NYS ASSEMBLY CONSUMER AFFAIRS & PROTECTION COMMITTEE HEARING
CONCESSION PRICING FAIRNESS - SUBMITTED TESTIMONY
FRANK G. HOARE, ESQ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NYS THRUWAY AUTHORITY
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HEARING ROOM B, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ALBANY, NY 12210

Chair Rozic and members of the New York State Assembly Consumer Affairs and Protection Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding concession pricing practices and the operations of the New York State Thruway Authority's 27 modernized Service Areas, which serve millions of travelers each year. While I regret that I am unable to appear before the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony for the record.

My name is Frank Hoare, and I am the Executive Director of the New York State Thruway Authority.

The New York State Thruway Authority operates one of the largest toll road systems in the United States. Spanning more than 570 miles, the Thruway serves as New York's Main Street, connecting major cities, communities, businesses and destinations across the state while providing critical links to neighboring states and Canada. In 2025, more than 400 million trips were recorded on the Thruway, accounting for more than 2.8 billion miles traveled.

Since opening in the 1950s, the Thruway has played a vital role in supporting economic growth, tourism and the movement of people and goods throughout the Northeast. As one of the nation's oldest Interstate highway systems, it remains a cornerstone of New York's transportation network.

Unlike many transportation facilities, the Thruway is a user fee-supported system. We do not receive any dedicated federal, state, or local tax dollars. Thruway operations, maintenance and improvements are funded primarily through toll revenue and other user-generated sources.

The Thruway's 27 Service Areas are strategically located approximately every 30 miles, providing convenient stops for travelers, commuters, commercial drivers and tourists. These facilities provide opportunities for Thruway travelers to rest, purchase food and beverages, use restroom facilities and access other services without leaving the highway, enhancing both convenience and safety by encouraging drivers to take needed breaks and combat fatigue.

Recognizing the important role these facilities play in serving the traveling public, following a competitive bidding process, the Thruway Authority partnered with Applegreen on a comprehensive modernization project that transformed all 27 Service Areas into modern, accessible facilities. Completed in November 2025, the project represented a $450 million private investment by Applegreen and was delivered through a public-private partnership that required no toll revenue or taxpayer funding for construction.

Today, these service areas provide travelers with a cleaner, more comfortable and reliable experience while preserving the convenience customers have come to expect along New York's Main Street.

As the Committee examines concession pricing practices, I want to be clear about how prices are established and monitored at Thruway Service Areas.

The Thruway Authority's contract with Applegreen provides that Applegreen is responsible for setting prices for food, beverages and retail items sold at the Service Areas. However, those prices are not set arbitrarily. The contract requires Applegreen to conduct regular pricing surveys of comparable businesses in the regions surrounding the Service Areas and limits pricing to no more than a 10 percent markup above surveyed prices for similar products.

To ensure compliance, Service Areas are grouped by region and surveyed at least twice annually, and up to four times annually. The Thruway Authority also performs routine inspections through its Service Area Representatives, who review operations and monitor adherence to contractual requirements, including pricing.

While occasional pricing discrepancies may occur, they are rare. When a price is found to be out of compliance with the contract, the Thruway Authority requires immediate corrective action to ensure customers are charged appropriately and that pricing remains fair, consistent and transparent.

These oversight measures help ensure travelers receive the convenience of on-highway services while maintaining pricing standards that are clearly defined, transparent and enforced through the Thruway Authority's agreement with Applegreen.

In closing, the Thruway Authority is committed to ensuring that our Service Areas provide travelers with a fair, convenient and reliable experience. Through our partnership with Applegreen, New Yorkers and visitors alike have access to modern facilities, quality food and retail options, clean restrooms and essential services along one of the nation's busiest and safest highway systems.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. I appreciate the Committee's interest in this important topic and look forward to continuing to serve the millions of customers who travel the New York State Thruway each year.