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**MTA Central Business District Tolling Program
Public Meeting: Northern NYC Suburbs
Testimony by Walter Zullig, MNRCC Member
October 5, 2021**

Good evening. My name is Walter Zullig and I am speaking as a member of the Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council, and as a long-time Westchester resident who travels regularly on Metro-North.

Traffic congestion is a serious problem in Manhattan and beyond. Heavy air pollution, reduced quality of life, and extensive delays can all be mitigated through congestion pricing. It's only fair to require drivers to bear more of the cost of our streets to make the region healthier, safer, and better for everyone.

Congestion pricing will help us avoid a grim reality for the MTA's future. Federal emergency funding will dry up sooner than we are prepared for, and without a long-term strategy like congestion pricing, everyday subway, bus, and commuter rail riders will take the hit. The billion dollars bonded to \$15 billion dollars brought in annually by congestion pricing are more than just crucial: they will be the lifeblood of the entire New York City metropolitan area.

With congestion pricing, Metro-North can become the best option for even more Westchester and other Hudson Valley residents. Projects like repairing and making more stations ADA accessible; extending Metro-North to Penn Station and adding four more stations in the Bronx; and making critical track, signal, and power upgrades along the Hudson, Harlem, and New Haven lines as well as the West of Hudson lines will ensure that our communities have safe, reliable, efficient service. Public transit is already the most environmentally friendly form of transportation, but we have to make sure that we're prepared to face worsening climate change and extreme weather by funding critical infrastructure improvements around the region.

Congestion pricing with few exemptions is the only feasible way to raise funding for essential improvements to Metro-North. It's the best way to make sure that fare discounts and flexible fare options are possible, bringing more riders to the commuter rail system by making it more affordable.

Thanks to congestion pricing, the transit system we desperately need is in sight. And to my fellow Westchester residents I say: take Metro-North the next time you go down to the city. You'll have a more relaxing trip while helping to make our entire region stronger than ever.