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Governor Kathy Hochul

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To Whom It May Concern,

We, the *Congestion Pricing Now* Coalition, write to express our continued support for New York's Central Business District (CBD) Tolling Program and to thank the members of the Traffic Mobility Review Board (TMRB) for your service.

We would like to express our strong support for the use of bridge and tunnel toll credits to be included as part of the TMRB's recommendations. Crediting bridge and tunnel tolls can significantly reduce excess travel, particularly through environmental justice communities. It is incredibly important for the TMRB, the State, and the MTA to ensure the implementation of congestion pricing is equitable, and that no communities are disproportionately impacted by toll shopping, to the greatest extent possible.

As it currently stands, about two-thirds of drivers enter the CBD for free, while about a third pay a variety of different toll rates depending on the route used. This increases traffic congestion in neighborhoods that host the free crossings, causing substantial health and environmental impacts. Ideally, the congestion pricing program would try to avoid a CBD tolling system that would not only maintain existing toll shopping but likely increase it. While much of the focus of toll credits has been on the Hudson River crossings, we believe that toll shopping could be even more significant on the East River crossings, with congestion – and vehicular emissions – increasing in neighborhoods surrounding the free bridges.

In order to do this, the congestion pricing program will need to apply toll credits, or off-sets, to reduce any incentive to drive further to avoid a particular toll as much as possible. This will require looking at the total cost of trips and to consider MTA and Port Authority tolls rather than simply looking at the congestion pricing charge in isolation. Working to achieve cost equalization between bridges and tunnels

entering the Manhattan CBD will allow drivers to use the most efficient crossing without the need for toll shopping, allowing for a more even, equitable flow of traffic into the area.

Additionally, our coalition strongly advocates for a per-ride surcharge paid by the passenger, rather than a once-per-day toll paid by the driver. For-hire vehicles (FHVs) are a significant cause of congestion and vehicular emissions within the central business district. However, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has determined FHV drivers are an important environmental justice (EJ) community. As a result, the Environmental Assessment approved by FHWA limits tolling on FHVs to once per day. Our coalition firmly believes that eliminating the once-per-day toll and replacing it with a per-ride surcharge will do far more to reduce congestion, protect drivers, and generate revenue for public transit. However, our coalition does not believe that a per-trip surcharge should be applied to taxis, which have already been burdened by required medallion investment.

We thank you for your dedication to this important issue.

Thank you,
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