

Good morning

My name is Michelle Petelicki and I own Panorama Tours, a small woman owned bus company in NJ. We are located in Bergen County, triangled exactly 10 miles from the GWB and 10 miles from the Lincoln Tunnel.

I am testifying today to ask that while working out the parameters of this program that you recognize that all buses both private and public are a part of the solution to the goals you wish to accomplish such as reducing congestion and improving air quality. Buses are not contributors to the problem. Therefore, I ask that an exemption for all buses be built into the final CBD Tolling Program.

Let's talk about congestion: I took this opportunity to put together for you real data from my small company. Although we predominantly service a NJ market, in a 12 month time frame, Panorama took 533 unique trips averaging 47 passengers into the CBD. If each passenger decided to drive themselves into the CBD for their trip to that show, or that restaurant; it would have been an additional 25,051 vehicles in the district. The demographic of those 25,051 passengers stretched across all socio economic classes, all races, and all religions. It included all ages from babies to seniors and because our fleet consists of ADA accessible vehicles, we were able to bring disabled passengers to the district that otherwise may not have been able to get there. We transported residents as well as visitors (both domestic and international) without adding addition cars or worse yet drivers that may be unfamiliar with driving NYC streets. If an additional expense such as a toll would be added to private buses, the cost may not be as advantageous to the riding public ultimately deterring them from using this service.

Now let's move to improving air quality. Buses today are very different from what they were 20 years ago when I entered this business. Buses have always been recognized as being one of the most fuel efficient modes of transportation - getting approximately 280 passenger miles per gallon v's a car that gets approximately 30. Today's buses, however, include technology that does even more. Every bus is manufactured with an engine that requires Diesel Exhaust Fluid to run. This fluid breaks down harmful emissions into non-hazerdous nitrogen and water, therefore reducing a bus's emissions by 90%. In addition to the DEF, every bus has Diesel particulate filters designed to capture and store exhaust soot, keeping it from being expelled into the air that we breathe. These are not the old smokey buses that one may remember from years ago.

To wrap up, I hope I was able to provide you with real examples of how all buses, both private and public are helpful to the success of the CBD Tolling program. To make sure that private buses continue to be a viable service for the public there must be an exemption made for those vehicles as this program is deployed.

Thank you for your time.