



S.5451 (DILAN, PERKINS)
A.8180 (SILVER, ET AL.)

Summary

This bill would provide for the refinancing of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA) operating and short-term capital needs by imposing a series of fees and taxes, as well as a payroll tax within the metropolitan commuter transportation district. The bill would also make various changes to the public authority's law related to financial reporting of MTA, the qualifications of the MTA's board members, and includes provisions related to the auditing of the MTA finances.

Explanation

Maintaining the New York City metropolitan area's transportation system is critical to preserving the state's overall environmental health. A contraction of that system or failure to maintain current levels of services would be a significant blow to New York's air quality and hamper the state's efforts to reduce global warming pollution.

Even with an expansive public transportation system, New York City fails to achieve even minimum federal air quality standards for ground-level ozone (smog) in large part due to pollution from cars and trucks. Smog and other pollutants from tailpipes can trigger asthma attacks and cause respiratory problems, and tailpipe pollution is responsible for a range of negative health effects.

Automobiles are also a major source of climate pollution. And to meet the challenges reducing greenhouse gas emissions in order to stave off the worst effects of climate change, New York must make a serious effort to reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas pollution from the transportation sector.

Significant additional investment in the MTA would ensure that New York continues on the path to a sustainable future. This bill addresses a large part of the MTA's current budget woes. The measure would avoid service cuts and offset a portion of the proposed fare increase that could decrease ridership. Although the bill makes funds available for the MTA's capital projects for the next two years, it fails, however, to address all of the long-term infrastructure needs of the MTA. We encourage legislators to revisit this issue to ensure the long-term viability of the MTA and preserve its significant environmental benefits to New York State.

Environmental Advocates of New York supports this bill.

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