

STATE OF NEW YORK

8658

IN SENATE

February 27, 2024

Introduced by Sen. GIANARIS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Transportation

AN ACT to amend the public authorities law, in relation to enacting the "get congestion pricing right act"

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as
2 the "get congestion pricing right act".

3 § 2. Legislative findings and intent. The legislature hereby finds and
4 declares the importance of the New York Metropolitan Transportation
5 Authority (MTA) and affirms the duty of the legislature to ensure that
6 the MTA operates effectively. The MTA provides an essential service:
7 transporting millions of New Yorkers on billions of trips each year to
8 and from their places of work, worship, and gathering. The legislature
9 further finds that, as the MTA moves to implement congestion pricing,
10 the MTA must also encourage the use of public transit as an alternative
11 by providing more frequent, reliable, and affordable service - partic-
12 ularly bus service. The legislature finds that bus system investments
13 were at the core of London's successful congestion pricing implementa-
14 tion and declares that New York must follow suit by investing in its own
15 bus service prior to the implementation of congestion pricing to better
16 serve riders and attract riders for the long-term.

17 § 3. The public authorities law is amended by adding a new section
18 1266-n to read as follows:

19 § 1266-n. Bus service frequency and reliability. 1. The authority
20 shall allocate forty-five million dollars in state funds received to the
21 authority's bus system to increase frequency and reliability.

22 (a) Upon receipt of such funding the authority shall evaluate target-
23 ing such investments according, but not limited, to increasing the reli-
24 ability, frequency, and speed of the following:

25 (i) feeder routes to subway stations;

26 (ii) express buses into the central business district; and

27 (iii) local and select buses.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 (b) Routes chosen shall have capacity for more frequency absent
2 infrastructure changes.

3 (c) The authority shall report on its route decisions in an initial
4 public report prior to the launch of such investments. The authority
5 shall also report an evaluation of frequency and reliability outcomes of
6 each selected route via two reports. The first such report shall be
7 completed no later than December thirty-first, two thousand twenty-four,
8 and the second such report shall be completed no later than one year
9 after the launch of such investments. Such outcome reports shall also
10 include cost and schedule projections for each route funded by such
11 increase.

12 (d) Such investments shall be implemented by the first day of
13 congestion pricing's implementation.

14 2. The authority shall allocate forty-five million dollars in state
15 funds received to expand the fare-free bus pilot program within the city
16 of New York.

17 (a) The fare-free bus pilot program expansion shall last for one year.

18 (b) The fare-free bus pilot program expansion shall consist of at
19 least fifteen new fare-free bus routes and shall cost no more than
20 forty-five million dollars in net operating costs. Net operating costs
21 shall be determined by the total costs of implementing the fare-free bus
22 pilot program expansion and shall not accrue to the city of New York.

23 (c) The fare-free bus routes included in the fare-free bus pilot
24 program expansion shall be selected by the authority, provided that
25 there shall be at least three new fare-free bus routes within each of
26 the following counties: Kings county, New York county, Queens county,
27 Richmond county, and Bronx county.

28 (d) The factors considered by the authority in selecting such fare-
29 free bus routes shall include but not be limited to:

30 (i) service adequacy and equity for low-income and economically disad-
31 vantaged communities; and

32 (ii) access to employment and commercial activity in areas served by
33 such fare-free routes.

34 (e) Each route selected shall meet a minimum threshold of twenty thou-
35 sand daily riders.

36 (f) The authority shall report to its board on the fare-free bus pilot
37 program expansion after it has been in effect for three months, six
38 months, and again upon the conclusion of the fare-free bus pilot program
39 expansion. Such reports shall also be sent to the governor and every
40 member of the state legislature and shall include, but not be limited
41 to, the following comparative performance metrics:

42 (i) ridership totals relative to equivalent time periods before the
43 fare-free bus pilot program expansion took effect;

44 (ii) percent of scheduled service delivered;

45 (iii) average end-to-end bus speed changes;

46 (iv) customer journey time performance;

47 (v) additional bus stop time and travel time;

48 (vi) wait assessments;

49 (vii) the cost to provide such service itemized by route; and

50 (viii) scheduled service frequency.

51 (g) The authority shall also survey riders on the fare-free routes at
52 the three-, six- and twelve-month marks on topics including but not
53 limited to:

54 (i) overall rider satisfaction;

55 (ii) real and perceived economic benefit experienced by riders,
56 including economic savings;

1 (iii) experience of security and safety when riding the fare-free bus;
2 and

3 (vi) general demographic information including annual income, vehicle
4 access, race and ethnicity, disability status, age, and enrollment
5 status in discount program. The authority shall also include questions
6 from the UMKC Center for Economic Information survey research of the
7 Kansas City Area Transportation Authority's (KCATA/RideKC) ZeroFare
8 program quality-of-life effects. Survey methods shall include in-person,
9 phone and online.

10 (h) The authority shall implement all-door boarding on all fare-free
11 buses beginning the first day of the fare-free bus pilot program expan-
12 sion.

13 (i) The authority shall promote the fare-free routes through the
14 following methods at a minimum: signage on buses, signage at bus stops,
15 intersecting subway stops, announcement on the authority "fares & tolls"
16 webpage, digital advertisements on subways, and across MTA social media
17 accounts.

18 (j) The authority shall present the fare-free bus pilot program expan-
19 sion to its board for approval no later than sixty days after the effec-
20 tive date of this section, for implementation no later than ninety days
21 after board adoption.

22 § 4. This act shall take effect immediately.