**Congestion Pricing Testimony**

**By: Jessica Spezio Administrative Assistant, PCAC**

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Good afternoon, my name is Jessica Spezio and I am the Administrative Assistant for the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC. I’m speaking today in support of Congestion Pricing on behalf of transit riders and drivers around the region.

I live in a subway desert in Bergen Beach, Brooklyn. My options to get to work in Lower Manhattan are limited: with no rail service close by, I can take the express bus, a slow local bus to a long subway ride, or drive my car. Taking transit is still my best choice because it’s more affordable—even when taking the more expensive express bus— and often faster than driving. My express bus commute gives me a pleasant and comfortable one-seat ride into Lower Manhattan or Midtown, but during rush hour the ride can be slow and backed up due to traffic in the tunnel and on the highway. Often, an excessive number of vehicles slow down and delay the express bus, even when it’s in the HOV lane. With school starting up again, my express bus ride will take even longer than during the summer, with more vehicles on the road with people driving to drop off their kids. Congestion Pricing would speed up my express bus commute and make it an even more convenient way for me to get to Manhattan. By decreasing traffic in and around the Central Business District, I’m looking forward to a much faster trip into and out of the city to and from the South East end of Brooklyn.

Congestion Pricing would even help make taking the local bus to the subway more reliable and fast. My bus options include the B41 which runs on the extremely congested Flatbush Avenue and takes much longer than it should to travel towards the 2 and 5 trains or Downtown Brooklyn. By reducing traffic, our bus network will speed up and become a more dependable and efficient way of getting to work.

The funding brought to the MTA by Congestion Pricing will go towards making the transit system more accessible and reliable for all riders. As a former subway conductor, I know how old some of the signals and systems are. They need upgrades and the funds that congestion pricing will bring in will help pay for them. I’m excited by the potential of projects like the Interborough Express and future subway extensions to bring subway access to neighborhoods like mine that do not currently have rail stations. Congestion Pricing will help fund these critical improvements and upgrades to the transit system, speeding up commutes for the majority of New Yorkers who travel by transit. Thank you.