

**PUTNAM COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
KEVIN M. BYRNE**

April 11, 2025

Hon. Marc Molinaro  
Administrator-designate  
Federal Transit Administration  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Molinaro:

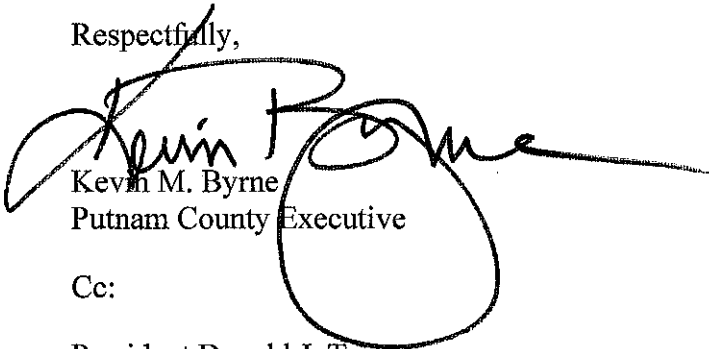
As the Trump Administration's April 20 deadline for New York State to end its Central Business District Tolling Program, also known as "congestion pricing," draws near, I would like to alert you to a related matter impacting Putnam County's taxpayers. According to our Office of Consumer Affairs, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA) E-Z Pass Program has improperly billed Putnam County for congestion-pricing tolls it did not incur in three separate incidents starting in January 2025. No county vehicles were in the Central Business District, defined as the area at or below 60<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan, at the time. Incredibly, the E-Z Pass Processing Center is now applying late charges to the disputed fees. Our Consumer Affairs director has rightly characterized this Kafka-esque scenario of government run amok as a "fiasco." This is but one more example why congestion pricing – or more accurately the "congestion tax" – must be repealed immediately.

On January 9, 2025, February 12, 2025, and March 2, 2025, a county-owned Ford Escape was improperly charged with the congestion tax after a Central Business District Tolling Program license-plate reader mistook it for another vehicle, in this case a Chevy pickup truck with an FDNY-emblazoned hood. Our Office of Consumer Affairs responded with a letter to E-Z Pass on March 11, 2025, challenging the tolls for the very sound reason that the license-plate reader tolled the wrong automobile. Instead of responding to the correspondence, however, New York State sent a new bill on March 30, 2025, with the overdue balance accompanied by late fees.

Putnam County is now being commanded to pay \$58.93 for tolls it did not incur while in a motor vehicle it was not driving. While this sum may seem like a minor amount, there is no telling how far-reaching and widespread these errors have been since congestion pricing was implemented by Governor Hochul in January 2025. The problem appears to be with the state's multi-million-dollar tolling equipment. Specifically, the license-plate reader is unable to distinguish one political subdivision, located on a license plate's lower left, from another if the two plate numbers are identical or possibly merely similar. Hence a Chevy pickup masquerading as a Ford Escape. Needless to say, the unfair and costly congestion tax has a profiling problem, too.

With your assistance, I respectfully request an immediate investigation into this fiasco in order to understand how many other municipalities' taxpayers are being squeezed by these unpredictable and arbitrary tolls. Thank you for your timely attention to this matter. As always, I appreciate your commitment to New York's mass transit commuters and its hardworking taxpayers, and I look forward to your imminent confirmation as FTA Administrator by the full body of the US Senate.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Byrne", with a large circular flourish underneath.

Kevin M. Byrne  
Putnam County Executive

Cc:

President Donald J. Trump  
US Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority Chair and CEO Janno Lieber