

Campaign for New York's Future Celebrates City Council Vote

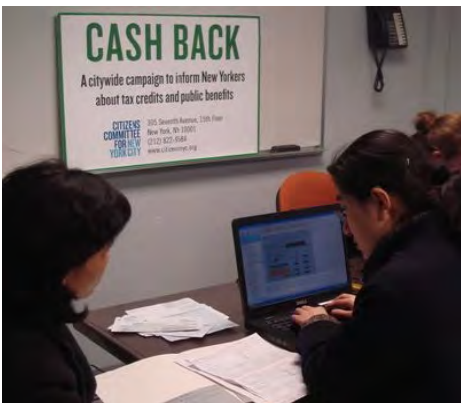


For over a year the Campaign for New York's Future, a coalition of over 150 civic, business, labor, and environmental groups including Citizens Committee for New York City, Environmental Defense, Transportation Alternatives, and the American Lung Association, has been working to advance Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC, specifically congestion pricing. On April first, we reached a major milestone with the City Council vote to approve congestion pricing, sending the proposal to Albany for an Assembly and Senate votes.

"This is a hard-won victory for the Campaign, and for all New Yorkers," says Citizens Committee President Peter H. Kostmayer, "we applaud the City Council for this vote, and encourage the Assembly to take advantage of this historic opportunity for traffic relief and funding from Washington, and move forward quickly to pass this legislation."

If Congestion Pricing is approved by the Assembly and Senate, it could go into effect by March 2009. Kostmayer echos the statement of Speaker Christine Quinn, who said that the City Council vote sends a message to the Legislature that "people who were elected to represent the New Yorkers who live in our five boroughs are sick and tired of our streets being clogged with traffic, we're sick and tired of the children who live in our city literally having to fight to be able to breathe, and that we see congestion pricing as a solution to this problem." For more information about The Campaign for New York's Future, visit www.makenewyorkgreen.org.

Cash Back Makes Final Push for Tax Year '07



Cash Back, Citizens Committee's program to help low-income New Yorkers and first-time tax filers claim tax refunds is entering its final push for tax year 2007, in the final two weeks before the tax filing deadline of April 15th. Cash Back has already had a very successful year, with 30 mobile tax preparation sites in all five boroughs, with 60-100 people filing their taxes at each site. This year, Cash Back was also able to help many of these people sign up for public benefits, such as health care and food stamps.

"Tax credits such as the earned-income tax credit and the child-tax credit were created to help low-income people make ends meet, yet every year so many people miss out on them because they don't file their taxes," says Pinky Vincent, Citizens Committee's Cash Back program manager, "with two weeks left in the tax season, we want to reach out to every New Yorker who made under \$45,000 last year, to let them know that there is still time for them to claim these credits, and have their taxes done for free." Vincent adds that although Cash Back will still be available to help people who miss the deadline, resources may be limited, so they are strongly encouraged to file their taxes now, particularly with this year's extra incentive, the economic stimulus package. All you have to do to get that extra \$300 or \$600 per person is file your federal return.

Anyone earning \$54,000 or less can visit www.beehivenyc.org/CashBack and file their taxes online for free. For a list of mobile sites with free help from a tax preparer, visit Citizens Committee's website www.citizensnyc.org, or call the Cash Back hotline (212) 822-9584 to find out who we're working with in your area. For more information about Cash Back, contact Pinky Vincent pvincent@citizensnyc.org.

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