

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 21, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

As representatives of New York State's 10th & 12th Congressional Districts, representing Manhattan and Brooklyn, we extend our appreciation to the Department of Transportation (USDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for their commendable work on New York's Central Business District (CBD) Tolling Program, also known as "congestion pricing." As the representatives for the Central Business District, we recognize your steadfast support of this initiative, which will address the challenges of traffic congestion and air pollution in New York City, as an invaluable asset in our effort to expedite the implementation of congestion pricing. Therefore, we write to request that USDOT reaffirm its commitment to implementing congestion pricing in New York and issue the program a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) without further delay.

Recent data reveals that traffic congestion in Manhattan's CBD has reached critical levels, jeopardizing our communities' health, safety, and infrastructure viability. The average speed of vehicles in the area has decreased from 6.5 miles per hour in 2010 to 4.7 miles per hour in 2019. More than 2.9 million people (76% of commuters) entered the CBD by some form of public transit, while the remaining 910,000 (24% of commuters) traveled by car, taxi, van, or truck, which added 728,000 private vehicles to Manhattan's streets. Approximately 89,000 (12%) of those vehicles entered the New Jersey district through the Holland Tunnel and Lincoln Tunnel. The other 88% – over 3 million private vehicles – entered the district from north of 60th Street (40%), Brooklyn (30%), and Queens (18%). This congestion, in total, is accountable for almost 25% of New York City's greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to the city's worsening air quality.

As you know, New York City's subways and buses are the lifelines of the city's transportation system, providing affordable and efficient daily transportation for millions of riders. These systems have been underfunded for decades, resulting in delays, disruptions, and safety concerns. The revenue generated by congestion pricing will generate \$15 billion annually in funding for necessary improvements and expansions to our city's public transit system, ensuring that it remains a dependable and affordable option for commuters.

We contend that congestion pricing is the requisite solution to New York City's growing traffic. By bringing congestion pricing to fruition, we aspire to lead the nation as the trailblazer of this contemporary and modern approach to remedying traffic, improving air quality, and funding public transit. Congestion pricing has been successfully implemented in major cities around the world. In London, traffic congestion in the city center declined by 30% after congestion pricing was implemented, and public transportation usage increased by 30%.

New York aims to use congestion pricing to establish a virtuous cycle: tackle congestion, reduce tailpipe emissions, fund major transit investments, and ultimately, increase transit ridership while also creating a new source of funding to improve the CBD's streetscape, incorporating new bike lanes, pedestrian walkways, and public spaces, thereby enhancing the overall quality of life for our constituents.

We acknowledge that there may be political challenges to implementing congestion pricing in New York City. However, as the sole representatives of those who live in the Central Business District and bear the brunt of the congestion and environmental impacts, we firmly believe that the program's environmental assessment of congestion pricing was thorough and comprehensive. The pressing challenges of traffic congestion and air pollution in Manhattan's CBD require immediate action, and congestion pricing offers a solution to these problems.

We strongly encourage USDOT to stay the course in ensuring the implementation of congestion pricing can meet an early-2024 deadline. The bottom line is this: New York is doing the work to fight the climate crisis, advance transit equity, and better serve disadvantaged populations. If the goal is to build back better, New York must be allowed to set the standard for tolling vehicle trips into urbanized metro centers that already have too much traffic and pollution. We appreciate your commitment and support towards this program and look forward to collaborating with you to materialize it.

Sincerely,



Jerry Nadler
Member of Congress



Daniel Goldman
Member of Congress