

KATHLEEN C. HOCHUL
26TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON
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COMMITTEE ON
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Congress of the United States
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May 31, 2012

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

Since 1998, as a local town official, I have challenged the existence of toll barriers on the NYS Thruway because of the additional costs they place on businesses and consumers. At the inception of the Thruway, a commitment was made to New Yorkers that the tolls would be removed system-wide when the bonds used to finance construction expired in 1996. While the State reversed that outcome, the continuation of tolls and now even more toll increases, place a heavy burden on the communities and businesses I now represent in Upstate New York.

That is why I urge you to reject the 45% increase for trucks that has been recommended by the NYS Thruway Authority. If implemented, this would seriously hinder economic activity in our region. I spoke to truckers just today who say they will have no option but to either pass on the additional costs of tolls to their customers, or to avoid the Thruway altogether by using secondary roads. The infrastructure costs on secondary roads used by truckers seeking to avoid the tolls will continue to rise as even more 70,000 pound trucks find their way to roads like Rt. 20A, Rt. 31, and Rt. 78 in my district.

Operators of five-axle tractor trailers typically pay over \$12,000 in state highway fees every year. As you know, these costs are not absorbed by operators, but are passed down to the businesses and consumers they serve. The Thruway Authority's proposal would make the cost of business in our state even higher, especially in rural communities that depend on trucks for freight service.

I know you recognize the need to dramatically improve the business climate of our State, a goal I wholeheartedly support, and I am concerned that increasing tolls by such a high rate will send the wrong message. Certainly the Thruway Authority has an obligation to streamline its operations and function more efficiently before seeking to further burden the businesses and customers who rely on products transported on the NYSTA. Rather than imposing higher costs on our businesses, we need to pass a long-overdue comprehensive highway bill that addresses the failing infrastructure in our nation.

On behalf of the farmers, families, and businesses I represent, I urge you to reject the 45% fee increase proposed by the NYS Thruway Authority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathleen C. Hochul". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K'.

Kathleen C. Hochul
Member of Congress