



4.25.06

SUPPORT FOR

Removing the Breckenridge Street and Ogden Street tolls on the Niagara Thruway

The Buffalo Niagara Partnership supports efforts to remove the Niagara Thruway commuter tolls, a system unique to metro Buffalo.

The Partnership supports removal of the Niagara Thruway tolls which represent yet another cost burden of government born by our members, their employees, and their families. Worse, it is a burden unique to metro Buffalo.

The Partnership recognizes the economic importance to our region of the Thruway. Indeed our regional economy came to exist because we have been a major multimodal transshipment hub before the term was coined. That role waned in the later half of the twentieth century, but global shifts in logistics once again position our region as a potential location for distribution and final assembly of goods from around the world.

Our recognition of the Thruway's importance to our economy is what prompted us, since early 2005, to urge that the recent \$0.25 toll increase be used by the Thruway Authority for direct improvements to the vital transportation artery (using regional engineering, design and construction firms whenever possible in order to maximize the impact of projects on the local economy), and that implementation of high speed EZ Pass and electronic toll taking be a priority for expenditure of its new resources.

Simultaneously, we pushed the Thruway Authority to reduce administrative costs within its organization, and, most importantly, urged it to complete its study of toll equity quickly and implement improvements that reduce and eventually eliminate the commuter toll system unique to metro Buffalo.

We have yet to see the results of that study; indeed, we believe it has not yet even begun! Thus, the tolls must be removed now, and the loss of revenue recovered from elsewhere in New York state. This is a burden that must be shared, not unfairly carried by residents of Buffalo Niagara, a region suffering under the weight of far too many other state-mandated costs.