



*FROM NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBER*



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# DAVID I. WEPRIN

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CHAIRMAN, FINANCE COMMITTEE

*For Immediate Release*

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## **Congestion Pricing Not A Lock**

City Hall, NY – Council Member David I. Weprin (D-Hollis), Chair of the New York City Council Finance Committee, was joined by Walter McCaffrey of [Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free](#), Transportation chair James Trent of the [Queens Civic Congress](#) and Corey Bearak, President of the [Queens Civic Congress](#), as Councilman Weprin renewed his call for Chairman Marc Shaw and fellow members of the New York City Traffic Mitigation Commission not to consider the tolling of the four East River Bridges, which has been free to New Yorkers since 1911. “Charging a toll on any of the four bridges is the equivalent to charging residents to cross the street – however in this case it’s a river,” stated Councilman Weprin.

The Traffic and Congestion Mitigation Commission released its Interim Report last week which included a proposal to toll the East River Bridge Crossings. Walter McCaffrey of [Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free](#) stated, “It is time for the Traffic Mitigation Commission to accept the public’s concerns and put forward only those traffic plans that do not create onerous and costly burdens on our city and its residents.”

It was estimated back in 2003 that a toll would affect nearly 200,000 commuters from Brooklyn and Queens. According to Councilman Weprin, “any modest reduction in the number of cars could cause a decline of well over \$1.5 billion annually in economic activity and a potential loss of 15, 000 jobs.”

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Mayor Bloomberg first proposed tolling the four East River Bridge crossing back in 2002, when the City was facing a budget gap of \$3 billion. Weprin pointed out that “it is interesting that as talks of budget woes ahead begin, due to the mortgage crisis, the decline in the housing market and less than a stellar year on Wall Street, the proposal of tolling the four bridges pops its ugly head again.” We should not be trying to finance a budget with sneaky, regressive user fees that will primarily affect working, outer borough families,” declared Weprin.

Councilman Weprin, who represents the eastern portion of Queens has been a staunch opponent of the Mayor’s Congestion Pricing Plan. While opposed to the congestion pricing tax he [Weprin] also spoke of having a “lock box” as part of any discussion and final proposal.

“You may be wondering, if I am against Congestion Pricing then why am I bringing up the “Lock Box” issue; I say that if you are going to have a legitimate debate about this issue it should be done with all the pieces”, stated Weprin. “But at the end of the day, no matter how you dress it up and how you sell it – it’s still a tax”, Weprin added.

Queens Civic Congress Transportation Chair James Trent added, “New Yorkers deserve better than promises about better mass transit that cannot be kept when they are again being asked to shell out more for less. Walter McCaffrey added, “the people of New York City have never been given a lock box assurance that the money will be dedicated to mass transit improvements.”

Councilman Weprin also renewed his call for members of the public to reach out to their state and local representatives letting them know they are opposed to any new tax, specifically the congestion pricing tax. He also suggested that residents opposed to any and all of the proposed congestion pricing plans to “attend one of the 5 public hearings, within the city and share your opposition or just show your support for your fellow New Yorker who is”, concluded Weprin.

*Note: Councilman Weprin will be testifying at the Public Hearing scheduled to take place on Wednesday January 16, 2008, at Hunter College.*

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Left to right, Glen Oaks Village (Co-op) Owners President Robert Friedrich, [Queens Civic Congress](#) Vice President Richard Hellenrecht who also chairs [Queens Community Board 13](#), City Council Finance Committee Chair David Weprin, and former NYC Councilman Walter McCaffrey of [Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free](#).



Left to right, [Queens Civic Congress](#) President Corey Bearak, Glen Oaks Village (Co-op) Owners President Friedrich, Councilman Weprin, and former NYC Councilman McCaffrey of [Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free](#).