



New York Farm Bureau • 159 Wolf Road • Suite 300 • Albany, New York 12205 • (518) 436-8495 Fax: (518) 431-5656

September 22, 2022

CBD Tolling Program
2 Broadway, 23rd Floor
New York, NY 10004

RE: Central Business District Tolling Program Environmental Assessment

To whom it may concern,

New York Farm Bureau (NYFB), the state's largest agricultural advocacy organization, would like to provide comments on the Central Business Tolling Program Environmental Assessment. NYFB has concerns regarding the tolls that farmers will have to pay as they transport food products into the central business district.

NYFB recognizes the purpose of congestion pricing, but it is also imperative that New York farmers can affordably transport New York food products throughout New York City. The pandemic has further shown the important role of New York farms in combatting food insecurity, especially in urban areas such as the central business district. It is important that farmers can continue to provide communities with access to New York grown food products.

The Central Business District Tolling Zone would cover 60th Street in Manhattan and all the roadways south of 60th Street, except for FDR Drive, West Side Highway/9A, Battery Park Underpass, and any surface roadway portions of the Hugh L. Carey Tunnel connecting to West Street. This district will include farmers markets, such as the Union Square Greenmarket which is open Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays year-round. During peak season, there are over 140 farmers selling their products to the more than 60,000 people visiting the market. Farmers participating in the Union Square Greenmarket and other markets in the district will have to pay these tolls each time they bring their farm products to the markets. These tolls would financially impact the farmer's ability to transport farm products to New York City and add another barrier to bringing New York grown food to these urban areas.

Instead of increasing the transportation costs for farmers and creating more barriers to combating food insecurity, NYFB recommends the establishment of a toll exemption for agricultural vehicles transporting farm products in the central business district. This exemption would support farmers as they continue to provide essential food to New York communities.

NYFB urges you to take into consideration the negative impact these proposed tolls would have on New York farmers and their ability to provide fresh farm products to food insecure residents

of New York City. For these reasons, NYFB respectfully requests the establishment of a toll exemption for the transportation of New York farm products in the central business district.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Renée St. Jacques". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the name.

Renée St. Jacques
Associate Director of Public Policy

Cc. Nivardo Lopez, NYS Deputy Secretary for Transportation
Kevin King, NYS Deputy Secretary for Food and Agriculture
Richard Ball, Commissioner, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets