



New York City Environmental Justice Alliance

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On the ground – and at the table

Good afternoon, my name is Kevin Garcia, and I am the Transportation Planner for the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA). Founded in 1991, NYC-EJA is a nonprofit citywide membership network linking grassroots organizations from low-income communities of color in their struggle for environmental justice.

NYC-EJA and other environmental justice advocates have supported the concept of congestion pricing for over 15 years. However, to be a truly environmentally just plan, congestion pricing cannot lead to *any* increases in traffic or emissions in EJ communities - particularly the Bronx. From the Environmental Assessment, it is projected that truck traffic and emissions will increase on some roadways in the Bronx.

The NYS CLCPA called for the identification of “disadvantaged communities” to properly steer 35-40% of the State’s and federal Justice 40 clean energy funds to the most climate-vulnerable communities. Under the draft criteria released by the Climate Justice Working Group, nearly the entire Bronx qualifies as a “disadvantaged community”. Also, under the CLCPA, DEC has embarked on an unprecedented hyper-local air monitoring program for 10 counties across the state - including the Bronx - with the intent of identifying mitigation opportunities. In fact, in her State of the State book, Governor Hochul herself announced her intention to “transform Hunts Point into a Clean Distribution Hub.”

The MTA’s intent to address increased traffic and emissions in the Bronx is woefully inadequate. The MTA and the Hochul administration have obligations **and** ample opportunities to not just shoot for a “net zero” approach to increasing traffic and emissions in the Bronx, but rather to commit to a “net positive” approach, where the action leads to lower levels of emissions than would have otherwise occurred under the MTA’s proposal. Here are some community-supported policies that can help reduce emissions over and above expected traffic emissions increases (a more complete list will be submitted with our full testimony next week):

1. Electrifying the Hunts Point Market - including:
 - Eliminate the use of all stationary diesel reefer units for auxiliary storage at the Hunts Point Food Markets,
 - Install curbside charging stations and grid connections.
2. Creating Green Loading Zones and Cool Corridors.
3. Replacing NYPA Peaker Power Plants in the South Bronx with clean, renewable energy plus battery storage.
4. Establish a marine freight terminal in Hunts Point to displace trucks.
5. Capping the Cross Bronx Expressway.

We need emission mitigation policies for the Bronx that are transparent, accountable, and measurable. For congestion pricing to authentically deliver on its promise for environmental justice, it must deliver on overall traffic and emissions reductions in the Bronx and other EJ communities, and not indulge in emissions accounting sleight-of-hand.