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## **TimesLedger Newspapers**

### **Bridges on East River must remain free**

Wednesday, March 18, 2009 5:46 PM EDT

An open letter to state legislators:

As you weigh all things considered with respect to funding the Metropolitan Transportation Authority by tolling the free East River and Harlem River bridges, consider the following that Keep NYC Free issued in conjunction with our participation in two news conferences, one in Washington Heights and the other on the Manhattan side of the Queensborough Bridge.

The proposed \$2 toll tax only changes the efficiency of tolling as a revenue source. The \$2 charge makes what was a grossly inefficient tax scheme that would have taken \$2 of every \$5 off the top away from mass transit into one that would require other revenues to cover its costs.

The revenues you adopt to resource mass transit should do just that and not address a gaping hole in another agency's budget. The toll scheme includes MTA assumption of bridge maintenance. The costs of building a toll infrastructure remain a big chunk of change to take away from transit.

The \$2 toll means the other revenues you adopt would be diverted away from transit to pay for some combination of bridge maintenance and tolling infrastructure until the tolls get hiked high enough to beat the cost of inflation on those costs.

Keep NYC Free and others proposed sounder, fairer and more equitable alternatives to tolls that we have previously shared and stand ready to discuss.

Corey Bearak  
Glen Oaks