



Anger Mounting Over MTA Bail Out

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Angry reaction has immediately set in over last night's vote in the state Legislature to close a budget gap for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority with the help of a punishing payroll tax that will cost businesses, local governments and nonprofits in New York and surrounding suburban counties a whopping \$1.5 billion.

This will be the topic of discussion on my "High Noon" radio program today at 12 noon on WVOX, 1460 AM—or wvox.com. My guest on the phone will be Assemblywoman Sandra Galef, D-Ossining who voted against the plan.

The payroll tax is just part of the plan. Fares will go up, too. Surcharges will be applied to car registrations and licenses as well.

There's some sort of provision to reimburse school districts for the payroll tax, but as of now it seems no one is sure how this will work. The whole idea looks like a giant mess.

What we do know is that hackles certainly have been raised. Assemblyman Greg Ball, R-Patterson, released a statement this morning that practically calls for a citizen revolt. Ball said the following—

"My message to my constituents: 'Grab your pitch forks people,' every taxpayer and business owner, including not-for-profits and the self-employed, and anyone who uses the MTA to commute to and from work should be outraged by this proposal."

The Westchester County Association is also holding a press conference at 11 a.m., just minutes from now, to announce its opposition to the payroll tax. The business group will be joined by leaders from the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association and from the various counties, including Westchester and Putnam.

Yesterday, Westchester County Executive Andy Spano, who opposes the payroll tax, said it will cost county government \$1.6 million and the Westchester Medical Center about \$1 million.