

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 15, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary  
Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

The Honorable Nicole Nason  
Administrator  
Federal Highways Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao and Administrator Nason:

As members of the New York City delegation, we would like to express our extreme disappointment by the continued delay of New York State's the Value Pricing Pilot Program (VPPP) application. The VPPP application was submitted jointly in June 2019 by the New York State Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA); the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT); and the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT). New York State's VPPP proposal would facilitate the nation's first area-wide cordon pricing program and the country's largest self-help initiative, consistent with the goals of this Administration.

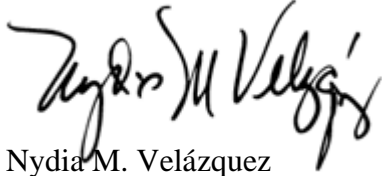
We understand, however, that after nearly 15 months the applicants have not yet received federal approval to commence the required environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The authorization to commence NEPA review is typically pro-forma for any proposed infrastructure-related project. As you are aware, the State's congestion pricing plan, as enacted by the New York State Legislature, authorizes the MTA to utilize 100 percent of the net proceeds for the renewal and modernization of capital assets, including stations, signals and rollingstock. The VPPP proposal is estimated to generate approximately \$1 billion annually in new dedicated revenues to support such capital projects. This regionally-generated revenue is more critical today than at any period in the MTA's history given considerable fiscal shortfalls directly attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also our understanding that USDOT has expressed concerns regarding the authority under the VPPP to use toll revenues for non-highway purposes. We fail to understand this concern as there is supporting legislation and long-standing precedent for utilizing toll revenues to support public transportation projects under the VPPP, including the Urban Partnership Agreement executed by USDOT in 2007.

While the congestion pricing initiative was proposed prior to the current pandemic, its implementation is only more critical now. New York State was the epicenter of the nation's coronavirus outbreak. During the worst of the crisis, the MTA proactively created an unprecedented response to ensure that health care professionals and other essential workers could respond to the needs of the City and surrounding communities to help stop the spread of this deadly disease. The continuation of these critical transportation services played a significant role in preventing the total collapse of the tri-state area's economy. We applaud the herculean efforts of transportation workers that made this happen, some whom lost their lives in the process.

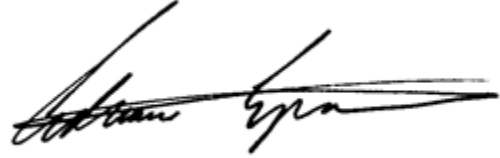
For the economic health and sustainability of our nation - and in tribute to our fallen transportation workers - we urge you to immediately provide the decision on the form of review that will be

required for the proposed Central Business District Tolling Program to begin the NEPA process, the next step in the USDOT review and approval process. Continued delay only serves to impede the ability of the MTA to lead this region's – and our nation's – economic recovery. We thank you in advance for your action in support of allowing this project to move forward.

Sincerely,



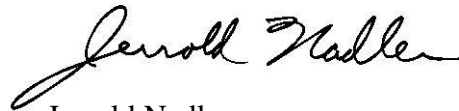
Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress



Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress