



December 7, 2021

PUBLIC COMMENT

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the Executive Director of the Greater New Jersey Motorcoach Association. Our association works in cooperation with national and other state industry associations, local, state, and federal agencies, legislators, suppliers of products and services to the operators, attractions, destinations, and other entities to promote the betterment and welfare of our industry, members, and association objectives. We are governed by a Board of Directors, who are primarily owners of motorcoach companies, and a few non-voting directors from our supplier and destination members. We are proudly celebrating our 40th anniversary this year.

We have asked before, but again we are asking to reconsider hiking tolls for buses. Specifically, we request to be excluded from this hike which we deem as counterproductive to your goals and economically harmful to our members. Our members provide valuable service to consumers and are an integral part of achieving your goals, as buses move people in and out of NYC with efficiency as a provider of “mass transit”.

The toll for buses was half of that for a car from 2001 to 2007. With the increase in 2011, it went up to 100%, which is equal to cars. Based on peak hours, based on a 2.5% inflation rate, by 2026, the toll for a bus is estimated to be at 135% of that for a passenger car. This type of increase is counterproductive and penalizes the use of mass transit, where use of it should be rewarded. Further, imposing a penalty for buses at peak periods does not make sense. Buses move people in and out at peak times, commuters and others that bring revenues to the city of New York. It is peak times when consumers need bussing the most.

In general, our private bus operators, many of which who provide public transportation, already bear the brunt of these increases in cost, along with NJ residents and taxpayers. Ever-increasing costs result in higher fares, and in some cases potentially a loss of service if a route becomes uneconomical to operate. We are not part of the problem; we are the solution. We should be regarded as advocates and not continue to take on the never-ending increases.

Please see the additional points below:

- Buses are part of the solution, not the problem regarding roadway congestion, especially in NYC.
- Buses eliminate fifty cars per bus, given the capacity. I have included a photo for you after my signature, as we believe a picture is worth a thousand words.

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- Buses offer the lowest carbon footprint per passenger mile of any form of transportation. To that point, motorcoaches are the greenest form of mass transportation, public or private. Please review environmental impact here: <https://www.buses.org/aba-foundation/research-summary/environment>.
- In addition, the revenue our industry brings to NYC's tourism, and your overall economic landscape, is enormous. Overall annual sales in NYC coming from motorcoach tourists totaled \$4.15 billion. Motorcoach operators, hotels, entertainment venues, restaurants and retailers who serve these travelers, along with the companies that supply services and materials to them, provide well-paying jobs in New York and pay significant taxes to state and local governments.
- We estimate that New York serves a total of 6,037,083 motorcoach group tourist equivalent people on day trips, and an additional 1,548,153 on overnight stays, for a total of 7,585,236 group tour visitors. It is estimated that 216,721 equivalent motorcoaches visited New York. Hotels in New York provide group motorcoach tourists with an estimated 3,187,195 room nights annually.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Cowley, Executive Director



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