STATE OF NEW YORK

8658--A

IN SENATE

February 27, 2024

Introduced by Sens. GIANARIS, BRISPORT, SALAZAR -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Transportation -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

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:

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

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

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

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

(a) Upon receipt of such funding the authority shall evaluate targeting such investments according, but not limited, to increasing the reliability, frequency, and speed of the following:

(i) feeder routes to subway stations;

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

LBD14661-02-4

(ii) express buses into the central business district;
(iii) buses that are chronically over capacity; and
(iv) local and select buses.
(b) Routes chosen shall have capacity for more frequency absent infrastructure changes and priority shall be given to increasing service on the lines that are part of the fare-free bus pilot program.
(c) The authority shall report on its route decisions in an initial public report prior to the launch of such investments. The authority shall also report an evaluation of frequency and reliability outcomes of each selected route via two reports. The first such report shall be completed no later than December thirty-first, two thousand twenty-four, and the second such report shall be completed no later than one year after the launch of such investments. Such outcome reports shall also include cost and schedule projections for each route funded by such increase.
(d) Such investments shall be implemented by the first day of congestion pricing's implementation.
2. The authority shall allocate forty-five million dollars in state funds received to expand the fare-free bus pilot program within the city of New York.
(a) The fare-free bus pilot program expansion shall last for one year.
(b) The fare-free bus pilot program expansion shall consist of at least fifteen new fare-free bus routes and shall cost no more than forty-five million dollars in net operating costs. Net operating costs shall be determined by the total costs of implementing the fare-free bus pilot program expansion and shall not accrue to the city of New York.
(c) The fare-free bus routes included in the fare-free bus pilot program expansion shall be selected by the authority, and may include either New York City Transit Authority or MTA bus routes, provided that there shall be at least three new fare-free bus routes within each of the following counties: Kings county, New York county, Queens county, Richmond county, and Bronx county.
(d) The factors considered by the authority in selecting such fare-free bus routes shall include but not be limited to:
(i) service adequacy and equity for low-income and economically disadvantaged communities; and
(ii) access to employment and commercial activity in areas served by such fare-free routes.
(e) Each route selected shall meet a minimum threshold of twenty thousand daily riders.
(f) The authority shall report to its board on the fare-free bus pilot program expansion after it has been in effect for three months, six months, and again upon the conclusion of the fare-free bus pilot program expansion. Such reports shall also be sent to the governor and every member of the state legislature and shall include, but not be limited to, the following comparative performance metrics:
(i) ridership totals relative to equivalent time periods before the fare-free bus pilot program expansion took effect;
(ii) percent of scheduled service delivered;
(iii) average end-to-end bus speed changes;
(iv) customer journey time performance;
(v) additional bus stop time and travel time;
(vi) wait assessments;
(vii) the cost to provide such service itemized by route; and
(viii) scheduled service frequency.

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

(i) overall rider satisfaction;

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

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

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

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

(i) The authority shall promote the fare-free routes through the following methods at a minimum: signage on buses, signage at bus stops, intersecting subway stops, announcement on the authority "fares & tolls" webpage, digital advertisements on subways, and across MTA social media accounts. Any messaging promoting the fare-free routes shall also include messaging reminding riders that such program is on select routes and that such riders should treat their bus operators with respect and decorum.

(j) The authority shall present the fare-free bus pilot program expansion to its board for approval no later than sixty days after the effective date of this section, for implementation no later than ninety days after board adoption.

§ 4. This act shall take effect immediately.