



Port Authority turns over study showing impact of bridge tolls on New York Container Terminal

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STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- Strike one for fairness.

After a five-month court battle, the Port Authority has dropped an appeal and released its year-old economic impact study that highlights the negative affect its bridge tolls have on the New York Container Terminal.

The announcement was made by Assemblyman Nicole Malliotakis, who took the agency to court last summer and later won release of raw data that showed truckers using the Container Terminal have to ante up an average of \$40.25 more in tolls than haulers going to New Jersey -- a 144 percent higher payout than the national average.



Staten Island Advance/Anthony DePrimo

A Port Authority study's executive summary reveals that the New York Container Terminal "is at an extreme disadvantage" economically, as a result of Port Authority tolls, according to Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis.

The complete study was e-mailed and sent by express mail to her Midland Beach office by the Port Authority.

While she and her staffers have not yet eyeballed it in detail, the study's executive summary reveals that the New York Container Terminal "is at an extreme disadvantage" economically, her office said Tuesday. Although a different set of metrics was used in the P.A. study, the outcome comports with Ms. Malliotakis's analysis of the raw data.

While a deal was subsequently brokered relative to the toll for the Container Terminal, Ms. Malliotakis's office said additional findings culled from the complete study could favorably affect a lawsuit still working its way through the courts filed by the Automobile Association of America to repeal the 2011 P.A. bridge toll increases.

"This is an accomplishment for Staten Island and all New Yorkers who have suffered the irresponsibility of public agencies that operate with little oversight or commitment to reconciling their finances," said Ms. Malliotakis (R-East Shore/Brooklyn). "These tolls have a definite effect on the success of businesses, let alone local residents. It's now been proven through independent analysis. All New Yorkers can now point to this study whenever the Port

Authority, MTA or other public agency tries to use New York motorists as cash cows. The proof is there. It is my hope that this study will help AAA make its case in federal court that the tolls are unjust, unreasonable and should be reversed."

New York state AAA official John Corlett called the PA's release of the full study a "victory for transparency and accountability."

"For too long the Port Authority has acted like a shadow government, indifferent to the impact toll increases have on the public and commerce," he said.

Ms. Malliotakis filed an **amicus brief** in support of the AAA and later requested a copy of the study through the Freedom of Information Act. Denied, she initiated a legal move to compel the agency to release the data and won a judgment. The P.A. appealed the decision and gave her raw study data instead, which Ms. Malliotakis and College of Staten Island finance professor Dr. Jonathan Peters then used to perform their own analysis.

A request for comment from the P.A. was not immediately returned.

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