

Proposed toll increase would hurt consumers, businesses

As someone who frequently travels the Thruway for work, I know that paying for tolls can add a significant cost to any trip. The company I work for does business throughout New York State, much like many other enterprises that are vital to growth and development in New York State. With a sizeable toll already in place, it was disappointing to learn that the Thruway Authority was again proposing a hike, worse yet, a 45 percent increase, for big trucks.

This is another example of a New York State agency proposing a fee hike that will inevitably end up costing you more. This is simply bad for business. Companies that use the Thruway are going to be forced to examine their operations. This could mean reduced service for consumers; increased costs for the consumer to receive those services; or both. The unfortunate end result could be companies simply choosing not to do business in New York State any longer, a common occurrence because of other taxes and fees.

Yet another possible effect would be trucking companies opting to use alternative routes, putting big rigs

onto streets that are not built to support them. This will result in increased infrastructure repair costs for the municipality that owns and maintains those secondary streets.

According to one report I read, a trip from Buffalo to Albany, for a commercial truck, currently costs \$44.70. With the proposed increase a truck would pay \$64.70. That is an outrageous hike. It is an insult for the chairman of the Thruway Authority to call this a "modest" increase. Such a large increase can't be passed onto our small businesses without a second thought nor should it be made light of. The effects some companies will incur will be anything but modest; we could see layoffs or businesses closing because of this new expense forced onto them. For someone in the chairman's position to view a 45 percent increase as modest demonstrates an out-of-touch

approach to business.

New York State has proved time and time again that it is good at implementing anti-job-creation policies.

Every day we lose residents and businesses. New York State is on a road leading in one direction, and it doesn't end well for residents and businesses. I encourage Gov. Andrew Cuomo and state leaders to do what they can to reduce the proposed fee increase before the consequences are irreversible.

New York State's infamous reputation for overtaxing remains intact with this proposal.

I am always interested in your thoughts on issues that affect you. Please contact my Legislative Office at 858-8676 or email edward.rath@erie.gov if you have any questions or concerns. Information is also available on my website at www.erie.gov/legislature/district06.



EDWARD RATH

Erie County Legislator

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✓To the fool who called about the Amherst Police doing nothing to curtail the illegal turns at Maple and Hopkins, I personally observed police writing ticket after ticket. The blame falls with the arrogant Amherst residents who think they can drive anywhere at any time whenever they want to. Leave the police alone; they are doing a good job.

✓People in Buffalo are wondering if the closing of the Canadian Counsel in the HSBC Building in Buffalo is in response to President Obama's decision not to construct the Keystone Pipeline in the United States.

✓Due to the poor condition of the road on Seabrook Drive, numerous water main breaks and the fact that the road hasn't been resurfaced in 29 years, the town highway department should install "rough road" signs.

✓Regarding the noise of motorcycles, it seems as though in recent years all police departments have stopped enforcing what used to be an enforceable law. Any evening you could be laying in bed and a loud motorcycle can go through town and wake up 1,000 people, which in the penal law amounts to disorderly conduct. I guess in the vehicle traffic law, it's not. I wish the police would get on

the ball and start enforcing a sensible law.

✓Kudos to the 10 neighbors and friends in the Wedgewood/Cimerand neighborhood who rescued seven ducklings from a storm drain on the evening of May 26. Animal control arrived as the last duckling was being rescued and announced a job well done.

✓Recently in the Snyder area I observed my letter carrier being followed door-to-door and evaluated by someone from the U.S. Postal Service. This occurred for three days in a row. As a taxpayer, I believe this is a complete waste of money. At a time when post offices are being closed and money is tight, these people could be used in a much more efficient manner than following a carrier door-to-door three days in a row.

✓Williamsville lost 273 residents, a 4.9 percent decline, bottoming out at 5,300 citizens. Unless spending in the village is brought under control, more residents will vacate.

✓To the Williamsville Central School District administration, I and others find it absolutely appalling that we actually see a small number of faculty and staff disregarding stop signs and going the wrong way in a one-way exit in the Mill Middle School lot. Besides the most important aspect of the obvious threat of public safety, when there is an accident, taxpayers will be footing the bill and you will have to answer to us. My suggestion is to send out a memo to all faculty and staff with a

strong message reinforcing the rules of driving in your lot. Get your people in line, and we'll get the video cameras ready on our phones.

✓Mary Ellen Walsh, former executive director of the Amherst Center for Senior Services, always was and continues to be dedicated to the seniors of Amherst. She is and will be long remembered for all she did for Amherst seniors, and we continue to be grateful for her love and dedication.

✓Now that Roycroft Boulevard has been paved and some new curbs installed, isn't it time for the stone gates at Roycroft and Main to be repaired? It has been three years or better and nothing has been done to these gates except shore them up. It is time.

✓As a village resident who daily walks and shops Main Street, I wish Williamsville businesses every success, but I have to wonder what marketing genius came up with the notion that 10 spas and beauty salons, 10 gifts shops and 10 coffee and tea outlets can all remain viable within four blocks.

✓Williamsville Central school District rankings in the Newsweek top 1,000 high schools is North at 711, East at 364 and South at 753 out of 1,000.

(Editor's note: Call The Bee at 632-0390 and record a one-minute comment on our Bee Heard line. It gives readers an opportunity to comment quickly and candidly on items of local or regional interest. Callers do not

have to identify themselves and no callers' names will be used. In the interest of fairness and good taste, The Bee will not publish derogatory or insulting comments. All comments are by our readers and are subject to editing.

Letters to the Editor

Family, friends

(Continued from page five)

the event can be viewed on his website, www.section6runs.com. Surface America provided refreshments.

Best of all, people of our community raised \$1,150 for The Miracle League. The contributions have been sent to the national office and will be earmarked for a special project.

Brian Dobmeier
 Bramblewood Lane
 East Amherst



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