



June 10, 2024

Greetings –

The Assembly adjourned early Saturday morning after several intensive days of debate and voting. Much significant legislation was passed, despite the Governor creating disruption with her last-minute announcement regarding her intent to shelve congestion pricing, which the legislature refused to go along with.

Leading the Fight Against the Governor’s Attempt to Cancel Congestion Pricing

As those of you who have been following the news know, on Wednesday, Governor Hochul announced that she wanted to “indefinitely delay” implementation of congestion pricing, which was scheduled to begin this June 30th. I went public right away with my opposition and made it clear that I would be voting “No” on any hastily thrown together legislative proposal the Governor might propose to plug the \$15 billion dollar deficit in the MTA capital plan that delaying congestion pricing creates. As I wrote in a Streetsblog op-ed, what the Governor is trying to do is both bad policy and bad politics and created a crisis when one did not exist.



I was one of a relatively small number of elected officials to speak out immediately and decisively against the Governor's misguided maneuver. I am grateful to all the advocacy groups and members of the public who pushed more elected officials to join the coalition openly standing-up to the Governor. My office received hundreds of calls expressing opposition to the Governor and asking for the implementation of congestion pricing and I am appreciative of the words of support I received from many of you.

I have been an advocate of congestion pricing since joining the Assembly in 2017. The benefits of a well-designed congestion pricing program are clear – reduced traffic and improved public transportation that will lead to a more livable, prosperous, and environmentally sustainable city. The program approved by the MTA makes New York a leader in transportation planning in North America, joining other global cities like London, Singapore, and Stockholm where congestion pricing has already been successfully implemented. At the heart of New York's plan is the \$15 billion in capital funding for the MTA that the program will generate. Delaying congestion pricing means jeopardizing many essential projects to modernize and improve our subways, buses, and commuter rails; these range from signal upgrades, to making trains run more efficiently to improving access for disabled riders at stations throughout the system.

The Governor needs to stop playing politics with what is in the best interests of our city and the metropolitan region as a whole and prioritize the millions of people who ride public transportation over a few disgruntled drivers and suburban politicians. The correct thing for the Governor to do is recognize her mistake and let the MTA implement the congestion pricing plan in accordance with State law without further interference.

Legislative Accomplishments

This session three of the bills I was prime sponsor of passed both houses of the legislature and will now be sent to the Governor for her signature and enactment into law: the [Dyslexia Diagnosis Act \(A.2898/S.5481\)](#); [Autobroker Regulation \(A.3499/S.7553\)](#); and the [Wildlife Crossing Act \(A.4243/S.4198\)](#). Key elements of another priority bill of mine, the [Right to Read Act \(A.2897/S.5480\)](#), which would align the State with evidence-based practices when it comes to teaching early literacy, were incorporated into the budget passed in April.

There were also important bills passed that I was proud to co-sponsor and vote for. Among these were the [Climate Super-Fund Act \(A.3351/S.7553\)](#) and the expansion of the City's [Red Light Camera Program \(A.5259/S.2812\)](#).

My bill, the [Dyslexia Diagnosis Act \(A.2898/S.5481\)](#), mandates that private health insurance policies pay for neuropsychological evaluations for the purpose of diagnosing dyslexia and is the first of its kind in the nation. The cost of such evaluations, which can be between \$6,000 - \$10,000, makes them out of reach to many families. An essential part of children with dyslexia and related learning disorders getting the services they need is positive identification of the nature of their disorder and this legislation would change the lives of thousands of children and their families.

My Auto broker Regulation bill ([A.3499/S.7553](#)) brings greater transparency and much needed consumer protections in the sale and purchasing of vehicles. It will prevent deceptive practices by auto brokers and will protect good union jobs in the auto-sales industry.

My [New York Wildlife Crossing Act \(A.4243/S.4198\)](#) directs the State Department of Transportation and New York State Thruway Authority to identify sites in the State where wildlife crossings are most needed both ecologically and in terms of preventing vehicular – wildlife accidents. Wildlife crossings help wildlife adapt to climate change and preserve biodiversity by connecting essential habitats. This bill will better prepare the State to take advantage of the \$350 million allocated in the Federal Infrastructure and Jobs Act for wildlife crossing infrastructure across the United States.

Passage of the [Climate Superfund Act \(A.3351/S.2129\)](#) marks a major environmental victory. This landmark legislation establishes a climate change adaptation cost recovery program, requiring major fossil fuel companies to pay their fair share of climate adaptation and mitigation costs. It is anticipated that these companies will collectively pay \$3 billion annually over twenty-five years that will go towards the infrastructure investments needed to adapt to the impacts of climate change in New York State. The legislation requires that at least one-third of the funds go to disadvantaged communities who have disproportionately been impacted by the effects of climate change.

The Climate Superfund Act is a significant policy measure, but more needs to be done to fight climate change and stem further environmental degradation. For the past two years, I have been strongly advocating for the [New York HEAT Act \(A.4592/S.2016\)](#), attending numerous rallies, and speaking directly with my colleagues about this bill's importance. While this legislation did not pass this session, I remain committed to finding a way forward so that we align utility regulations with the goals of the Climate Change and Community Protection Act and hasten the transition away from fossil fuels. I was also disappointed that the [Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act \(A.5322/S.4246\)](#) did not pass and will continue to advocate for legislation that will lead to a reduction in the vast quantities of waste produced that cannot be recycled and the resulting environmental harm caused.

On a positive note, a major win for street safety was achieved by passing legislation ([A.5259/S.2812](#)) re-authorizing and expanding the City's red light camera program. The number of intersections in the City where there can be red light cameras is increased from 150 to 600, or from about 1% to 5% of all intersections. This expansion will deter reckless driving, prevent accidents, and save lives.

I look forward to continuing to work in partnership with my colleagues, constituents, and residents from across the State as we strive to make policy that best serves the public interest and makes New York both more equitable and sustainable.

Full-Service Friday Wrap Up – Rain Barrels available

Thanks to the hundreds of you who came by my district office on 5/31 to utilize shredding services, patronize the MTA MetroCard van, or pick up a rain barrel. We gave out over 100 rain barrels, but we do have **4 remaining** that people reserved but failed to pick up. If you need one, please call my office at 718-788-7221 or email us at carrollr@nyassembly.gov. Special shout out to Nick from The City Sponge, a

local email newsletter that focuses on resiliency and flooding. [He features the event in his newsletter and offers some helpful information on rain barrels. Check it out here.](#)



Outsmart the Rodents and Attend a Rat Academy Training Session

My office has been fielding a lot of complaints about rats, a city-wide problem that increased during the past few years. In response, the New York City Department of Health has developed a community training course for everyone including homeowners, tenants, property managers and superintendents. During the training sessions you will learn about safe and effective methods for rat prevention in your home and community. This free two-hour training can be tailored to the audience and neighborhood. Typically, this training course is hosted and sponsored by a community partner such as a block or neighborhood association. I have hosted these in the past and my office is happy to work with your neighborhood group to set one up. [You can also sign up as an individual for a scheduled community-based training, the next virtual training is Tuesday, June 18, 5pm to 7 pm. Click here to sign up.](#) For more information on how to host or sponsor a training, email ratportal@health.nyc.gov or call 311.

If you have any concerns about any legislative or community issue, please email me at carrollr@nyassembly.gov or call (718) 788-7221.

-Bobby

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