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**TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES CHALLENGES ACCURACY,
ANALYSIS OF QUINNIPIAC CONGESTION PRICING POLL**

LOADED, MISLEADING AND ABSENT QUESTIONS UNDERMINE POLLING RESULTS

New York, New York – August 30, 2007: Transportation Alternatives (“T.A.”), New York City’s advocate for cycling, walking and environmentally sensible transportation, raised serious questions regarding the results of a congestion pricing poll just released by the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute (the “Q-Poll”), which found that while 89 percent of New Yorkers consider traffic congestion to be a serious problem, 57% oppose congestion pricing.

Chief among T.A.’s criticisms of the Q-Poll was that many of its questions are misleading and contain biased language. For example, in asking voters whether they supported the Mayor’s plan, questioners stated that congestion pricing would “charg[e] a fee for vehicles that drive south of 86th Street in Manhattan.” As Paul Steely White, Executive Director of T.A. pointed out, “knowledge of the details of congestion pricing is still limited among New York voters, so posing a question that suggests that congestion pricing fees will apply at all times, rather than just from 6 am to 6 pm on weekdays, is misleading and skews the results against the proposal. The Q-Poll’s professionals should know better.” T.A. also challenged the use of loaded language in asking voters if the federal government’s \$354 million condition grant constituted “federal meddling in a municipal decision.” “The use of a nefarious sounding phrase like ‘federal meddling’ rather than a more balanced one like ‘too much involvement’ provokes a negative response against the federal government and the plan before the respondent answers the question. This is another big ‘no-no’ when it comes to accurate polling.”

The real problem, T.A. says, is that city residents are still not well informed about congestion pricing’s significant benefits and minimal impositions on the 95% of New Yorkers who are reliant on transit and do not regularly drive to Manhattan south of 86th street. The gap between those who think traffic is a serious problem and those who support congestion pricing provides just one indication of that point. For example, the fact that most Bronx elected officials, who have studied congestion pricing in detail, have come to support it while a majority of Bronx residents oppose it more likely points to an information gap than an opinion gap. Also, the fact that a majority of Staten Islanders oppose congestion pricing despite the fact that they will benefit from the program while virtually never paying its fees is also suspect. As Mr. White noted, “the absence of a question asking voters how well they feel informed about congestion pricing is a glaring omission. I have no doubt the Q-Poll’s numbers will not hold up once information about congestion pricing is more effectively disseminated to average New Yorkers.” T.A. also noted that the Q-Poll fails to refer to congestion pricing as a “three year trial program,” which it is, and never asks voters who are seriously concerned with traffic if they would rather implement congestion pricing on a trial basis or doing nothing at all to address traffic congestion.

In summary, T.A. stated that the only thing the Q-Poll shows definitively is that New Yorkers may not be well-informed about the benefits and details of congestion pricing and that the authors of the Q-Poll could afford to brush up on their polling techniques.

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