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Residents and lawmakers respond to possible tolls on East River bridges

By NY1 News

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While Governor Cuomo continues to look for ways to raise money for the struggling M-T-A, Queens elected officials are making it known that adding tolls to local bridges should not be the answer.

Local politicians gathered Sunday morning at the entrance to the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge to voice their strong opposition to any proposed plan that includes adding tolls to the free East River Bridges.

Many stress their constituents in northern, southern, and eastern Queens who do not live near public transportation, rely on access to the free bridges.

They say a new toll will impose a financial burden on the working- and middle-class, as well as small businesses.

"Small businesses that do multiple deliveries across the Queensboro bridge for example, if they had to pay that toll both ways, they'd have to pass it on to the consumers, they would lose business, consumers would be hurt," said Queens Democratic Assemblyman David I. Weprin.

All the East River Bridges have been without tolls since 1911.

Elected officials in attendance suggested alternative proposals including a non-resident income tax on out-of-state commuters.