**Congestion Pricing Pause Will Hurt the Operating Budget and the Economy Too**

**Testimony to the MTA Board by Lisa Daglian**

**July 31, 2024**

Good morning, I’m Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC.

July 30th would have marked a month since the start of congestion pricing. As of noon yesterday, more than $83.5 million in toll revenue has been lost, while more than 4.5 million vehicles not removed from the zone spewed more than 214,000 tons of carbon dioxide into our air. New Yorkers spent more than 1.2 million hours stuck in congestion. Thanks to Streetsblog for providing us with daily, updated doomscrolling on the damage being created by Governor Hochul’s pause. Reinvent Albany reminds us that more than 100,000 jobs around the state are at risk.

Yesterday, Governor Hochul announced $54 million for utility relocation work on the Second Avenue Subway. That’s akin to asking to be a hero for putting out a fire that you, yourself started – and using a water bottle instead of a fire extinguisher. Hey, we’ll take it! But construction companies can’t work in fits and starts, unsure of where the next $54 million – or $15 billion – is going to come from.

That’s all included in [our new report](https://pcac.org/report/15facts/), together with the NY Building Congress, debunking 15 myths about congestion pricing with cold, hard facts.

Myth #12 is particularly pertinent today: Pausing congestion pricing won’t affect the MTA’s operating budget.

Fact: if the MTA issues debt earlier than anticipated – as it would to cover the cost of state-of-good-repair projects that still need to be completed in the current capital program – it would need to pay down the debt service from the operating budget. The effect on operating funding, which pays for the labor, fuel, and other resources needed to maintain the service riders count on, could lead to service cuts, layoffs, and drastic fare increases.

More facts:

**Congestion pricing will not hurt low-income New Yorkers.**

**Congestion pricing is crucial to economic growth for New York.**

**There is no alternative to congestion pricing and if it does not resume, New Yorkers and the MTA will irrevocably suffer.**

Governor Hochul: the best way to work through more delays that will arise is to follow the law and unpause the pause.