ECLEG MAY21 '13 PM10:51

A RESOLUTION TO BE SUBMITTED
BY LEGISLATORS GRANT & HOGUES

RE: Urging the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority to Discontinue the Advertising of Alcoholic Beverages on the Exterior or Interior of Light Rail Train Cars & Buses

WHEREAS, it has come to the attention of the Erie County Legislature that Light Rail Cars that are part of the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority's (NFTA's) public transit system now feature advertising by private corporations that sell products containing alcohol; and

WHEREAS, there are at least three such train cars that advertise a brand of beer brewed by a nationally known company, essentially serving as billboards traveling on the light rail transit line; and

WHEREAS, Erie County has a valid concern regarding the advertising of certain products on property or equipment that serves a public purpose and is subsidized by tax dollars; and

WHEREAS, certain tax revenues are collected and distributed to the NFTA by Erie County as part of a long-standing agreement "to keep the buses and trains running," an agreement that dates back to the late 1980s; and

WHEREAS, use of alcoholic products by underage minors and abuse of alcoholic products by people of all ages is a major concern to public health and medical professionals, resulting in considerable costs to insurance companies and taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, public transit is highly utilized by high school students in our community as their sole means of transport to school; and

WHEREAS, in the article titled, "Reducing Youth Exposure to Alcohol Ads: Targeting Public Transit," the Journal of Urban Health reports that research has demonstrated the connection between alcohol advertising and underage drinking; and

WHEREAS, the Journal of Urban Health further suggests that "Restricting outdoor advertising in general and transit ads in particular, represents an important opportunity to reduce youth exposure;" and

WHEREAS, another journal article titled, "Prevalence, proximity and predictors of alcohol ads in Central Harlem," concludes that "predominantly Black neighborhoods continue to face high exposure to outdoor alcohol advertising, including around sites at which youth congregate; and

WHEREAS, economically disadvantaged adults undergoing treatment for alcohol and substance abuse often travel to their counseling sessions aboard NFTA buses and trains, and

the oversized interior and exterior ads for the nationally recognized brand of beer provide a tacit endorsement of the product while they are struggling to overcome their addiction; and

WHEREAS, this Honorable Body believes it sends the wrong message for a public authority such as the NFTA – in large part funded with federal, state and local tax dollars – to accept money from advertisers that promote the use of products containing alcohol.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature convey its opposition to the advertising of products containing alcohol on or within the light rail cars and buses that compose the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority's (NFTA's) public transit system; and be it further

RESOLVED, that representatives of the NFTA and Dr. Wesley Hicks, the County Legislature's appointee to the NFTA Board, as well as health and mental health professionals are requested to attend an upcoming meeting of the Health & Human Services Committee of the Erie County Legislature to discuss the advertising policy of the NFTA and to provide these representatives with the opportunity to hear the views of the government body that approves and distributes a portion of revenue it collects to the NFTA; and be it further resolved

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be conveyed to Kimberly Minkel, Executive Director of the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority; Dr. Wesley Hicks, member of the NFTA Board, as well as the entire Board; the WNY Delegation to the State Legislature; Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz; Erie County Commissioner of Health, Gale Burstein; Elllery Reaves, MPA, Erie County Commissioner of Mental Health; Mayor Byron Brown; Rev. Darius Pridgen, Councilman for the Ellicott District of Buffalo; the Clerk of the Buffalo Common Council; the Executive Director of the Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse; and all others deemed necessary and proper.

FISCAL IMPACT: None for resolution.