.

20 JOSE TAVERAS: Hello?

21 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can hear
22 you.

23 JOSE TAVERAS: I'm Jose Taveras.
24 I'm a TLC driver in the city for a
25 long, long time. I just want to say

1 that the MTA really have mismanaged
2 their budget, and I don't understand
3 why, for a long time. They seem to
4 want to devour the car service
5 industry once and for all.

6 As a TLC driver, I provide for
7 my family. This is the only way that
8 I can do it in New York City. This
9 toll increase would minimize the
10 provision to my family. I would like
11 to know how much had the MTA collected
12 from the surcharge of \$2.75 below 96th
13 Street since it went into effect and
14 what they have implemented with this
15 budget. That's a lot of money.

16 We pick up below 96th Street and
17 that's 2.75. We drop off below 96th
18 Street, that's 2.75. We drop off at
19 the airport, that's 2.75 extra. We
20 pick up at the airport, that's 2.75
21 extra. And now they come in with this
22 toll increase, which in some scenario,
23 the FHV vehicle, they not equal to the
24 yellow taxi.

25 Another comment is to Governor

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1 Hochul, I cannot support your
2 candidacy if you're trying to minimize
3 the provision for my family. So
4 please look in some of scenario, and
5 some of scenario is not fair to the
6 FHV vehicle compared to the yellow
7 taxis. We're being penalized for the
8 \$23 compared to them.

9 That's all. Thank you.

10 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

11 Our next speaker is Manirul
12 Islam, followed by Stephanie Peterson.

13 Our next speaker is Stephanie
14 Peterson, followed by John Banzer.

15 The next speaker is John Banzer,
16 followed by Vicki Madden.

17 Our next speaker is Vicki
18 Madden, followed by Morgan Adzei.

19 The next speaker is Morgan
20 Adzei, followed by E.K.M. Watson.

21 The next speaker is E.K.M.
22 Watson, followed by Erich Makarov.

23 E.K.M. WATSON: Hello?

24 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.

25 E.K.M. WATSON: Hi. My name is

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1 Emma and I am a recent New York City
2 resident. I live on the border of
3 Bushwick and Ridgewood. I do have a
4 personal vehicle, but I exclusively
5 use it to commute from the Bronx to
6 Brooklyn, so the increased traffic on
7 the Cross Bronx Expressway would like
8 definitely affect me.

9 However, I'm mostly concerned
10 with extra charges for the taxis
11 because that charge is going to fall
12 onto the customer. Currently, if I
13 were to take a taxi or an Uber, Lyft
14 from the proposed area to be tolled to
15 where I live, it would be anywhere
16 from 60 to \$80, and that's before
17 tipping.

18 So some of these tolls are up to
19 \$50, that would be like over \$100 just
20 to get to and from Manhattan, and I
21 would much prefer taking a taxi when
22 it comes to the early morning hours,
23 like 1 a.m., 2 a.m., verses taking the
24 subway because of increase in crime
25 that happens during that hour. As a

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1 woman, I have to think of the worse
2 case scenario for that kind of stuff.

3 Another point that concerns me
4 is there are a lot of drivers that
5 have temporary plates that have
6 expired, they're either from New
7 Jersey or Texas, and we all know that
8 those are New York City residents
9 trying to avoid being tolled either on
10 the RFK Bridge or other places.

11 So I think we're just going to
12 see an increase of people trying to
13 evade such a high toll. And I know
14 that most of that is part of the
15 police jobs and the judicial systems
16 to help with crime on the transit, so
17 it's out of your jurisdiction. But I
18 think it's an ongoing conversation
19 that needs to happen if the goal is to
20 reduce congestion in that specific
21 area.

22 That's all I have. Thank you.

23 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

24 The next speaker is Erich

25 Makarov, the followed by our 130th

1 sign-up, Christian Baum.

2 Our next speaker is Christian
3 Baum.

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

6 The next speaker is Michael
7 Huarachi, to be followed by Michelle
8 Grossman.

9 Michael, once you're unmuted,
10 you can proceed.

11 MICHAEL HUARACHI: Hi. Yes.
12 Thank you for your time. I appreciate
13 your time.

14 First, I'd like to start off
15 with a quote, you have to act as if it
16 were possible to radically transform
17 the world and you have to do it all
18 the time.

19 Congestion pricing is the floor
20 not the ceiling -- that quote was from
21 Angela Davis. I'm sorry.

22 For far too long, taxpayers have
23 subsidized private vehicular use and
24 storage for nearly half a century.
25 Again, congestion pricing is the floor

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1 not the ceiling. I work for one of
2 the largest transportation companies
3 in the world -- in the country, if not
4 the world, the airlines. I travel the
5 world and I understand that
6 industrialized nations around the
7 world have a robust transit system.

8 One thing I've noticed since
9 working for the airlines is that
10 tourists find our transit system
11 third-rate, at best. I do not
12 disagree with much of my neighbors in
13 the area, I've lived in the Central
14 Business District for over 20 years.
15 I work, I give back to my community
16 all the time.

17 I notice that once tourists come
18 off of the train, they find it
19 difficult to navigate our system.
20 Congestion pricing is the start. The
21 highways running through our precious
22 gem that is core Manhattan is the
23 issue. How much money is lost
24 providing free public space to private
25 vehicular storage, two to 10,000 --

1 one to two-ton death machines. I
2 guarantee you tourists from Europe,
3 Asia and other parts of the world are
4 spending more money in NYC than any
5 bridge and tunnel driver.

6 I do not want to discount my
7 neighbors concerns about safety and
8 cleanliness, but let's not conflate
9 homelessness, our third-rate health
10 care system with crime. A lot of
11 these issues are overlapping, it's
12 called intersectionality.

13 My grandfather was homeless. I
14 grew up in a very working-class
15 blue-collar neighborhood in New
16 Jersey. I'm familiar with driving,
17 but we cannot criminalize poverty.

18 We cannot criminalize turnstile
19 jumpers who seek a better transit
20 system, more equitable and just. We
21 must have a more transparent system
22 that tracks MTA's spending and I do
23 advocate for that.

24 Lastly, I'd like to end with
25 another quote from Angela Davis, I'm

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1 no longer accepting the things I
2 cannot change, I'm changing the things
3 I cannot accept.

4 Thank you for your time.

5 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

6 Our next speaker is Michelle
7 Grossman, followed by Jay Chokshi.

8 MICHELLE GROSSMAN: Hello. I
9 live in the CBD. I am for the
10 environment and reducing congestion,
11 but I am against the current
12 congestion pricing plans. Today I
13 will speak to the impact of people who
14 live in the CBD, especially impacts I
15 didn't see reflected in your report.

16 Plain and simple, the cost of
17 everything will go up. I have to say
18 many of the speakers who already went
19 are inspiring, their testimonials are
20 at times gut-wrenching and they've
21 been hitting the nail on the head.

22 Almost all goods or parts of
23 goods that are sold in the CBD
24 originate from outside of the CBD.
25 The cost of the congestion pricing on

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1 those goods needs to be passed along
2 to someone and the local customers are
3 who it would be passed to. Many
4 services come from outside of the CBD.

5 Just think of your local
6 restaurant and the various services
7 they receive in addition to the goods;
8 cleaning services, armored car
9 services, they pick up cash, repairs
10 and maintenance, routine servicing of
11 kitchen equipment, installations, the
12 list goes on. The congestion pricing
13 on those services will either be
14 absorbed by the restaurants already
15 operating on a thin margin and/or
16 passed along to the consumers.

17 That concept doesn't just apply
18 to restaurants, just think about all
19 the other places you go in a
20 neighborhood; grocery store, bodega,
21 laundromat, drugstores like Duane
22 Reade, CVS, or independent drug
23 stores, phone store, beauty salon,
24 farmer's market; the list goes on. In
25 addition, the cost of home deliveries

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1 for food and other goods and services
2 will go up. Need someone to come to
3 your home for services, a plumber, an
4 exterminator, that will cost you more.

5 As some had spoke to you, it's
6 not just about goods and services,
7 it's freedom of moment to go to and
8 from loved ones, to visit or transport
9 them places like doctors'
10 appointments. If you live in the CBD,
11 for people to visit you or pick you up
12 via car, you'll need to factor in a
13 congestion toll even if there's no
14 congestion due to the day of the week
15 or time or day.

16 Another concept that is alarming
17 for residents is that residents will
18 be charged to return home if traveled
19 via car no matter what time of day or
20 day of week. It feels like my
21 neighbors and I are being penalized to
22 go -- speaking for myself, I rarely am
23 in a car for any reason due to how
24 accessible everything is where I live.
25 I'm fortunate to be able to walk or

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1 take the subway almost everywhere I
2 need to get. I get into a car on
3 average like five times a month in
4 total. Where else in the state or
5 country can you say that? And yet, my
6 neighbors and I will be bearing the
7 burden in a way that no other commuter
8 will of an increased cost of living
9 due to reducing commuter
10 congestion that we do not contribute
11 to.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

14 Our next speaker is Jay Chokshi,
15 followed by Ryanne Milligan.

16 JAY CHOKSHI: Hello, everyone.
17 My name is Jay. I'm a resident of the
18 Lower East Side and I'm speaking today
19 to come out in favor of congestion
20 pricing in Manhattan.

21 I think this agency has done a
22 great job laying out the positives and
23 negatives of their findings of
24 congestin pricing earlier. Overall,
25 implementing this plan will be

1 beneficial for our communities today
2 and future generations of New Yorkers
3 tomorrow. Other folks who have spoken
4 earlier have legitimate concerns which
5 they've eloquently layed out. But
6 positive change is never a seamless
7 transition, there's never going to be
8 a perfect solution which fixes all our
9 city's problems in one fell swoop.

10 And for other speakers who say
11 this plan doesn't go far enough in
12 environmental justice, all I have to
13 say is that we can't let perfect be
14 the enemy of good. The bottom line is
15 that if we don't move our city away
16 from car-centered infrastructure
17 policies today, our kids and grandkids
18 will be paying for it tomorrow with
19 worse transit options, more air
20 pollution and increased vehicular
21 violence.

22 It's time that New York joins
23 the 21st Century and follow other
24 great cities that have implemented
25 congestion pricings, like London,

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1 Stockholm and Singapore. It's time to
2 start investing in transit that
3 benefits the majority of our citizens
4 rather than the few. And I know it's
5 tempting to believe that we can encase
6 this city in amber and life will
7 continue like it always has for 20 or
8 30 years, but that's not how the real
9 life operates.

10 Thanks again. And I hope you
11 all have a great day.

12 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

13 As a reminder, if you've joined
14 the Zoom under a name different from
15 the one you used when you signed up to
16 speak or if you didn't sign up to
17 speak but would like to, please
18 identify yourself in the Q&A function.

19 Our next speaker is Ryanne
20 Milligan, followed by Juliet
21 Alexander.

22 Our next speaker is Juliet
23 Milligan, followed by George Pilieri.

24 Our next speaker is George
25 Pilieri, followed by LisaMarie Rice.

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1 Our next speaker is LisaMarie
2 Rice, followed by Genisha Metcalf.

3 LISAMARIE RICE: Good afternoon.
4 I'm stay-at-home mom in Brooklyn. I
5 believe the congestion tax will bring
6 more of a burden on the middle
7 working-class and then poor of the
8 city. This is a regressive tax, which
9 means those in the middle and lower
10 economic strata will be the one
11 hardest hit by this initiative.

12 We hear every election cycle how
13 politicians care about the
14 middle-working and poor and yet, it is
15 telling that our elected officials
16 would push for a tax that would leave
17 a burden on the most vulnerable in
18 this city. This tax will further an
19 economic stranglehold on New Yorkers
20 who are already suffering from the
21 ripple effects of inflation. While
22 working in favor of corporations such
23 as Uber and Lyft, which actually are
24 significant contributors to the
25 congestion issue at hand.

1 Every week New Yorkers are
2 challenged to meet the rising cost of
3 living and to put food on the table
4 for their families. This tax leaves
5 the wealthy and the political elite
6 unaffected while further increasing
7 the cost of goods and services, which
8 will continue to crush families. It's
9 appalling.

10 It also means that this tax will
11 not only affect drivers in New York
12 City, it affects everyone. By
13 supporting this tax our officials are
14 showing us they are completely out of
15 touch with their constituents and they
16 have no idea what day-to-day living is
17 like in the city.

18 Aside from disproportionately
19 affecting the underprivileged, this
20 will force increased traffic patterns
21 into neighborhoods where the
22 underprivileged already suffer
23 disproportionate levels of noise and
24 air pollution. These neighborhoods
25 experience higher rates of asthma.

1 While politicians like to taut claims
2 of social justice, they simultaneously
3 promote further economic and
4 environmental injustices through this
5 tax.

6 The MTA must make available a
7 transparent audit of its budget and
8 spending. The MTA must vigorously
9 seek to improve its image as a
10 wasteful and ineffective entity before
11 asking us to pay an insurmountable
12 amount of money into a system the
13 public already does not trust.

14 And finally, before we decide to
15 further burden the residents of New
16 York City, a full and complete
17 environmental impact statement must be
18 made with hearings made available to
19 the public on that statement. Until
20 then, it would be egregious to ask New
21 Yorkers to shoulder this burden.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

24 Our next speaker is Genisha
25 Metcalf, followed by our 140th sign

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1 up, Anna Carafas.

2 GENISHA METCALF: Hello. Good
3 afternoon. Thank you for providing
4 this space. Although, I am a little
5 disappointed that you would leave such
6 an important conversation to take
7 place at the end of summer when many
8 New Yorkers are out of town and unable
9 to participate.

10 My name is Genisha Metcalf, and
11 I am a Community Board 10 member in
12 Harlem. However, I'm here as a Native
13 New Yorker deeply disappointed in a
14 proposal seeking to recoup costs lost
15 during the pandemic on the backs of
16 hard-working New Yorkers.

17 This program is being put forth
18 without substantial input from New
19 Yorkers who rely on free accessible
20 ways to get throughout New York City.
21 This will indeed impact New Yorkers
22 particularly from marginalized
23 communities and create urban
24 segregation, as one of the speakers
25 said earlier.

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1 I have noticed that many of the
2 cultural institutions, hospitals and
3 various economic-opportunity districts
4 are located along these through lines
5 that you want to charge people for.

6 Many people do not see driving
7 in New York as a luxury. When I had
8 my children that are five and ten now,
9 when they were smaller, there was no
10 way I could get on the subway with
11 them and going through the staircases
12 because there were no elevators on any
13 of the subway platforms in my
14 neighborhood.

15 We cannot ask people to rely on
16 a public transportation system that
17 disproportionately has limited access
18 for disabled people and people in
19 marginalized communities. This is
20 unfair to think that the MTA can
21 mismanage their funding. We all have
22 budgets, we're all doing the best we
23 can in a pandemic and a recession.
24 Why should New Yorkers have to bail
25 the MTA out for mismanagement?

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1 I have been in this city my
2 entire life and I've never seen
3 accessible and equitable access in the
4 transportation system like you would
5 expect us to believe. You cannot
6 expect us to believe that creating
7 this congestion pricing will in a
8 timely way create the subway system
9 that we deserve.

10 I do believe there needs to be
11 changes made. However, I think this
12 process needs to model the
13 participatory budgeting process, be
14 way more transparent and allow people
15 to truly have input in the options
16 that work for them. I know a lot of
17 the people who are in favor of the
18 plan have cited other cities, but I
19 would ask them to consider that New
20 York City is one of the only places
21 with 24-hour accessible transportation
22 options. So it's not apples to apples
23 comparison; we are not London, we are
24 not these other cities. We are New
25 York, we take care of New Yorkers, we

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1 take care of everyone. And in doing
2 so, that means no congestion pricing.

3 Thank you. Revisit your plan.

4 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

5 Our next speaker is Anna
6 Carafas, followed by Carlos Jaramillo.

7 ANNA CARAFAS: Hi. Can you hear
8 me.

9 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

10 ANNA CARAFA: Thank you. My
11 name is Anna Carafas. I live in
12 Spring Valley, which is a
13 working-class village in Rockland
14 County. I'm a life-long New Yorker.

15 Since Rockland County is part of
16 the metropolitan commuter
17 transportation district, I pay
18 .375 percent as a surcharge that goes
19 with my sale tax on every single thing
20 that I buy, even though I don't
21 actually really use MTA services. My
22 employer pays a payroll tax to the MTA
23 even though I don't work in New York
24 City.

25 Rockland County is the only

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1 county in the MCTD that pays more, for
2 the tune of 40 million dollars a year,
3 than we receive from the MTA in
4 transit service and funding. Rockland
5 County train service is provided
6 through a contract with New Jersey
7 Transit and the service is subpar and
8 unreliable. The stations badly need
9 to be upgraded. And yet, those
10 investments have not been with the
11 exception of Nanuet. Which, by the
12 way, is an upscale part of Rockland
13 County, unlike Spring Valley and that
14 train station is atrocious.

15 When Rocklanders drive into
16 Manhattan, it's often because we don't
17 have other good options. According to
18 the information provided earlier in
19 the session, drivers from Rockland
20 County represent only a very small
21 percentage of the traffic and
22 therefore, emissions in the area of
23 Manhattan that's the subject of the
24 congestion pricing under this plan.

25 Rockland residents already pay

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1 more than our fair share to the MTA.
2 Based on this and other things I
3 mentioned, Rocklanders should be
4 exempt from the congestion pricing, or
5 at least receive substantial credits
6 or discounts. I'm also very concerned
7 that the Central Business District
8 Traffic Mobility Review Board
9 apparently has no representatives from
10 the MTA's west of the Hudson service
11 region which includes my home county
12 of Rockland County.

13 I would also like to say that I
14 really don't understand how there is
15 so little accountability with respect
16 to how the MTA spends its money.
17 There are tens of millions and
18 possibly billions of dollars a year
19 that seem to be going into a total
20 black hole. There should be more
21 transparency in terms of how the MTA
22 gets its money and where exactly that
23 money goes.

24 It doesn't seem that things ever
25 get better, they just seem to get

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1 worse. And this congestion pricing
2 plan just seems like a slap in the
3 face, certainly to people like me in
4 Rockland. And I think you'd be
5 hearing from a lot more of us if so
6 many of us weren't on vacation during
7 these hearings.

8 Thank you very much for
9 listening, and I really hope you don't
10 go through with this plan as it's
11 currently proposed. Rocklanders have
12 put up with enough and I think we've
13 had it. I know I have.

14 Thank you for listening.

15 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

16 Our next speaker is Carlos
17 Jaramillo, followed by Muneeb Rehman.

18 CARLOS JARAMILLO: Hello?

19 MR. WOJNAR: We can hear you.

20 CARLOS JARAMILLO: Hello. Hi.

21 Good afternoon. My name is Carlos. I
22 speak on behalf of myself and other
23 New Yorkers who are against the
24 proposed congestion pricing tax on
25 hard-working New Yorkers. I believe

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1 the project is a bad idea and places
2 an undue economic cost on New Yorkers
3 who choose to drive.

4 I am a Native New Yorker. And
5 for the past 28 years, I've lived on
6 the west side of Manhattan in Hell's
7 Kitchen. I own a car and use my car
8 to drive in Manhattan every day. I
9 also ride and use the public
10 transportation system of New York.
11 However, the public transportation
12 system needs a tremendous amount of
13 work to improve public safety.

14 It is lacking in a very serious
15 way to be a safe alternative for
16 transportation. It is strewn with
17 needy unhoused people and criminals.
18 I will say that cars and car use has
19 had a wonderful positive impact on my
20 life allowing freedom of travel,
21 independence and mobility. I believe
22 that it is flawed and absurd to accept
23 as true that the majority of New
24 Yorkers prefer a car-free Manhattan.

25 Fringe groups, such as

1 Transportation Alternatives, Riders
2 Alliance, Chekped, and other groups,
3 do not speak for everyday New Yorkers.
4 The FHWA acknowledges that congestion
5 pricing is -- congestion, I should
6 say, is partly caused by non-optimized
7 traffic signals.

8 In addition to this, I assert
9 that the main root causes are the
10 following: Rideshare vehicles, there
11 has been a massive proliferation of
12 rideshare vehicles. There have been
13 changes to the traffic light sequence
14 that have slowed down vehicles' flow.
15 The leading pedestrian interval phase
16 to walk and do not walk signals where
17 the cars have to wait an extended
18 period of time. Pedestrian jaywalkers
19 allowed to freely operate.

20 Double lane buses causing
21 gridlock at intersections; I have
22 photographic evidence that shows
23 double-length buses cause massive
24 amounts of gridlock at intersections.
25 The construction of projects that are

1 overrun. All these factors are
2 implemented by governmental agencies
3 in charge of transportation
4 stewardship have contributed to
5 congestion.

6 Further, regarding the
7 60,000-dollar threshold for economic
8 relief, it is unrealistic and
9 unreasonable to accept as a meaningful
10 plan for relief that drivers in the
11 middle-income category make under
12 \$60,000 and will get some relief. The
13 inflationary impacts of the project
14 will raise the cost in goods and
15 services.

16 Finally, with regards to
17 emissions, there are other means that
18 remain untapped. Anti-idling
19 enforcement by the Department of
20 Environmental Conservation, the New
21 York City DEP and the Federal EEP --

22 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
23 your remarks.

24 CARLOS JARAMILLO -- have not
25 chose to enforce idling controls. So

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1 New --

2 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

3 CARLOS JARAMILLO: -- York is
4 not --

5 MR. WOJNAR: Our next speaker is
6 Muneeb Rehman, followed by Tracy
7 Annunziato.

8 The next speaker is Tracy
9 Annunziato, followed by Troy Negron.

10 Our next speaker is Troy Negron,
11 followed by Derek McIver.

12 TROY NEGRON: All right. Can
13 you hear me?

14 MR. WOJNAR: Troy, we can hear
15 you.

16 TROY NEGRON: Thank you. I
17 appreciate it.

18 So the MTA received four billion
19 dollars on the bailout and is
20 receiving ten billion dollars on the
21 infrastructure plan. Who is to say
22 that that money will not be mismanaged
23 as of all the years of mismanagement
24 through the MTA? The congestion
25 pricing, for sure, you guys will

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1 generate, as you indicated,
2 approximately a billion dollars. Who
3 is to say in time that that won't be
4 mismanaged? It seems obvious that
5 there's a history of the MTA is just
6 basically mismanaging it. You show
7 that you do certain things and some
8 things get produced, but where is the
9 rest of it?

10 I believe you guys are part of
11 the bottlenecking of the drivers down
12 in the city -- actually, throughout
13 the whole of New York with the
14 understanding, quote-unquote, that it
15 would reduce traffic. Apparently it
16 has not. And so what you're trying to
17 do it to force people back into the
18 subways. Which, at the end of the
19 day, you know, it isn't clean, as
20 other speakers have said. It isn't
21 safe; and although it may seemingly be
22 safe, right, because not every person
23 on the subway is getting attacked, but
24 it's more than enough to strike fear.
25 And of course, as I mentioned, and

1 others, it's just not clean.

2 It would seemingly to be that
3 those are -- you know, won't be able
4 to afford, let's say those in the
5 Bronx or Brooklyn, Uptown, that this
6 \$23 or so, you know, would hurt their
7 pockets, it would seem -- it's
8 seemingly reminiscent of what Robert
9 Moses did with the parkways. It
10 seemed to generate a situation to
11 prevent people from coming into the
12 city.

13 Which, why? I'm not certain why
14 you would want people not coming in.
15 Because if you're trying to prevent
16 cars from coming in -- you know, your
17 preventing people from not coming in.
18 So I guess to get on the subway -- but
19 again, the subway's not safe, so it
20 doesn't seem fair.

21 I'm sure throughout this whole
22 day everyone sounds like Miss Crabtree
23 at this point. And I'm pretty sure
24 it's not going to not happen, but just
25 be kind to others in the decision of

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1 what you're making as far as saving
2 people money or giving out discounts.

3 Thank you.

4 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

5 The next speaker is Derek
6 McIver, to be followed by Dave
7 Sattinger.

8 DEREK MCIVER: Hello. Can you
9 hear me?

10 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

11 DEREK MCIVER: Great. I'll be
12 brief. My name is Derek McIver. I'm
13 a Harlem resident. I've lived in
14 Manhattan for a little over two and a
15 half years now. And I actually got
16 rid of my car after living here for
17 about one year because the island is
18 so well served by buses and trains and
19 other forms of transportation. I am
20 impressed by the thorough assessments
21 by this agency on the impacts of this
22 program on impacts to traffic and the
23 environment. Especially where climate
24 change poses greater and greater risks
25 every day, and vehicle pollution is a

1 major contributor to carbon emissions.

2 Congestion pricing is not an
3 abstract idea. People here have
4 talked about programs in London,
5 Stockholm, and Singapore which have
6 been implemented and been very
7 successful all around the world. So I
8 am wholeheartedly in favor of
9 congestion pricing for Manhattan
10 because of the environmental
11 improvements, such as air quality,
12 better commute times, and also as a
13 revenue-generating activity.

14 I'm not in any favor of any
15 carve-outs for the highways. And
16 perhaps there is a tolling structure,
17 such as by time, that people on those
18 highways can be charged in order to
19 keep -- to not exempt them from the
20 program.

21 I also believe that business
22 owners in the CBD should receive
23 greater subsidies to encourage
24 employees to ride transit into the
25 zone. And I'm also in favor of public

1 transit improvements, as many have
2 discussed there are certain failings
3 that need to be addressed.

4 For example, there could be
5 improvements to the bus
6 infrastructure, including more covered
7 waiting areas and dedicated platforms,
8 and subway improvements, including
9 accessibility improvements on
10 escalators, elevators and so on.

11 I also believe that the
12 congestion pricing plan will make
13 Manhattan safer for pedestrians.
14 Manhattan has a much higher rate of
15 pedestrians being severely injured or
16 killed than the other boroughs. And I
17 also think that the program should
18 include more bike stations and better
19 delineated and safer bike lanes.

20 So my final thought is that I
21 hope there is more consideration for
22 low-income residents. I believe there
23 are technological solutions which can
24 mitigate many of the risks people are
25 talking about; such as special E-ZPass

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1 devices or different kinds of license
2 plates that might be able to help them
3 not bear the brunt of this pricing
4 plan.

5 Thank you very much.

6 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Dave
8 Sattinger, followed by Nrupesh Gajjar.

9 DAVE SATTINGER: Good afternoon.
10 Thank you for your time. I'm here to
11 speak for some of the working-class
12 interests of folks out here on Long
13 Island. I live in Nassau County.

14 And my concern here is that it
15 seems like this whole proposal really
16 does elevate corporate interests of
17 the Central Business District above
18 the regional needs of residents.
19 Congestion pricing should be based on
20 the needs of regional residents and
21 families to reduce congestion in a
22 holistic regional transit plan.

23 You know, I do appreciate the
24 concept of congestion pricing, but
25 where is the relief for Long Island

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1 residents. Every day our roads are
2 congested and degraded, we are
3 overtaxed by tolls and fares. It's
4 time to provide us with relief from
5 cost-prohibitive pricing that
6 precludes our families from having the
7 quality of life we deserve from the
8 taxes that we pay.

9 If you're going to move forward
10 with these types of plans, Long
11 Islanders deserve nothing less than
12 the following: First, elimination of
13 peak fares on the Long Island Rail
14 Road. It just literally makes no
15 sense. Every Long Island Rail Road
16 ticket should include a free transfer
17 to the subways and buses in New York
18 City and a regional fare that includes
19 Nassau and county transportation
20 services should be created.

21 Resident discounts on tolls for
22 residents of Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau,
23 Suffolk, just like those that Staten
24 Islanders and Rockaway residents
25 receive is something that should

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1 happen. We are literally on an
2 island. I can assure you that I do
3 not travel to other parts of New York
4 and the tri-state area as it's just
5 too costly to do so. Yet, we get
6 bombarded from congestion from all
7 over the region and other states
8 negatively impacting our air, water,
9 parks beaches, towns, our roads and
10 our quality of life. It's time to be
11 fair to the residents and all the
12 folks on Long Island.

13 I thank you very much for your
14 time.

15 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

16 Our next speaker is Nrupesh
17 Gajjar followed by Jen Sobers.

18 NRUPESH GAJJAR: Hello. I have
19 a collection of things to consider.
20 I'm on the border of 59th Street
21 Bridge. I'm self-employed in
22 E-commerce delivery/retail field. I
23 drive, I take the subway, bus and
24 walk. I also used Citi Bike for a
25 year.

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1 One of the things I'm
2 thinking -- especially in this area,
3 wondered has anyone that's involved in
4 decision-making driven in the proposed
5 congestion areas at all times of day
6 or night? Because there is a
7 chokepoint, and the chokepoint is by
8 FDR, 62nd, 63rd Street, and there has
9 been recently added bike lanes. Well,
10 recently as in two, three, four years.
11 And they add danger to pedestrians,
12 motorists, and add to the perpetual
13 traffic by York, 1st, 2nd Avenue and
14 FDR.

15 So the thing to consider is look
16 around East 60th Street, East 59th
17 Street by Trader Joe's, right under
18 the bridge where there's an entrance
19 on 59th Street Bridge, 58th
20 Street which -- 58th and 2nd, or you
21 can enter on 58th Street eastbound.
22 East 57th Street, in the middle of the
23 block, there is an entrance between
24 1st and 2nd Avenue. And if there is
25 something to be timed with cameras,

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1 sometimes you can get around within a
2 minute or two. Sometimes it takes
3 half hour, it can.

4 And then the other thing to
5 consider is criminal elements on a
6 subway, where you should take a survey
7 of public safety at various locations
8 at different times of the day. Where
9 MTA fare evaders get away without any
10 shame or fear due to bail reform. The
11 fare evaders do not need to file any
12 reports to get their discount, while
13 the law-abiding citizens having to do
14 the paperwork dance for insignificant
15 discount.

16 There are one, two,
17 three-wheelers who ignore the traffic
18 signals and going in all directions,
19 including sidewalks. Some are working
20 for delivery platforms which require
21 delivery within five to ten minutes or
22 the delivery employees may lose their
23 jobs. Such platforms have turned
24 delivery employees into modern-day
25 slaves. And there should be

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1 restrictions on E-commerce delivery
2 speed in areas which add to additional
3 traffic, as well as Amazon trucks that
4 just unload merchandise anywhere and
5 just increase the traffic.

6 So everything sounds great on
7 paper until it doesn't. And what I
8 learned -- what I heard are people
9 feeling happy that others would
10 subsidize their once-a-year visit to
11 the city versus who are constantly in
12 the area.

13 If this MTA tax does not work,
14 there will be no going back and
15 current proposal just feels excessive.
16 So most of the people who said oh,
17 London area, you're in New York City
18 and you should consider traveling to
19 those places; I have and those are not
20 utopias as people think they are.

21 Thank you.

22 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

23 Our next speaker is Jen Sobers,
24 followed by Micheal McLaughlin.

25 Our next speaker is Micheal

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1 McLaughlin, followed by our 150th
2 speaker to sign up, Cherie Brown.

3 Our next speaker is Cherie
4 Brown, followed by Jeany Lochard.

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

7 Cherie, you are currently muted.

8 CHERIE BROWN: Can you hear me?

9 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

10 CHERIE BROWN: Hi. My name is
11 Cherie Brown and I am a resident of
12 Hell's Kitchen on 52nd Street between
13 10th and 11th.

14 And my issue was that with the
15 congestion pricing, if I left my area
16 to go to Harlem to visit my family, I
17 would have to pay a toll to get back
18 to where I live at. Or if my kids
19 want to come down here to visit me,
20 they have to pay a toll to come from
21 Harlem down here, they all drive. And
22 I don't think that's fair.

23 I think there should be an
24 exemption for residents that live down
25 here. We shouldn't have to pay a toll

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1 to come back home. Or are you just
2 making us be in this area where we
3 don't have to pay a toll.

4 The transit system is horrible.
5 It's not safe, I don't feel safe
6 sitting there waiting for a train and
7 now I got to worry about if somebody
8 is going to come up and try to push me
9 on the tracks or slice me with a
10 machete or a hammer coming down the
11 steps.

12 I'm 65 years old. I had surgery
13 on my foot and it's very hard for me
14 to get around. Sometimes the
15 elevators are not working in the
16 transit system. When I had surgery, I
17 had a knee scooter. I had to go to
18 the foot doctor in Harlem, and I get
19 into the train station and the
20 elevator's not working for me to go
21 down onto the tracks, so now my
22 boyfriend has to carry me down the
23 steps with the foot scooter.

24 So I don't trust your train
25 system and it's all -- the MTA is

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1 complaining about that they don't have
2 money. Y'all got money through the
3 pandemic. You also put up these
4 posters by the bus stop to tell you
5 when the bus is supposed to arrive, it
6 might be on 50th Street and 10th
7 Avenue, and it doesn't work.

8 None of these things work, so
9 what are you wasting your money on.
10 You set these things up, and then they
11 don't even work at all. Nobody comes
12 back to set it up, it's just there.
13 We have to pay the MTA to upgrade the
14 system, it's filthy. When you got to
15 sit on the seats with the rats running
16 on your foot, it needs to be a lot of
17 improvement.

18 And my final statement is that I
19 don't think that the tenants that live
20 in Manhattan, down in Hell's Kitchen
21 or past 60th Street, should be charged
22 a toll at all. We should be exempt.
23 This is where we live at, this is our
24 residence and we are being
25 constricted.

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1 That's all I have to say. Thank
2 you. And I hope you'll take my issue
3 into consideration.

4 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

5 CHERIE BROWN: Thank you.

6 MS. FLAX: Our next speaker is
7 Jeany Lochard, followed Elaine de
8 Vera.

9 Our next speaker is Elaine de
10 Vera, followed by Shar Blades.

11 Our next speaker is Shar Blades,
12 followed by Jovanna Marc.

13 Shar Blades.

14 Our next speaker is Jovanna Marc
15 followed by Knm Rabbi.

16 Our next speaker is Knm Rabbi,
17 followed by Dorma Seepersayd.

18 Our next speaker is Dorma
19 Seepersayd, followed by Kellie Preyor.

20 Our next speaker is Kellie
21 Preyor followed by Walter Iwachiw.

22 KELLIE PREYOR: Hello. Can you
23 hear me?

24 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

25 KELLIE PREYOR: I would just

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1 like to find out, first of all, the
2 MTA received 10.5 million dollars from
3 the federal government during the
4 pandemic. And I believe ridership is
5 almost back to prepandemic levels. So
6 how is this money being managed? And,
7 you know, I'd like to know why they
8 feel they need to charge the average
9 worker, who is just trying to earn a
10 living for their family, this money so
11 that they can do improvements to the
12 MTA.

13 I think we've heard this
14 already, but the accessibility needs
15 major improvement. They need safety
16 track rails so that people don't get
17 pushed in the subways. And security
18 is really, really necessary.

19 Also, as a resident of the Lower
20 East Side, I noticed that there's a
21 lot more bike lanes and bike stations
22 and they have removed parking from
23 this area. I don't think that that's
24 fair, but I also do believe that that
25 is a cause for congestion in that area

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1 and I'm sure in other areas of
2 Manhattan as well and in the city.

3 And I also believe that the bus
4 lanes, sometimes there is double
5 parked cars that need to pull over in
6 specific areas and the buses have to
7 go around them. I think that it's
8 just a big jumble of these so-called
9 amenities, which I think are really
10 necessary, but they contribute to
11 congestion.

12 And it just seems that now you
13 want to say, well, we need more money
14 from residents or workers coming in
15 from other boroughs or people who
16 actually live in Manhattan to as well
17 to go into other boroughs to work so
18 we can get this money for
19 improvements, when the MTA has a lot
20 of money, I agree with the previous
21 speaker, and I'd like to know what
22 they plan to do.

23 The subways need to be cleaned.
24 They're filthy, there's rats and
25 rodents and I mean, the same thing but

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1 they're everywhere. And what are you
2 doing for that? What are you doing
3 with the money to improve this for
4 riders? And maybe that would help, if
5 you could improve those things, it
6 would improve the ridership and people
7 would be less likely to drive. But
8 don't tax the average worker coming in
9 from other boroughs.

10 Things are hard, gas prices are
11 high. And we're giving money to other
12 countries, but yet, we need to improve
13 what we have here.

14 And that's all I have to say.

15 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

16 Our next speaker is Walter
17 Iwachiw, followed by Shar Blades.

18 Our next speaker is Shar Blades,
19 followed by James Cane.

20 SHAR BLADES: Good afternoon.

21 I'm Shar. I'm sitting here with
22 Jermaine. And we are two young
23 contributors to New York City.

24 I've ridden New York City
25 transit since I was 19 years old and

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1 I'm also a driver. And I can see that
2 there's so much advertisement being
3 done on the trains. I mean, for four
4 weeks, you can advertise with the MTA
5 on their buses for \$12,000, \$12,500.
6 So that's only one side of the bus;
7 that's the back. There's four sides
8 to the bus.

9 Where's all this money going and
10 if that's, what, \$300,000 for one bus
11 for 12 months, come on. So let's not
12 play, where is this money going that
13 you're getting from all over the city?
14 And then we want to talk about the
15 low-income people that come into the
16 city or jump the trains. You have all
17 these police officers at these train
18 stops, and I seen it for myself, where
19 people will just walk in, walk in
20 through the train station, through the
21 gates right in front of the police
22 officers. There's no accountability
23 there.

24 Raising the taxes or creating a
25 toll, I do audits in the city every

1 day. I'm in Manhattan and I'm in the
2 other boroughs. That makes no sense
3 to tax me if I'm in and out. If I
4 have three or four audits to do, I'm
5 not paying \$23 one way, then \$23 to
6 come back to Brooklyn. That's
7 ridiculous.

8 Do the permit system. I don't
9 know London and I don't know about
10 Stockholm, but I know Washington DC
11 you can eat off they train floors. I
12 mean, you can literally pick something
13 up, drop your piece of candy and pick
14 it up. That's how clean it is.

15 And in Pennsylvania, they have
16 permanent parking. Do permanent
17 parking for people that live in the
18 Bronx, if you live in Brooklyn, if you
19 live in Manhattan, that's going to
20 help with people with these
21 out-of-state plates. And a lot of
22 them out-of-state plates are fake;
23 somebody did say that. So there's a
24 lot of criminality going on in the
25 city.

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1 We work hard, we love this city.
2 And I will say to the MTA, when I was
3 not working that I got the half-fare
4 MetroCard -- I'm sorry if I'm speaking
5 so fast -- the half-fare MetroCard and
6 I really appreciate that. You guys do
7 things to help, but some of y'all are
8 not -- wherever this money is going,
9 it's not going to the proper places.
10 And you got to stop, you know, tearing
11 us apart and create more -- in the
12 boroughs there need to be more
13 programs for people that are, you
14 know, recovering from drugs because --
15 not just giving them a place to stay.

16 Even the Jewish man say oh, we
17 have all of these places where they
18 just house them. Have programs so
19 they can -- I want to be rich one day
20 too. You know, I don't want to stay
21 middle-class. So have programs where
22 they can increase and make more money
23 for themselves and be real, you know,
24 citizens and provide to the community
25 of New York City, just not have them

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1 hanging around the train stations.

2 (JERMAINE): And it's not safe.
3 In Clinton Hills, an Asian woman was
4 attacked on the train. It's not safe
5 and you guys are asking for all of
6 this income from us --

7 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
8 remarks.

9 SHAR BLADES: -- and it's not
10 fair. You know, and --

11 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker is James Cane,
13 followed by Richard Bert.

14 Our next speaker, and 160th to
15 sign up, is Richard Bert, followed by
16 Cindy Roberts.

17 Our next speaker is Cindy
18 Roberts, followed by Daisy Ramos.

19 CINDY ROBERTS: Hello. This is
20 Cindy Roberts. Thank you, and good
21 afternoon. I think you already heard
22 enough about the negative impact of
23 congestion pricing, on increasing the
24 price of goods and services in the
25 city, as well as the horrific

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1 congestion that will ensue in
2 communities immediately outside the
3 zone, and more.

4 So I'd like to illustrate my
5 specific situation, and I'm sure there
6 are many others who can relate to it.
7 I am a senior on a low fixed income, I
8 am also a driver. I do not ride a
9 bike and I cannot walk for distance.
10 I live in Lower Manhattan. I have
11 given up riding mass transit because
12 of the filth, the easier disease
13 transmission and most of all, the
14 crime, so my car has become a
15 necessity.

16 One of the important things I
17 need to use my car for is taking care
18 of my elderly mom who lives in
19 Brooklyn. I live literally across the
20 street from the entrance ramp to the
21 Brooklyn Bridge. And my car is parked
22 indoors 100 feet away from the
23 entrance to the Brooklyn Bridge. Do
24 you mean to say when I take my car out
25 of my garage and enter the ramp to the

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1 Brooklyn Bridge and drive to help my
2 mother, that when I come home, I'll be
3 charged \$23 to repark my car 100 feet
4 from the Brooklyn Bridge?

5 Something has to be done. And
6 if I understand correctly, I might be
7 one of those people who gets a tax
8 credit at the end of the year.

9 Problem with that is that I am on a
10 tight budget to the penny. I can't
11 shell out hundreds or thousands of
12 dollars in advance of the end of the
13 year to get a credit at the end of the
14 year.

15 So I hope you will please
16 seriously consider the financial
17 impact on people such as myself who
18 are just trying to survive in this
19 city in these much more difficult
20 times.

21 Thank you.

22 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

23 Our next speaker is Daisy Ramos,
24 followed by Alexander Kramer.

25 Our next speaker is Alexander

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1 Kramer, followed by Susan Parker.

2 Our next speaker is Susan Parker
3 followed by Peter Reiter.

4 Susan, you may unmute yourself
5 and begin your remarks.

6 Susan, you're currently muted.
7 You may unmute yourself and begin your
8 remarks.

9 If you're not able to unmute
10 yourself, then we can come back to
11 you.

12 We'll move to our next speaker
13 Peter Reiter, followed by Gustavo
14 Penafiel.

15 Our next speaker is Gustavo
16 Penafiel, followed by John Bonafede.

17 Gustavo?

18 GUSTAVO PENAFIEL: Yes, I'm
19 here. It's very difficult to do this.

20 Like I was saying, my name is
21 Gustavo Penafiel. I live in
22 Manhattan, and I'm also an Uber
23 driver. I pay enough taxes as it is.
24 I think MTA is underworked and
25 overpaid. All these fees that they

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1 do, you don't know what they're for.
2 If that business can't be sustainable
3 by itself, then why are they getting
4 corporate welfare? It's not fair to
5 me or anybody else.

6 This is my job, I've been doing
7 this since 2017. This is the best job
8 I've probably had in my life. So I
9 just think it's very unfair, there
10 should be other ways. If they need
11 money, there should be other ways for
12 them to do it; like maybe raising the
13 toll or just basically raising the
14 fares.

15 But it shouldn't be subsidized
16 by drivers, because my main work is in
17 Manhattan and that's basically the
18 best place to work. The people I pick
19 up don't take the trains, so I
20 can't -- if I was to be charged this
21 tax, I wouldn't be able to do it
22 because the tax isn't going to go to
23 the riders, it's going to go to me,
24 and I get taxed enough as it is
25 already.

1 So the MTA should just figure
2 out another way, maybe they should
3 have a hiring freeze, a salary freeze,
4 and get some more money other ways.
5 But other than, it's just -- corporate
6 welfare is like -- it shouldn't be
7 given to them. Or maybe their
8 management should be outsourced to
9 people that really know how to run a
10 business that's sustainable on itself,
11 not on the backs of people that work.

12 I've been living in this city
13 since 1987, and it's always been bad.
14 I just can't afford it and this is my
15 job. I don't have an education, I
16 can't be a teacher or a doctor or a
17 lawyer, so this is what I do and I
18 hope to continue to do this.

19 Thank you.

20 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

21 Our next speaker is John
22 Bonafede and then we'll go back to
23 Susan Parker.

24 Our next speaker is Susan
25 Parker, followed by Suad Boljevic.

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1 Susan, if you can unmute
2 yourself, you can begin your remarks.

3 We can't hear and we'll have to
4 move to the next speaker.

5 Our next speaker is Suad
6 Boljevic, followed by Kate Corkery.

7 SUAD BOLJEVIC: Hello. I hope
8 I'm coming in okay. I'm a student
9 that goes to Hunter constantly, and I
10 take transportation.

11 Now, it's come to a sad state
12 where I need to consistently look over
13 my back and hopefully there's not a
14 crazy person behind me or there's not
15 a mentally insane person in front of
16 me. And that's a sad state of affairs
17 for the transit system. And while
18 those -- while those things are not
19 being addressed, it seems like the MTA
20 is going to the other way and just to
21 add more fines for their convenient
22 straphanger. And that goes also for
23 the drivers that go in and out of
24 Manhattan and the people live in
25 Manhattan as well.

1 It seems that we've given enough
2 money to the system that constantly
3 needs more money. But yet, they don't
4 tell us where all that money is going
5 into. And it is proven by a recent
6 report by the RPA where they had went
7 into a proposal of expanding the
8 branch within Queens that was
9 deactivated that used to be part of
10 the LIRR system. And there was a
11 missing 20 million of investment into
12 that extension plan of the LIRR system
13 that were to connect to the Queens
14 Boulevard line all the way to the Far
15 Rockaways. And the question is, where
16 did that 20 million go; probably into
17 your pockets, and not into the actual
18 fixing of the transit system.

19 As well as the express buses
20 will also be inundated with constant
21 new riders. And its services,
22 depending on the line that you have,
23 is shoddy at best. And folks --

24 (Technical difficulties.)

25 -- five, where it's only five

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1 express buses going into Manhattan and
2 eight coming in from Manhattan. If
3 you could improve those areas of bus
4 express and subway and even expending
5 the express and subway systems instead
6 of having people to pay for it,
7 because the money keeps on going into
8 that black hole that everyone keeps on
9 talking about, and to have to have an
10 independent board that's independent
11 from the MTA to actually look into
12 where all this money is going into.
13 Because it looks like it's just likely
14 going into the areas just to fix it.
15 But at the same time, it's not.

16 That's all I have to say. Thank
17 you.

18 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

19 Our next speaker is Kate
20 Corkery, followed by our 170th speaker
21 to sign up, Ron Simoncini.

22 Our next speaker is Ron
23 Simoncini, followed by Evelyn Stier.

24 Our next speaker is Evelyn
25 Stier, followed by Renee Cassell.

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1 Our next speaker is Renee
2 Cassell, followed by Cathy Burton.

3 RENEE CASSELL: Hello. Can you
4 hear me?

5 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

6 RENEE CASSELL: Okay. Yes. My
7 name is Renee Cassell. I'm a lifelong
8 New Yorker, New York City retiree and
9 I live in Brooklyn. I'm grateful for
10 this opportunity to talk about
11 congestion pricing. I would also like
12 to let you know that I'm a motorist,
13 cyclist and pedestrian, so I cover it
14 all and I'm very, very disappointed
15 with this congestion pricing.

16 As you know, it's very costly to
17 live in New York City, more and more
18 people are making the decision to move
19 out of New York because of the quality
20 of life. I stopped taking the train
21 about a year ago, the subway about a
22 year ago because of an incident where
23 a gentleman tried to push another man
24 into the subway. He actually didn't
25 push him, but he was about to and I

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1 happened to see that and stop. And it
2 just really stopped me from taking the
3 subway. And like people say, it's not
4 safe, it's not clean.

5 I see that the MTA's been
6 getting like bailouts through the
7 pandemic. I appreciate the fact that
8 they were able to give people free
9 subway rides and bus rides during the
10 pandemic, but it should not be on the
11 backs of the middle-class. You are
12 pushing the middle-class out of New
13 York.

14 And I want people to know that
15 we have to start to vote these people
16 out who are not looking out for our
17 benefits, for the low-income and the
18 middle-income earners are not able to
19 afford to live in New York.

20 So now you want to give me
21 another tolling to come into the city.
22 I have doctor's appointments, I was
23 injured during 911, and most of my
24 doctors are in Manhattan in the
25 congestion pricing area. And it's not

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1 fair, it really isn't fair. I want
2 people to understand that we cannot
3 keep taking on these extra pricing and
4 live in New York.

5 And I hope that you don't -- I
6 hope this doesn't go through, I'm
7 quite sure it is, but I hope it
8 doesn't, so that it can help people
9 who can't afford to live in New York.
10 I mean, this is making my decision to
11 leave.

12 Thank you for the opportunity,
13 and I hope that people vote these
14 people out who are voting for this
15 congestion pricing.

16 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

17 Our next speaker is Cathy
18 Burton, followed by Joseph Bergdoll.

19 Our next speaker is Joseph
20 Bergdoll, followed by Leatrice Smith.

21 Our next speaker is Leatrice
22 Smith, followed by Paul Gordon.

23 LEATRICE SMITH: Hello.

24 MS. FLAX: We can hear you.

25 LEATRICE SMITH: Okay. Thank

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1 you.

2 My name is Leatrice Smith. I
3 live in Queens, New York. I live in
4 what used to be called a two-fare zone
5 and it takes me 30 minutes on the bus
6 to get to either Parsons Boulevard or
7 Jamaica Center. It adds to my commute
8 if I want to go to Manhattan. New
9 York has -- Manhattan has some of the
10 best hospitals in America. A lot of
11 retirees still keep -- that live in
12 Georgia, South Carolina, but they
13 could still maintain their New York
14 City, Manhattan doctors.

15 For me, if I had to take the bus
16 and subway to get to Manhattan to
17 Mount Sinai where most of my doctors
18 are, it would take me over two hours.
19 If I leave my job, which is near the
20 VA Hospital in Fort Hamilton, with the
21 R train or the N train, another two
22 and a half hours.

23 I cannot take a whole day to go
24 to my doctors in Manhattan. So this
25 is untenable for me to use the subways

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1 and the buses to go to my doctors. I
2 take my car, I zoom into Manhattan as
3 quickly as possible, and I go back to
4 work. You can't have a transit system
5 that would take a whole day out of a
6 person's life. I would lose my job.

7 So just think about people who
8 have chronic illnesses like cancer,
9 they're getting radiation treatment,
10 they're going to Beth Israel, they're
11 going to Mount Sinai they're going to
12 Weill Cornell. This is untenable.

13 People cannot use public
14 transportation in New York because
15 it -- the only rapid transportation is
16 if you live in Manhattan. And if you
17 live in the outer boroughs and if you
18 live in Southeast Queens, it takes you
19 two hours, minimum, to get to
20 Manhattan because a half an hour is
21 taken up just by getting to the
22 subway.

23 Please do not go through with
24 this congestion pricing. And it seems
25 like the pretty people in Manhattan

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1 decided this was a good idea. But no
2 one took into consideration what would
3 happen to those who live in the outer
4 boroughs, who work in thee outer
5 borough, whose doctors are in
6 Manhattan.

7 And is there going to be some
8 type of set aside for people that have
9 chronic conditions that doctors are in
10 Mount Sinai, Beth Israel, NYU? What
11 do we do if we have to go back and
12 forth to the doctors? On one hand, we
13 have the Inflation Reduction Act,
14 people putting money in that hand but
15 taking out double from the other hand
16 with congestion pricing.

17 MS. FLAX: Please conclude our
18 remarks.

19 LEATRICE SMITH: Thank you.

20 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

21 Our next speaker is Paul Gordon.
22 Afterwards, we'll go back to Susan
23 Parker.

24 Paul, you may unmute yourself
25 and begin your remarks.

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1 PAUL GORDON: Yes. Can you hear
2 me?

3 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

4 PAUL GORDON: Good afternoon.
5 My name is Paul Gordon. I live in the
6 Bronx. Actually, I live in Mount
7 Vernon but I reside in Bronx.

8 Listen, there's tolls in almost
9 every bridge or tunnel, and these are
10 not cheap tolls. I believe you guys
11 are doing this to -- I believe now all
12 you guys are doing is making another
13 way to find a way to get into taxpayer
14 dollars. And I understand the time
15 period right now in which you chose is
16 not the time period to do it.

17 Now, I don't know the prices of
18 London, but I'm pretty sure it doesn't
19 equivilate to the prices you guys want
20 to make, by any means. Now, if the
21 tolls were like New Jersey, I wouldn't
22 have a problem with it. Like say \$5
23 or anything like that, but I need you
24 guys to make another way to find the
25 money. But -- I'm sorry, excuse me.

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1 I'm hearing that you guys had
2 four billion dollars given from
3 federal funds and another ten, I don't
4 know how true the other ten is. You
5 guys do spend blindly. I also heard
6 you guys also spent 30 million dollars
7 on a staircase, and it looks about
8 five million dollars.

9 To be honest, I have say
10 solution either keep that toll at \$5
11 and discount taxis and people who live
12 there or maybe raise everything across
13 the board 25 cents to 50 cents. I'm
14 just looking for a way for the
15 taxpayers to get a win here, you know,
16 because we're getting hammered. And
17 to be honest, I want everybody to know
18 we that all pay a MTA tax. If you
19 work in the city, we all do pay an MTA
20 tax.

21 And I know every project that's
22 being built over MTA is also being
23 paid to MTA. So I want to know what's
24 going on with the money, if the money
25 is being mismanaged. And I do want it

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1 to be -- if you guys do raise it, I
2 want it to be like a cap over it as to
3 be, maybe you guys can't raise the
4 fare in the next seven years or so.

5 And I know for a fact when this
6 toll puts on, the BQE that they are
7 currently working on is going to be
8 the worse traffic in the city, if not,
9 worse than I-95. If they really cared
10 about congestion, they would probably
11 make a way of drivers can't come in
12 the city between Monday to Thursday
13 between a certain time period or
14 anything like that below a certain
15 area.

16 But that is all I have to say.

17 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker is Susan
19 Parker, followed by Ian Robinson.

20 Susan, you're being promoted to
21 speak. Please accept and begin your
22 remarks.

23 Please unmute and begin your
24 remarks.

25 Unfortunately, because we still

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1 can't hear you, we will have to move
2 on to the next speaker. Our
3 moderators will make sure to provide
4 you with information about how to
5 submit comments through written
6 format. You may also submit video
7 testimony via e-mail to
8 cbdtp@mtabt.org. And if you're able
9 to join via another device, we will
10 try calling your name once again after
11 we finish calling all speakers a first
12 time.

13 We're now at our 177th speaker
14 on the list.

15 Our next speaker is Ian
16 Robinson, followed by Rafael Reyes.

17 Our next speaker is Rafael
18 Reyes, followed by Frank Hardaway.

19 Our next speaker is Frank
20 Hardaway, followed by Jorge Urena.

21 Our next speaker is Jorge Urena,
22 followed by Melissa Cromwell.

23 Our next speaker is Melissa
24 Cromwell, followed by Gregor Winkel.

25 Our next speaker is Gregor

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1 Winkel, followed by Dayz Black.

2 Gregor, you may unmute yourself
3 and begin your remarks.

4 GREGOR WINKEL: Hello. Can you
5 hear me?

6 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

7 GREGOR WINKEL: I'm waving at
8 you. Can you see me, everybody who is
9 sitting in the panel?

10 MS. FLAX: Your camera is not
11 on -- there.

12 GREGOR WINKEL: I'm turning it
13 on, one second.

14 Can you see me? Wave back.

15 MS. FLAX: We cannot see you.
16 Please begin your remarks.

17 GREGOR WINKEL: You cannot see
18 me?

19 Hello? You cannot see me?

20 MS. FLAX: Your camera is
21 enabled, but it's showing a black
22 screen. Please begin your remarks.

23 GREGOR WINKEL: I don't
24 understand why.

25 What I want to say is I am

1 absolutely against this congestion
2 pricing. I think it's pretty much
3 backward. The MTA should have come up
4 with ideas how to implement proper
5 infrastructure so that it is doable
6 for people to leave their cars at
7 home.

8 There is a lot of people,
9 especially as we saw, the young
10 hipsters, they are all for congestion
11 pricing. But you saw most elderly
12 people if they have arthritis, they
13 cannot get in the subway or disabled
14 people cannot access the subway
15 system, so the car is the last resort
16 for them to keep doctors, for example,
17 in New York City. And they would be
18 cut off from this line of access if
19 this congestion pricing is
20 implemented. I wonder if there's even
21 some legal implication, a civil rights
22 violation or something.

23 I think it's outrageous, what
24 they are doing. They might say yeah,
25 okay, we do license plate, disability

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1 license plate, but just getting a --
2 is having a big problem getting access
3 in the subway even if you could find a
4 working elevator it does not qualify,
5 you do not get a license plate for
6 this. So these people really have
7 problems accessing these doctors.

8 So if they, all these
9 proponents, support congestion
10 pricing, they do not likely have these
11 problems. And if they are so excited
12 about it and so adamant in their
13 support, maybe the MTA could work
14 these donations and they can show all
15 of their support even financially.

16 Another thing is the evaluation
17 that you presented, I find it a little
18 questionable that you want to take off
19 the middle rail and then increase the
20 speed of the escalators, I mean, all
21 of the people might fall off so I'm
22 questioning, a little bit, this
23 evaluation that is presented by the
24 MTA, this is just an example. So I'm
25 really hoping that congestion pricing

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1 will not be implemented.

2 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
3 remarks.

4 Thank you.

5 Our next speaker is Dayz Black,
6 followed by Steven Salvesen.

7 Our next speaker is Steven
8 Salvesen, followed by Veronica Mills.

9 Our next speaker is Veronica
10 Mills, followed by Annie Troy.

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

13 VERONICA MILLS: Good afternoon.
14 Are you able to hear me?

15 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

16 VERONICA MILLS: Hi. My name is
17 Veronica Mills. I am a New York City
18 resident and I do travel using the
19 MTA, I have most of my life. And the
20 MTA service is a vital service
21 throughout New York City and the outer
22 boroughs. I understand the massive
23 need for funding and I do understand
24 billions of dollars -- on the onset
25 billions of dollars, it does seem like

1 an enormous amount of money.

2 The MTA does need to provide
3 infrastructure, do repairs throughout
4 the city, like accessibility for many
5 disabled people, physically disabled
6 and otherwise. They do need more
7 access throughout the city. There is
8 still limited access with elevators
9 not always working or escalators not
10 always working. I do understand that
11 there is a need.

12 With that said, I agree that the
13 city has to assist in funding the MTA
14 in order to have a service but this
15 method of funding seems to come at a
16 poor time, a time where a lot of
17 people are struggling physically after
18 illness with the COVID-19 virus. They
19 are struggling with the decimation of
20 their family, losing family members.
21 Also they've already started
22 recovering to become employed. But
23 the timing is just not right.

24 I understand this happens in
25 2023. Is that enough time for people

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1 to pay these fees? And the fees are a
2 24-hour period, there seems to be no
3 lapse or no time that anyone living in
4 the area can freely travel. There's
5 always going to be the likelihood of
6 being charged. And from what was said
7 yesterday, the way that the fee would
8 be determined is if you enter a
9 certain area below 60th Street that
10 the computers will recognize your
11 plates. How many times are you
12 charged there?

13 So those are concerns about if
14 you're traveling throughout the day,
15 if you live in the area, you could be
16 charged multiple times. If you're
17 just moving your car from here to
18 there -- it sounds like it makes
19 getting around challenging for the
20 residents in the area. I understand
21 businesses will be highly affected
22 with deliveries being delivered
23 throughout the day.

24 That's all I wanted to point
25 out. Maybe there is another way.

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1 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

2 Our next speaker is Annie Troy,
3 followed by Lorenz Skeeter.

4 Our next speaker is Lorenz
5 Skeeter, followed by Dina Ruiz.

6 Our next speaker is Dina Ruiz,
7 followed by our 190th speaker to sign
8 up, Lopen Zuo.

9 Our next speaker is Lopen Zuo,
10 followed Johnathan Gibbs.

11 Our next speaker is Johnathan
12 Gibbs, followed by Teresa Stewart.

13 JOHNATHAN GIBBS: Hello. Can
14 you hear me?

15 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

16 JOHNATHAN GIBBS: Hi. My name
17 is Johnathan Gibbs. I am a ten-year
18 New York resident. I live in
19 Brooklyn, Crown Heights. So I think I
20 represent the people that a previous
21 speaker, Gregor, was talking about,
22 the hipsters that were all for
23 congestion pricing.

24 And before coming to this
25 meeting I was pretty much for the idea

1 of congestion pricing as I understood
2 it through the media. However,
3 sitting on this call for the past two
4 hours, at least since speaker number
5 120-something, I've heard stories from
6 people like Leatrice who has to do
7 doctors' appointments in the daytime
8 and lives in a two-fare zone. I
9 wholeheartedly agree with what
10 Veronica Mills said a few moment ago
11 about how the money could be found
12 somewhere else.

13 It comes at a bad time when a
14 whole bunch of people are sick, we're
15 suffering from inflation, and there
16 just seems like there should be a
17 better way than the current one that's
18 layed out before us.

19 You know, that's really all I
20 had to say about it, is that I -- from
21 the very -- as a very able-bodied
22 privileged person that saw what was
23 being proposed, I said oh, yeah, that
24 would be great because gridlock and
25 the Holland Tunnel on a Friday

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1 afternoon, all that kind of stuff.
2 And now, just listening to these
3 stories of people trying to make it to
4 the doctor, the elderly people, I
5 couldn't be you and make the decision
6 to continue to go on with this.

7 So that's all I have to say.

8 Thank you.

9 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

10 Our next speaker is Teresa
11 Stewart, followed by Lauren Hauptman.

12 Teresa, you may unmute yourself
13 and begin your remarks.

14 TERESA STEWART: Can you hear
15 me?

16 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

17 TERESA STEWART: Thank you. My
18 name is Teresa Stewart and I'm a
19 lifelong Brooklynite.

20 I'll start with my point that
21 congestion pricing is wrong. Yes,
22 there is congestion in New York City.
23 And yes, it can be frustrating having
24 all that traffic. But we are a
25 diverse city of over nine million

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1 residents, many of whom use a variety
2 of means to get to their various
3 destinations. Many who use cars out
4 of necessary and will be heavily
5 burdened in an already expensive city
6 doing activities like doctors'
7 appointments, grocery shopping and
8 visiting friends and families who do
9 not live in the five boroughs.

10 The city of New York's
11 Department of Transportation has spent
12 at least a decade narrowing streets
13 all around the city, bike lanes,
14 cutting off parking, making pedestrian
15 plazas, and we've had an uptick in
16 population which is obvious just in
17 the number of luxury residential
18 buildings that have popped up in
19 Downtown Brooklyn and in Queens. Did
20 anyone expect the streets to not be
21 more congestion with less streets and
22 more people?

23 Most people already use mass
24 transit to get around. Yes, the
25 pandemic caused a dip in ridership,

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1 but New Yorkers use mass transit. I
2 know I do, I take the subway, the bus,
3 the express bus, I'm a motorcyclist, I
4 use the commuter rails, and every now
5 and again, I do have to rent a car.

6 When my elderly disabled mother
7 needs to run errands through the city,
8 whether it's shopping or going to
9 doctor's appointments, we often either
10 put her in an Uber or Lyft or rent a
11 car so that she's able to do so. She
12 should not be expected to pay an
13 additional toll just to do these
14 activities. And she should not have
15 to do the up, down, sometimes going
16 backwards in order to go forward that
17 mass transit often requires.

18 And let's be brutally honest,
19 Access-A-Ride is not a viable options
20 for enough New Yorkers, especially our
21 elderly population. Most people like
22 my mom are already on a fixed income
23 and this is an additional burden that
24 they should have to pay, nor should
25 the middle-class or lower-income.

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1 But once again the MTA is crying
2 out for funds and has yet to show the
3 specific capital improvement that New
4 Yorkers will actually receive if the
5 MTA receives the money from congestion
6 pricing, and when those capital
7 improvements will be implemented and
8 completed.

9 In addition, the presentation
10 mentioned on numerous occasions that
11 the implementation of this plan would
12 reduce the number of vehicles in
13 Manhattan, so how -- what does that
14 mean? If the traffic drops, can the
15 MTA still collect a billion dollars?
16 You want less traffic, but you still
17 want the money.

18 And what is the MTA doing with
19 the congestion fee from Uber and Lyft
20 rides that the city has already
21 collected? What is the MTA doing with
22 the tolls that it already collects
23 from the various crossways; the
24 Brooklyn Battery, the Queens-Midtown,
25 the Triborough Bridge? The MTA's

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1 budget needs to be made transparent.
2 New Yorkers need to be able to
3 weigh-in on the MTA's spending, and
4 all seven of the congestion pricing
5 plans need to be rejected.

6 Thank you.

7 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

8 Our next speaker is Lauren
9 Hauptman, followed by Frank Tufano.

10 LAUREN HAUPTMAN: Hello. Can
11 you hear me?

12 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

13 LAUREN HAUPTMAN: My name is
14 Lauren Hauptman. I'm a Manhattan
15 resident and native New Yorker.

16 In general, I support tolling
17 those who use Manhattan's resources
18 without directly contributing to our
19 tax base. But I ask you to consider
20 two things: I live on East 63rd
21 Street and I'm concerned about the
22 increase of both vehicle and
23 pedestrian traffic in this already
24 horribly congested neighborhood, which
25 would be caused by the CBD.

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1 I'm very fortunate to live near
2 the Q line, and I'm further worried
3 that my subway station would become
4 overwhelmed. Please also consider the
5 huge congestion increase in recent
6 years that has been caused by for-hire
7 vehicles, such as Lyfts and Ubers,
8 which clog and pollute the streets of
9 Manhattan. Sadly, it has become much
10 harder to hail a taxi in Manhattan as
11 many drivers have been forced out by
12 the for-hire vehicles and the
13 pandemic. If you exempt medallion
14 green and yellow taxis from the toll,
15 you will achieve every anti-congestion
16 goal associated with the new plan much
17 more quickly. We can literally save
18 the lives of taxi drivers and we can
19 get back to the iconic yellow-cab
20 culture that was a hallmark of
21 Manhattan before Uber and Lyft
22 inundated our streets.

23 Thank you for your time and
24 consideration.

25 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

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1 Our next speaker is Frank
2 Tufano, followed by Janet Mack.

3 Our next speaker is Janet Mack,
4 followed by Brian Henderson.

5 Our next speaker is Brian
6 Henderson, followed by Natascha
7 Sabert.

8 Our next speaker is Natascha
9 Sabert, followed by Michael
10 McAllister.

11 Our next speaker is Michael
12 McAllister, followed by Kathryn
13 Harney.

14 Our next speaker is Kathryn
15 Harney, followed by Choresch Wald.

16 Our next speaker is Choresch
17 Wald, followed by Ted Monjure.

18 CHORESH WALD: Can you hear me?

19 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

20 CHORESH WALD: Good afternoon.

21 My name is Choresch Wald. I'm a
22 resident of the East Village of
23 Manhattan, deep in the congestion
24 pricing zone.

25 I am here to raise my support of

1 the plan and to ask that there will be
2 no exemptions for drivers other than
3 those that have already been approved
4 as part of the legislation that
5 created the congestion pricing plan.

6 We are a family of five that
7 lives in lower Manhattan without
8 owning a vehicle, same as the other
9 80 percent of our neighborhoods. We
10 walk, we ride a bicycle and we use
11 public transportation. Occasionally,
12 we rent vehicles to drive out of the
13 city and when we take taxis or
14 for-hire vehicles, we pay congestion
15 fees already. It's been three years
16 that we've been doing that.

17 Every speaker before me that
18 mentioned these surcharge, whether by
19 Uber drivers or taxi drivers or
20 passengers, they mentioned the
21 surcharge. It's right to question it.

22 All the money that we are paying
23 is not going back to us. It goes to
24 subsidize outer borough residents that
25 entered the congestion zone by rebates

1 paid to them for using bridges to
2 enter the city.

3 We are part of the vast
4 majority. Eighty percent of area
5 residents don't own a car but suffer
6 from traffic congestion. Our quality
7 of life is degraded by air pollution
8 and noise pollution that creates
9 stress in our life.

10 I'm counting the days until
11 congestion pricing will be in effect,
12 the day when the amount of vehicles on
13 our streets will be reduced. I will
14 be able to enjoy safer streets for my
15 children to ride a bicycle on since
16 the amount of motor vehicles will be
17 reduced.

18 On our recent trip to London,
19 England, I got to experience the
20 affect of the central tolling area.
21 The streets are quiet, public
22 transportation is able to move freely
23 without being stuck in traffic. The
24 air is cleaner and the atmosphere is
25 calmer, all in the center of an eight

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1 and half million city just like ours.

2 We deserve the same high life
3 quality other cities enjoy. Please no
4 carve outs to city employees, federal
5 employees, state employees, no
6 exemptions. Otherwise, this plan is
7 subject to fail. Thank you.

8 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

9 Could you please spell your name
10 for the record.

11 We will request the spelling of
12 your name in the chat. Thank you for
13 your comments.

14 The next speaker is Ted Monjure,
15 followed by Damon ODonnell.

16 Ted, you may unmute and begin
17 your remarks.

18 TED MONJURE: Okay, can you guys
19 hear me?

20 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

21 TED MONJURE: Wonderful.

22 Well, I'm so glad to see that
23 there's a public hearing on this
24 discussion and certainly you all are
25 to be congratulated for hosting this.

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1 I guess, the question that I
2 have is that in listening to this for
3 an hour and a half, my question is
4 what problem is it that is being
5 solved by the congestion pricing? And
6 it sounds like there might be multiple
7 ideas here. I hear about pollution, I
8 hear about congestion of cars, I hear
9 about parking. But the fact that the
10 MTA is involved in the discussion,
11 kind of makes me wonder is this really
12 a financial issue. And if it is, then
13 maybe there should be some thought
14 about what is the problem at the MTA
15 financially.

16 I would think it's an operating
17 cash-flow problem, not capital
18 expenditures. I think the ridership
19 is at 64 percent of prepandemic
20 levels. So what the problem was that
21 you're trying to solve using the money
22 from a congestion tax is to meet an
23 operating deficit of the MTA, which
24 has been, to a certain extent, created
25 by the pandemic.

1 If that's the case, then why
2 don't you start looking at the
3 question of why is the ridership only
4 at 64 percent. Some of these people
5 on these calls have mentioned their
6 concerned about crime. Now, I would
7 think -- I'm a Manhattan resident.
8 I've been here for 31 years, I use the
9 transportation system all the time and
10 I have a car. But I would think that
11 the problem is one of getting the
12 criminals out of the transit system.

13 So you got a lot of fare beaters
14 out there. Why don't you come up with
15 a use of your capital funds to see if
16 there is a way to make it so that a
17 person cannot get on a bus or a subway
18 without paying the fare. People who
19 push people on the railroad tracks and
20 people who stab people, are not the
21 kinds of people who are fare payers.
22 Okay.

23 If you find a way, I'm not
24 saying there is a solution, you have
25 to find a way to make it so that you

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1 can't beat the fare. And that way the
2 operating deficit of the MTA doesn't
3 have to be quite so large.

4 If we were to roll the clock
5 back, say six years ago, was there an
6 operating deficit of this scale? I
7 don't think so. The problem was then
8 because of a surge of crime and you
9 got to go back to the city and ask the
10 city what are you doing to prosecute
11 fare evading and quality-of-life
12 crimes in the transit system.

13 I think if you bring, you know,
14 the transit system you make it a
15 little bit safer, you bring the safety
16 up, you're going to have more fares
17 and if you have more fares, you solve
18 the operating problem. But the idea
19 you're going to solve it with
20 congestion pricing, this is not the
21 right time.

22 You got to get workers downtown,
23 you got to get them in those buildings
24 so the city can collect its property
25 taxes, otherwise the city is going to

1 have a budget deficit.

2 Anyway, those are my
3 observations, and thank you for
4 listening.

5 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

6 The next speaker is Damon
7 ODonnell, followed by Terese Kreuzer.

8 Our next speaker and 204th on
9 our list, is Terese Kreuzer, followed
10 by Joseph Verebes.

11 The next speaker is Joseph
12 Verebes, followed by Stacey Shub.

13 The next speaker is Stacey Shub,
14 followed by P. Ferrara.

15 The next speaker is P. Ferrera,
16 followed by Adam Purpara.

17 The next speaker is Adam
18 Purpura, followed by Sherwyn James.

19 ADAM PURPURA: My name is Adam
20 Purpura. I'm a third generation New
21 Yorker. I love New York.

22 My issue is I work in New Jersey
23 and so I live in Astoria. So I
24 commute, I have a sales job, I've been
25 a small business owner as well.

1 And so as far as that, commuting
2 we know working in New Jersey, I'm
3 paying taxes in New Jersey and paying
4 taxes in New York, which is an issue.
5 Pennsylvania and New Jersey have an
6 agreement where they work together
7 that you're taxed once. So that's
8 just the top of it.

9 Living in New York for so many
10 years, we know the Port Authority with
11 the tolls, we had toll booths, we had
12 people working there, that took those
13 jobs away. And as far as that, you
14 know, these bridges and everything
15 have been paid off for many years.

16 And I speak of the majority of
17 the working-class, you know, these
18 issues now with the MTA I feel that
19 they are doing it the wrong way. I
20 think legally should have been with a
21 law where people vote, not through a
22 character as far as the way we're
23 doing it today. So I hear everybody's
24 issues but I'm for no on this.

25 Thank you.

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1 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

2 Our next two speakers are
3 Sherwyn James followed by Andrew Fink.

4 We've reached the final two
5 speakers on our list of those who
6 signed up or requested to speak.
7 After they've both been given an
8 opportunity to speak, we'll then read
9 again the names of all speakers who
10 were previously called, but did not
11 speak yet.

12 As we make our way through the
13 list of speakers for the second time,
14 those present who have not spoken yet,
15 will be given an opportunity to
16 comment. Again, if you missed your
17 name being called, did not sign up to
18 speak but would like to speak or have
19 joined the Zoom under a name that is
20 different from the one you used when
21 you signed up to speak, please
22 identify yourself in the Q&A function.
23 You may also request to speak
24 anonymously.

25 Our next speaker is Sherwyn

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1 James, followed by Andrew Fink.

2 Sherwyn, you may unmute yourself
3 and begin your remarks.

4 SHERWYN JAMES: Hello, and good
5 afternoon, can everyone hear me?

6 MS. FLAX: Yes, we can.

7 SHERWYN JAMES: Very good.

8 Thank you for allowing me to speak.

9 My name is Sherwyn James. I'm a
10 Southeast Queens resident and I wanted
11 to call and let it be known that I am
12 vehemently opposed to congestion
13 pricing in the City of New York.

14 There are a lot of individuals and
15 families that live in the Southeast
16 Queens area, of which I'm a part,
17 which consists of Rosedale, Laurelton,
18 Springfield Gardens and beyond, who
19 traditionally have to utilize the
20 roadways to travel, whether from our
21 area in Southeast Queens outside of
22 the New York City area.

23 As of right now, there is no
24 real route where you don't have to pay
25 a fare or pay some kind of a toll in

1 order to literally leave New York City
2 or to come through New York City in
3 one way form or fashion to go into
4 Manhattan.

5 Implementing congestion pricing
6 what we're really saying is anyone and
7 everyone who desires to drive or use a
8 motor vehicle in order to get into
9 Manhattan, will now currently have to
10 pay a significant -- what is being
11 proposed as a significant toll.

12 That's going to have an adverse
13 impact when a lot of working-class
14 families, a lot of seniors in my
15 community, a lot of people who are
16 basically on the margins. Southeast
17 Queens is a community where a
18 significant portion of our community
19 are losing their homes because of
20 their difficulties in paying property
21 taxes.

22 We already pay the MTA through
23 our utility bills and many other means
24 of payment. We're paying fares, we're
25 paying an MTA surcharge through our

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1 utility bills, we're paying high tolls
2 when we come across the Verrazzano
3 Bridge, we're paying tolls when we go
4 across the Triborough Bridge. And now
5 here we're asked, yet again, to pay
6 another toll, which is really just
7 another name for a tax. How ever you
8 want to call it, it's a tax. And it's
9 unfortunate.

10 We understand there is a need to
11 address issues of congestion but the
12 reality is that the city has created
13 some of the congestion problems that
14 we have by the reduction and
15 elimination of lanes throughout our
16 city. That is one of the problems
17 that we have that contributes to
18 congestion and that's a reality. It's
19 not necessarily because we just simply
20 have this influx of vehicles using the
21 roadway and in part, we have it now
22 post-COVID or since COVID as a result
23 of people feeling very unsafe on the
24 MTA utilize transportation facilities.

25 I think we need to look at other

1 ways of being able to address the
2 MTA's shortfall. We need to have an
3 outside firm to be able to look at and
4 analyze how the MTA's spending their
5 resources. But I'm vehemently opposed
6 to congestion pricing in any way, form
7 or fashion. And quite frankly, I
8 think that our elected officials need
9 to be held responsible --

10 MS. FLAX: Please conclude your
11 remark.

12 SHERWYN JAMES: -- for this and
13 we need to address this in some other
14 way other than raising fares on the
15 residents of --

16 MS. FLAX: Thank you.

17 Our next speaker, before we call
18 the list of speakers a second time,
19 will be Andrew Fink.

20 ANDREW FINK: I appreciate the
21 time.

22 So I live in the Central
23 Business District. I have a car, I
24 use it occasionally. I'm lucky in
25 that even if this get enacted, I'll be

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1 able to pay it. I know I'm super
2 lucky.

3 I was on the first session two
4 nights ago, I've been on this session.
5 The amount of people on here who are
6 adversely affected by this is
7 incredible and we all can agree this
8 represents a fraction of the
9 population. These are the people who
10 are speaking on this, how this will
11 affect them negatively. I mean, we
12 can all agree there's going to be tons
13 of people who are affected similarly
14 who are not speaking on this or are
15 not on this.

16 I wish this dialogue was two-way
17 because as an example, Ted, the
18 speaker a few minutes ago, raised a
19 great question; what are you trying to
20 solve? That deserves an answer to the
21 public as a whole. This is a one-way
22 conversation. It's basically this is
23 the MTA's business proposal and now
24 this is a session for people to kind
25 of make their feelings heard. This

1 needs to be a two-way dialogue. His
2 question is completely legitimate and
3 deserves an answer to the public as a
4 whole.

5 The fact that there are not
6 two-way dialogues going on with people
7 able to answer questions and get --
8 ask questions and get answers, that's
9 just kind of a -- that encapsulates
10 issues with government. This is not a
11 fair way or a fair hearing to go about
12 this.

13 I know you can't answer
14 questions that we have but can I get a
15 show of hands from all the people on
16 the DOT and MTA on here, a share of
17 hands, who feels sympathy and empathy
18 from a lot of the people that have
19 spoken earlier with how this will
20 fiscally affect them?

21 Can we see a show of hands from
22 that, that they feel sympathy and
23 empathy? I mean, I kind of see three
24 there. There should be five for five.

25 If you don't have sympathy and

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1 empathy for these stories, there's
2 something really wrong. How about
3 now, can we get a show of hands from
4 the people on this, who's going to go
5 back to whether it's their bosses,
6 their executives making decisions and
7 make sure that they emphasize how many
8 people of the 200-plus speakers are
9 going to be fiscally impacted by this?
10 Can we get a show of hands? Who's
11 going to go back and make that message
12 clear?

13 I mean, I saw one up there,
14 William.

15 This is just a cash grab. This
16 is not a solution for whatever issues
17 you're trying to solve by taxing here
18 and I'll conclude my remarks.

19 My friend's a teacher from
20 Queens, teaches on the Upper West,
21 drives through every day because he
22 coaches three sports. His entire life
23 is dedicated to kids. He has to drive
24 in to be able to get to all the kids.
25 \$25 per day on a teacher's salary for

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1 someone coaching three sports, that's
2 an incredible impact.

3 This is a wrong decision and you
4 need to make sure your bosses know
5 this cannot go through.

6 Thank you.

7 MR. OLIVA: Before we reread the
8 names, I would just like to remind
9 everyone, this hearing is an
10 opportunity for the members of the
11 public to comment on the Environmental
12 Assessment for the Central Business
13 District Tolling Program.

14 Your comments will be recorded
15 in depth and responded to as part of
16 Environmental Process. Responses will
17 not be provided during today's
18 hearing.

19 MR. WOJNAR: I'll begin our
20 second turn through the list with
21 those speakers present.

22 The next speaker is John Lee, to
23 be followed by Julie Tighe.

24 JOHN LEE: I just want to make a
25 few points. The first one is, just

1 recently the Citizens Budget
2 Commission's study they came out with
3 a report on August 23rd, in which they
4 said that New York City Transit is at
5 risk of falling into disrepair. So I
6 just want to make a point that the way
7 the MTA is spending money is not a
8 good way. For example, the project,
9 the 2nd Avenue Subway is costing like
10 four billion dollars per mile and
11 that's, you know, that's like a waste
12 of money when you have infrastructures
13 that's failing.

14 The priority should be right now
15 is to fix the existing transit system,
16 including Long Island Rail Road, New
17 York City Transit and the subway
18 system. If you go on the subway you
19 can notice that the columns are like
20 rusting, you can see water falling
21 when it rains, the waterproofing, you
22 know, just remember that this is more
23 than a hundred year-old system, so it
24 needs to be repaired. I don't think
25 we should spend money on any new

1 projects.

2 So what everyone seems to be
3 saying is, the way MTA is spending
4 money, they should be held
5 accountable. One way to do that would
6 be have a third-party, something like
7 that, a party that can be -- that
8 would bring more transparency to the
9 system. Right now, as you can hear,
10 the public is just not happy with the
11 way MTA is spending its finances. So
12 once you bring in that party, you'll
13 have more of a -- get more respect for
14 what's happening in the MTA.

15 Other things, there was a story
16 about a -- the air quality in the
17 subway. There was a concern about
18 steel dust and there is also a new
19 story that they use magnets to remove
20 some of that dust. I think that's a
21 good idea. They need to find some
22 experts that can look at those issues
23 and solve those kind of problems.

24 You really need technical
25 experts, I think that's another issue.

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1 The last 25 years, 30 years you notice
2 it's less technical people within MTA
3 so you really need the outside
4 experts.

5 And the last thing I want to say
6 is that what got us here is this bond
7 issues. In 2008, MTA used bonds to
8 get us into --

9 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude --

10 JOHN LEE: -- so that's all for
11 now.

12 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

13 Our next speaker is Julie Tighe,
14 followed by Susan Parker.

15 JULIE TIGHE: Hello. My name is
16 Julie Tighe. I'm president of the New
17 York League of Conservation Voters,
18 which is a statewide environmental
19 advocacy organization. I live in
20 Hell's Kitchen and I work in the
21 Financial District, so I certainly
22 live and work in the Central Business
23 District.

24 We are longstanding supporters
25 of congestion pricing. We strongly

1 supported its passage in 2019, as well
2 as -- it started in 2008 -- and we're
3 please that the Environmental
4 Assessment has finally been released
5 having been held up by the Trump
6 Administration for two years and after
7 the MTA has held numerous public
8 outreach and stakeholder discussions
9 to come to this point.

10 We urge the USDOT to swiftly
11 approve the Central Business District
12 Tolling Program when the public
13 comment period closes and for the MTA
14 and New York State and city
15 governments to then implement this
16 program as quickly as possible.

17 First and foremost, the EA tells
18 us what we have long known and the
19 answer to the question an earlier
20 speaker asked, congestion pricing will
21 reduce congestion and improve air
22 quality just as it has in London,
23 Stockholm, Singapore and elsewhere.
24 Congestion pricing will result in a 15
25 billion-dollar capital investment in

1 the MTA, which is the lifeblood of the
2 New York Metropolitan region.

3 We can't drive our way out of
4 the climate crisis and we know that
5 overwhelmingly low and moderate-income
6 people use mass transit to travel into
7 the CBD. Congestion pricing won't
8 only benefit Manhattan's Central
9 Business District but the entire
10 region. Funding will be dedicated not
11 just to the subway and bus system, but
12 also in Metro-North and the Long
13 Island Rail Road.

14 By statute, commute time for
15 people who must commute by car will be
16 shorter. Congestion pricing will have
17 significant benefits for the
18 environment. The EA forecasts that
19 the proposed tolling scenarios would
20 decrease VOCs, NOx, carbon monoxide,
21 PM10, PM2.5, and carbon dioxide
22 equivalents across the board in
23 Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn and
24 Suffolk and Hudson counties, with
25 decreases in most of these pollutants

1 in Nassau, Westchester and Putnam
2 counties as well.

3 This represents a meaningful
4 decrease in greenhouse gas emissions
5 from transportation and is a real win
6 for clean air and public health,
7 representing the single biggest step
8 we have taken towards improving air
9 quality since we phased out Number 6
10 home heating oil.

11 I am concerned that under some
12 of the scenarios the EA forecasts
13 potential increase of some of these
14 pollutants in some places, in
15 particular the Bronx and Staten
16 Island. We know that the state can
17 and should comprehensibly mitigate any
18 environmental justice issues caused by
19 changes to traffic patterns with
20 congestion pricing.

21 We encourage capping the Cross
22 Bronx Expressway, improving public
23 transit and building out electric
24 vehicle charging infrastructure and
25 zero-emission public fleets in these

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1 areas and prioritizing clean truck
2 fleets and spending federal
3 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
4 and Inflation Reduction Act
5 transportation dollars.

6 I'm confident that any adverse
7 impacts of congestion pricing can be
8 satisfied through mitigated -- if the
9 state and city governments begin to
10 act on these measures now. We urge
11 you to move forward with congestion
12 pricing with just few exemptions as
13 possible.

14 We thank you again for the
15 opportunity to comment today.

16 MR. WOJNAR: Our next speaker is
17 Susan Parker followed by Tashana
18 Watson.

19 Susan Parker.

20 Susan, if you can unmute and
21 proceed with your comment.

22 We'll have to ask you to submit
23 in another form.

24 We'll go now to Tashana Watson,
25 followed by Inocencio Lopez.

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1 Tashana, if you could unmute and
2 proceed with your comments.

3 TASHANA WATSON: Hi. Yes, I'm
4 not in favor of congestion pricing. I
5 think it's going to be just a
6 fairytale of benefits that we're not
7 going to see.

8 This is just taking money out of
9 hardworking people's pockets. I
10 actually live in Queens, I'm a New
11 York resident for 41 years now. I
12 rarely go to Manhattan but I feel the
13 burden that it's going to put on the
14 regular working people that has to pay
15 this tax. It makes no sense. It
16 really makes no sense.

17 The MTA has their hand in every
18 form of transportation. So it's like
19 they're trying to cripple us to moving
20 around. People mention they have to
21 go on doctor's appointments, some
22 people may be shopping or whatever it
23 is or conducting business. No one is
24 joyriding in that area. People have
25 business to take care of. So even

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1 with the tax, if this does go through
2 and I'm pretty sure that it will, I
3 don't feel that anything that we say
4 is going to change anything, but we're
5 still going to voice our dismay
6 for these choices that are being made.

7 I just feel like it's just
8 another way to put money in the MTA's
9 pockets that's already strangling us
10 to death. Literally everywhere you go
11 is a toll. Tolls, the bridges,
12 everything. MTA is involved in every
13 form of transport in New York City.
14 So I don't see how this is going to
15 help for the environment.

16 They need to be audited, they
17 need to be transparent. I've heard
18 many people say that the MTA has not
19 been transparent.

20 I don't have all the facts, I
21 remember back in 2003 or 2004, the MTA
22 wanted a certain amount of money and
23 it came out that the MTA had a surplus
24 that they were hiding and then after
25 that, I never heard this again. And

1 that was around the time that they
2 started the project of the extension
3 of the 2nd Avenue Subway, which I
4 don't even know if that's been
5 completed yet. That's been like two
6 decades now. Like come on, let's be
7 real.

8 This is very, very wicked of the
9 MTA. They're just greedy. I'm not
10 going to say unfair because everybody
11 that's on that board, you know that
12 this is unfair.

13 It's wickedness and that's all I
14 have to say.

15 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

16 Next speaker, Inocencio Lopez.

17 Michael Murray.

18 Isabella Rieke.

19 Brian Jankowitz.

20 Donald Howell.

21 Daniel Flax.

22 Winston Fernandez.

23 Birain Parikh.

24 Kyle Burford.

25 Jose Liz.

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1 Frank Hernandez.
2 Chris Moody.
3 Jay Rash.
4 Precious Golston.
5 Oscar Ortega.
6 Trevor Sheade.
7 Jose Del Rosario.
8 Alan Pena.
9 Alexander Sanchez.
10 Yoel Mateo.
11 Robert Friedrich.
12 Adrian Mercado.
13 Christopher Reyes.
14 Gerald Adames.
15 Dima Teploff.
16 Paul Wang.
17 Bill Weber.
18 Lori Goodman.
19 Mukul Biswas.
20 Michelle M.
21 Hassan Elhelwa.
22 Imran Rabbani.
23 Norman Edwards.
24 Susan Lee.
25 Yvette Phillips.

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1 Daniel Pizarro.

2 Guy Crowl.

3 Thomas Donnelly.

4 Angel Acevedo.

5 Stuart Keller.

6 MS. FLAX: As we continue making

7 our way through the list of speakers

8 for the second time, if you believe

9 that you missed your opportunity to

10 speak, please identify yourself in the

11 Q&A function.

12 Nick Drossos.

13 Latae Dorsey.

14 Noe Rodriguez Carrero.

15 Alvin Arocho.

16 Tyler Hines.

17 Steve Wang.

18 Vincent Rocco.

19 Kindel James.

20 Darrell G. Fulton.

21 Daniela Cetean.

22 Jose Pichardo.

23 Cesar Garcia.

24 Marcin Gornik.

25 Qiana Raysor.

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1 Eunjoo Lee.
2 Juan Duran.
3 Ellis Ifill.
4 Alex Cedeno.
5 Chris Doyle.
6 Marisa Searle.
7 David Dean.
8 Tiwana Lewis.
9 H. Black.
10 Mike Ash.
11 Philippe Haussmann.
12 Stephon Wallace.
13 Michael Golz.
14 Bhairavi Desai.
15 Jason Anthony.
16 David Zelman.
17 Abram Morris.
18 Gerard Ferrer.
19 Bryan Byrne.
20 Thaddeus Alexandria Jr.
21 Lesley Halliday.
22 Paoyi Chang.
23 Cristian Munoz.
24 Denise Williams.
25 MR. WOJNAR: If you did not sign

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1 up to speak but would like to speak or
2 joined Zoom under a name different
3 from the one you used when you signed?
4 Up to speak, please identify yourself
5 in the Q&A function.

6 Fatima Ahmad.

7 Jose Paulino.

8 Sara Mahmoud.

9 Anthony Tuck.

10 Janice Gardner.

11 Scott Sloat.

12 Mary Anne McElroy.

13 Cerise Ann.

14 Meilyn Espinosa.

15 Amel Halper.

16 Ivan Ventura.

17 Shmuel Avital.

18 Ali Madu.

19 Hannah Kushner.

20 Josh Gottheimer.

21 Manirul Islam.

22 Stephanie Peterson.

23 John Banzer.

24 Vicki Madden.

25 Morgan Adzei.

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1 Erich Makarov.

2 Christian Baum.

3 Danny Sena.

4 We'll jump to Frank Hardaway.

5 Frank is ready.

6 Frank Hardaway.

7 FRANK HARDAWAY: Good afternoon.

8 Frank Hardaway, can anybody hear me?

9 MR. WOJNAR: Yes, we can.

10 FRANK HARDAWAY: Okay. Thank
11 you.

12 Anyway, I'd like to share about
13 I am in favor of congestion pricing.
14 I am in favor of congestion but with
15 condition.

16 I think you need to expand even
17 further more. Currently in the
18 Central Business District right now,
19 currently, the way I see it, the way I
20 study, I don't think it's enough.
21 Actually, I think you should expand in
22 all five boroughs, not just in
23 Manhattan. How about Brooklyn, Staten
24 Island, Queens and the Bronx? Look at
25 all the main arteries throughout the

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1 Metropolitan, people coming inside the
2 five boroughs and even outside the
3 five boroughs, vice versa.

4 I see the tremendous money
5 opportunity out there I believe the
6 politicians is really sitting on. The
7 MTA Bridges and Tunnels, yeah, it's
8 okay. The tolls is fine, you even got
9 the cashless toll, they good and
10 everything.

11 To tell you the truth, y'all
12 complaining about y'all don't have
13 enough money to get this done and get
14 that done. My idea, if you don't
15 follow my advice, y'all going to spend
16 the next one decade, two decade, three
17 -- or the next lifetime talking about
18 this and still nothing get done. But
19 y'all might not agree with my idea or
20 like my idea, but I see it as like a
21 deal thing, as in you might get
22 something back in return.

23 If it goes on and expand --
24 let's say, for example, cashless toll
25 on the Major Deegan Expressway

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1 connected to the New York State
2 Thruway, vice versa, or the Long
3 Island Expressway going into Queens
4 and Nassau and the Southern State and
5 the Bronx River, for example. I'll
6 say how about -- what about the New
7 England Thruway, Interstate 95, how
8 come we can't have cashless toll in
9 there?

10 Look at the Cross Bronx, I see
11 this every day. As a professional
12 school bus driver, I used to drive
13 around in the Bronx. I've seen this
14 on a daily basis. It's like the
15 traffic is terrible. But what I'm
16 telling you is, it's not going to
17 reduce traffic but what I see it as an
18 opportunity so you can make money.
19 You sitting on millions and millions
20 of dollars a year but you not
21 exercising -- you could make like not
22 just a year, maybe it could be a month
23 or so.

24 There's money to make for
25 transportation infrastructure too.

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1 It's right there underneath your nose.
2 It been under our nose for many, many
3 years. If you do a little study and
4 research you'll understand what I'm
5 talking about. Consider and think
6 about these things. Do your research,
7 do your study --

8 MR. WOJNAR: Please conclude
9 your remarks.

10 FRANK HARDAWAY: Thank you, sir.

11 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

12 FRANK HARDAWAY: I'll be back
13 another --

14 MR. WOJNAR: Our next speaker is
15 Glen Bolofsky, followed by Joseph
16 Verebes.

17 GLEN BOLOFSKY: Good afternoon,
18 everybody. I want to thank city DOT,
19 the state DOT, USDOT, the MTA, all the
20 authorities to be here today on a
21 beautiful Saturday in August. I
22 appreciate everybody being here and
23 for this democratic process engaging
24 the public process.

25 The simple truth is that as a

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1 born and bred New Yorker, 66 years
2 old, I've ridden the subways all my
3 life. I don't think there's enough
4 money in the world to fix them. It's
5 a sad statement, I don't like making
6 this statement but sometimes you have
7 to start fresh. I know this is not on
8 the table today, but this is my
9 opportunity to speak to everybody.

10 So I just think we're pouring
11 money down a hole, literally that's
12 rat infested, filled with crime and
13 the only way it's ever going to come
14 back to life is not because of money.
15 It's because if every municipal
16 worker, state, city, federal actually
17 picks up a broom and a mop and a towel
18 and cleans everyday because we just
19 don't have enough workforce, or not
20 enough incentivized workforce to clean
21 it.

22 The only way to get things clean
23 is to get your hands dirty. No matter
24 how much money you throw at it, it's
25 not going to clean it up and I'm very

1 sad to say this, but it's a truthful
2 statement in my view, plus the fact
3 that nobody believes for a second that
4 congestion is going to -- of vehicles,
5 bicycles and pedestrians is going to
6 decrease. It's just a nickname, it's
7 congestion pricing.

8 I would be remiss if I didn't
9 give due credit to former Mayor Mike
10 Bloomberg and also give respect to --
11 may he rest in peace -- Sheldon
12 Silver, who are two people who are
13 unfortunately not here today. But
14 this is the Mike Bloomberg program,
15 make no mistake about it whether
16 you're in favor of it or not.

17 I want to thank the panel for
18 its time and wish everybody good
19 health.

20 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

21 The next speaker is Joseph
22 Verebes.

23 Joseph, you may be on mute.

24 JOSEPH VEREBES: Hi, can people
25 hear me?

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1 Yes, we can.

2 JOSEPH VEREBES: Okay. Thank
3 you.

4 Thanks for the opportunity to
5 speak. I just wanted to briefly state
6 that I am very much against congestion
7 pricing. I live in the zone that will
8 be affected and interesting the area in
9 the zone I live in is primarily
10 residential. Anyway, it's the
11 StuyTown area, so I've never quite
12 understood why that part of the city
13 is in the zone.

14 Aside from that, I just want to
15 say as somebody whose lived in this
16 city all his life and has owned a car,
17 you know, I basically use mass transit
18 whenever I can. If I could get
19 somewhere using the bus or subway, I
20 do it. It's just that a lot of places
21 are not feasible to reach by mass
22 transit, especially if a person wants
23 to enjoy things outside of New York
24 City and other parts of the state that
25 are available to do you. You just

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1 can't get there by bus, subway or even
2 Metro-North.

3 So to be charged extra money on
4 top of, you know, tolls and taxes and
5 everything else that car owners are
6 already paying, just doesn't seem fair
7 especially to those who live in the
8 zone.

9 The other thing I'll say is, you
10 know, not all that long ago, I had
11 unfortunately to take a family member
12 back and forth to a medical facility
13 for radiation treatment at 7:00 in the
14 morning and to have -- you know, incur
15 a 20-something-dollar charge for
16 something like that every time I use
17 the car, which was every single day
18 for a month, it just would have been
19 another burden to add. That just
20 doesn't seem to be fair to me and to
21 other New Yorkers who are in a similar
22 situation.

23 Last thing I'll say is I know a
24 number of people who own small
25 businesses. A lot of them mentioned

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1 -- the guy who cuts my hair, my barber
2 drives into the city every morning.
3 He gets there by 7:00, works a ten,
4 twelve-hour day and drives home. And
5 he's told me that, you know, where he
6 lives in Queens it just wouldn't be
7 feasible to run his business if he had
8 to take mass transit.

9 Overall I think mass transit is
10 great. I use it whenever I could but
11 there are times that I and others need
12 to use a car and this is just going to
13 be something that's going to make that
14 overly expensive and burdensome and I
15 honesty say, for myself and a lot of
16 people I know, we're not going to vote
17 in the future for anybody who
18 supported this.

19 Thank you very much.

20 MR. WOJNAR: Thank you.

21 If you missed your name being
22 called, did not sign up to speak but
23 would like to or if you joined the
24 Zoom under a name different from the
25 one you used when you signed up,

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1 please identify yourself in the Q&A
2 function. You may also request to
3 speak anonymously.

4 Ryanne Milligan.

5 Juliet Alexander.

6 George Pilieri.

7 Muneeb Rehman.

8 Tracy Annunziato.

9 Jen Sobers.

10 Michael McLaughlin.

11 MS. FLAX: Jeany Lochard.

12 Elain de Vera.

13 Jovanna Marc.

14 Knm Rabbi.

15 Dorma Seepersayd.

16 Walter Iwachiw.

17 James Cane.

18 Richard Bert.

19 Daisy Ramos.

20 Alexander Kramer.

21 Peter Reiter.

22 John Bonafede.

23 Kate Corkery.

24 Ron Simoncini.

25 Evelyn Stier.

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Cathy Burton.
Joseph Bergdoll.
Ian Robinson.
Rafael Reyes.
Jorge Urena.
Melissa Cromwell.
Dayz Black.
Steven Salvesen.
Annie Troy.
Lorenz Skeeter.
Dina Ruiz.
Lopen Zuo.
Frank Tufano.
Janet Mack.
Brian Henderson.
Natascha Sabert.
Michael McAllister.
Kathryn Harney.
Damon ODonnell.
Terese Kreuzer.
Stacey Shub.
P. Ferrara.

This concludes our second
run-through of the list of those who
signed up to speak.

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1 MR. OLIVA: Thank you all for
2 joining us today.

3 For those who did not do so
4 already, we encourage you to take our
5 short survey via the QR code or link
6 currently being displayed. The link
7 can also be found in the Q&A section
8 of the Zoom.

9 For details about upcoming
10 hearings, please visit the project
11 website at mta.info/CBDTP or call the
12 Public Meeting Hotline at (646)
13 252-6777.

14 As a final reminder, in addition
15 to the virtual public hearings, there
16 are several other ways you can provide
17 comments on the Environmental
18 Assessment through September 9, 2022.
19 We encourage the public to comment via
20 the CBDTP website, where you can also
21 find the latest project information
22 and sign up to stay informed via
23 e-mail.

24 You may also e-mail comments to
25 CBDTP@mtabt.org, send them via mail to

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1 CBD Tolling Program, 2 Broadway, 23rd
2 Floor, New York, New York 10004, or
3 call (646) 252-7440.

4 Comments may also be provided
5 directly to the Federal Highway
6 Administration via email to
7 CBDTP@dot.gov, or via mail to FHWA -
8 New York Division, RE: CBDTP, Leo W.
9 O'Brien Federal Building, 11A Clinton
10 Avenue, Suite 719, Albany, New York
11 12207.

12 The time is currently 2:44 p.m.
13 This concludes our hearing. Thank you
14 again for your participation.

15 (TIME NOTED: 2:44 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 27th day of August, 2022.

Makeda Edwards

MAKEDA EDWARDS