

Transportation Advisory Panel Meeting

March 9, 2021 | 1:00pm-3:00pm

Attendees

Members present:

- **Chair**, Marie Therese Dominguez, Commissioner, New York State Department of Transportation
- Jared Snyder, Deputy Commissioner, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- Albert Gore, Policy and Business Development, Tesla
- Elgie Holstein, Senior Director for Strategic Planning, Environmental Defense Fund
- Julie Tighe, President, New York League of Conservation Voters
- Kendra Hems, President, Trucking Association of New York
- Kerene Tayloe, Director of Federal Legislative Affairs, WE ACT for Environmental Justice
- Steve Finch, Senior Vice President, Automotive Services, AAA Western & Central New York
- Paul Allen, Senior Vice President, M. J. Bradley & Associates
- Dimitris Assanis, Assistant Professor, Stony Brook University
- Porie Saikia-Eapen, Director, Environmental Sustainability and Compliance, Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Members not present:

- John Samuelson, International President, Transport Workers Union
- Renae Reynolds, Transportation Planner, New York City Environmental Justice Alliance
- Craig Turner, Executive Director, Buffalo Niagara International Trade Gateway Organization
- Bob Zerrillo, Policy Director, New York Public Transit Association
- Nancy Young, Vice President, Environmental Affairs, Airlines for America

Key staff present:

- Adam Ruder, New York State Energy Research & Development Authority
- Paul Beyer, Department of State
- Ron Epstein, Department of Transportation
- Carolyn Ryan, Department of Transportation

Guest speaker(s):

- Abby Morgan, Kittelson & Associates

Meeting Notes

Welcome and Introduction

- Commissioner Dominguez welcomed everyone and introduced the agenda.
- Carolyn Ryan ran through meeting procedures and conducted roll call.
- Commissioner Dominguez noted that Nick Sifuentes will no longer be serving on the panel, as he has started a new position.

Review of Cadmus Policy Briefs on VMT Management/System Efficiency Policies

- Commissioner Dominguez welcomed Abby Morgan from Kittelson & Associates.
- Abby Morgan provided an overview of the policy briefs related to Vehicles Miles Traveled (VMT) management and system efficiency, which are part of the New York State Clean Transportation Roadmap (see slides).
- Commissioner Dominguez: Can you give us some examples of other states that are affirmatively looking at VMT pricing and how that's being applied in those instances?
- Abby: Oregon is the most aggressive example in the US, both for the cost they're considering and the policy. California is the other state that has run a pilot and is looking into other pricing mechanisms. They are also looking at how it would impact electric vehicles (EVs). The other states that have truck VMT taxes include Kentucky and New Mexico, in addition to New York and Oregon. They are similar policies, just different pricing levels.
- Julie: What are the funds being used for? Are they being used as a replacement to gas taxes (i.e supporting infrastructure) or are they funding other shifts? How are the VMT reported and the taxes paid?
- Abby: In New York the VMT tax is annual (Note: as corrected below, this tax is more closely tied to vehicle weight than VMT). Most other states are the same, although some are monthly. In terms of how the funds are being used and implemented, it varies. The pilot programs haven't been net-revenue generators. What we're starting to see are discussions around how we can improve the services in general, but we don't really know how they're being used right now.
- Commissioner Dominguez: I want to make a clarification on the NYS VMT. Ron, please jump in here.
- Ron: The fee in New York is not the newly-discussed VMT fee that is under consideration for recommendation to the CAC. There is a tax for heavy-duty vehicles to account for their damage on roadways. Therefore, the funding is currently being used for infrastructure.
- Kendra: I was just going to say what Ron did, in that it is more of a weight-based tax than a VMT tax.
- Commissioner Dominguez thanked Abby for her presentation.

Review of Advisory Panel Recommendations for Public Transportation and Smart Growth Strategies

- Commissioner Dominguez introduced this section, which focused on providing overviews of both public transportation and smart growth recommendations.
- Ron Epstein provided a review of public transportation strategies (see slides).
 - Julie and Porie indicated appreciation for the presentation.
- Paul Beyer provided a review of smart growth strategies (see slides).
 - Commissioner Dominguez noted how well these two subpanels work together.

Next Steps/Open Discussion

- Commissioner Dominguez presented next steps (see slides) and opened the floor for discussion.
 - Important clarification indicated by the Commissioner: The Transportation Advisory Panel will be presenting their recommendations in May, instead of April, along with a few other panels.
- Julie: Do we know how quickly the recommendations will be up on SharePoint?

- Commissioner Dominguez: We are targeting March 18th, so you'll have at least two weeks to review them.
- Commissioner Dominguez: We are looking to schedule the freight roundtable meeting during the second week in April.
- Commissioner Dominguez closed the meeting.