



Staten Island lawmaker says Port Authority should set N.J. straight on trucker toll deal

Judy L. Randall | randall@siadvance.com By Judy L. Randall | randall@siadvance.com

on September 14, 2012 at 1:17 PM, updated September 14, 2012 at 1:55 PM

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- It figures.

Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis Friday said it's no surprise that New Jersey is the apparent hold-up to a bridge toll deal for New York Container Terminal truckers.

Two of her Albany colleagues -- who have been in on negotiations with the Cuomo administration to structure a deal with the Port Authority -- told the Advance Thursday that **Jersey is looking for concessions before it signs off.**

P.A. study data that the bi-state agency was **court-mandated to turn over** to Ms. Malliotakis revealed 95 percent of truckers headed for NYCT pay tolls on the Goethals and Bayonne bridges or Outerbridge Crossing.

This compared to just 20 percent of truckers headed to a container port in Jersey City.

"It's not surprising that New Jersey is holding up the deal for a commercial discount," said Ms. Malliotakis (R-East Shore/Brooklyn). "The data I've examined shows that a shipping terminal in New York is at a monumental disadvantage to its competitors in New Jersey ... This fact exposes why New York is losing shipping jobs and revenue to New Jersey, and has been uncompetitive in the fields of trucking, warehousing and distribution."

State Sen. Andrew Lanza (R-Staten Island) and Assemblyman Michael Cusick (D-Mid-Island) laid the blame for the impasse squarely at New Jersey, saying but for Jersey an agreement had been reached "in essence."



Staten Island Advance/Hilton Flores

Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis is reviewing the raw data from the Port Authority study on the economic impact of tolls on Island businesses.

The P.A. has declined comment.

Said Ms. Malliotakis: "While the Port Authority continues to exploit its control of the New York-New Jersey border, New Jersey's economy thrives on the imbalance. As a bi-state agency, the Port Authority should have no interest in providing one state with a better opportunity to succeed than the other. These numbers show that this agency is doing exactly the opposite. It is because of policies like this that New York is one of the least business-friendly states in the nation."

Lanza and Cusick have not been specific about what give-back they think New Jersey is looking for.

Back in June, Ms. Malliotakis filed a Freedom of Information Law request with the P.A. seeking access to an economic impact study paid partially with taxpayer monies.

The P.A. refused, saying it was in draft form. However, on the eve of a court date with Ms. Malliotakis, they provided some of the study's raw data. But Ms. Malliotakis noted it was in an "unreadable format without any means for interpretation."

Supreme Court Judge Joseph Maltese ruled last Friday that the P.A. had to provide her with all the data, as well as the means to intercept it.

The agency did, and she is **currently analyzing it with an expert in finance and transportation matters**, Dr. Jonathan Peters, a College of Staten Island professor. She has promised to make their findings public once they are done.

Maltese also ruled that the data must be turned over to him, along with any analyses or conclusions drawn by the P.A.

The judge is set to rule whether all or part of that data should be made public.

© 2015 SILive.com. All rights reserved.