

April 15, 2005

212 3rd Street, Apt 2-G
Troy, NY 12180

The Honorable George E. Pataki
Governor, State of New York
Executive Chamber
New York State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Pataki:

I am opposed to the proposal of a Western Avenue flyover; I think a better solution to the problem of traffic congestion is the "barrier" concept. I am a member of the McKownville United Methodist Church, which is located near Exit 24, and I use Exit 24 frequently in my work travel and well as attending the church on Sundays and frequently on other days of the week. As a person with a deep interest in the quality of the environment for commuters (and I am an EZ-Pass customer) and residents of the area, I hope we can count on your leadership to convince the Thruway Authority that the flyover is a very bad idea. Please help them to explore seriously other alternatives.

I join my voice with others in the McKownville area because one voice alone is not heard but coming together for mutual aid as citizens of New York can make a difference. The reasons why the flyover is a bad idea are detailed below:

The New York State Thruway announced at a June 2003 meeting that it was considering the construction of a Western Avenue flyover. For EZ-Pass users only it would join the Thruway to the Northway near Western Avenue and Schoolhouse Road. The purpose of the flyover would be, among other things, to reduce congestion at Exit 24. While there is no doubt that Exit 24 congestion problems need relief, the Thruway admits that the Western Avenue flyover is only one of a dozen ways to deal with the problem and it has put forth alternatives which would not require the construction of a Western Avenue flyover.

There are many good reasons for not building the Western Avenue flyover. First, the Western Avenue flyover would significantly increase the traffic noise and dirt for residents near the Thruway. Second, it would cause more physical harm to residences—the ground now shakes from Thruway traffic and it would be made worse by overpass traffic. Third, it would cause harm to many nearby businesses, such as Stuyvesant Plaza Executive Tower. Fourth, it would be an eyesore—no one is fond of living under an overpass or even near one. Five, it will degrade Albany's largest lake, Lake Rensselaer. Six, it would reduce the quality and area of the Pine Bush, a unique ecosystem that State and local governments have spent millions of dollars to preserve and enhance. In sum, many people—governments, businesses and homeowners—would suffer significant financial harm from the Thruway's proposed Western Avenue flyover.

The McKownville Improvement Association analyzed all the Thruway proposals and found that the best Thruway proposal for improving traffic near and through Exit 24 was to implement the Thruway's "barrier" concept—essentially charging round trip tolls at Exit 23 and 25. (See the Association's August 23, 2004 letter to the Thruway for a more complete explanation of how the two barrier concept and concept H should be merged). This would help all commuters. The Western Avenue flyover is focused on only the EZ-Pass users. The Thruway, by selecting an improvement which would aid all of its users, would also not cause as much harm to those of us who live near the Thruway and Exit 24. I beseech you as my Governor to call the Thruway (John L. Buono, Chairman, Michael L Fleischer, Executive Director) and inform them that the Western Avenue flyover should not be built. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Catherine M. Stanford