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Susan Goldstein
President



Bridges and Tunnels

July 30, 2009

Dear M:

MTA Headquarters has forwarded me your letter of July 16, 2009 to MTA Chairman-nominee Jay Walder concerning the gates on MTA Bridges and Tunnels' E-ZPass lanes. I am responding on behalf of Acting MTA Executive Director Helena Williams. The gates on MTA Bridges and Tunnels' E-ZPass lanes serve two basic functions: 1) to enhance safety; and 2) to secure agency revenues.

Safety for customers and employees is the number one priority on our facilities. We have employed gates in our E-ZPass lanes because it serves to meter the traffic through the lanes, enabling both E-ZPass and cash lane traffic to merge safely beyond the plaza. Also, many of our employees are engaged in toll collection or maintenance activities and must cross toll lanes to get to their assignments. Therefore, vehicles traveling at highway speeds without slowing down would be a significant safety hazard for our employees.

We also have a fiduciary role to support mass transit in the region with our toll revenue – a special role not shared by most other toll agencies in the region. In 2008, MTA Bridges and Tunnels contributed over \$708 million to support mass transit at our sister MTA agencies. Recent studies have found that the revenue loss of gateless toll lanes could approach 5% for some agencies. For an agency like MTA Bridges and Tunnels, which collected roughly \$1.3 billion in 2008, even a loss rate of one-half that amount would result in approximately \$30 million per year that would no longer go to support mass transit services throughout the region. With that said, there is rapid development of new technologies in the toll industry that may permit higher-speed, all-electronic tolling in the future. MTA Bridges and Tunnels is continuing to study the new technologies to measure their impact on agency revenues, as well as, their safety implications.

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I would also like to address your question about the possibility of one-way tolling at MTA Bridges and Tunnels' facilities. While it is a worthwhile idea to consider, the problem is that it would likely create significant diversions from the untolled City bridges to the B&T crossings in the untolled direction, with the opposite impact in the reverse direction, causing massive delays on the major arterial approaches to our facilities throughout the day, not just during rush hour. As a result, MTA Bridges and Tunnels has decided to maintain two-way toll collection for the foreseeable future, except at the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge where federal law requires one-way toll collection.

I want to thank you for bringing your concerns about MTA Bridges and Tunnels' toll collection system to the MTA's attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Kupferman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Susan L. Kupferman
President