

Editorial: Cross Sound Tunnel—A Dead Idea

The Cross Sound Tunnel is not an idea that won't die. It's an idea that has been killed many times, and like a viral zombie, it doesn't know that it's dead. The idea has been discussed, researched, and proposed many times all to the same end. It's wrong for Long Island. This project is not simply intended to allow Long Islanders a faster way off Long Island, it is viewed by the business community as a way to open up Long Island to an influx of commercial and passenger traffic from all over New England and the Northeast in the hopes of filling business coffers at the expense of Long Island residents. Traffic on our roads and byways won't be lighter. It will be worse as tens of thousands of people from off the Island seek weekend refuge on Long Island for its beaches, parks, and other amenities, the finest in the Northeast. If you think traffic is bad for the air show at Jones Beach on Memorial Day Weekends, prepare for that experience every day.

The finances don't make sense either. As we know, when Mr. Polimeni proposed his tunnel (it's actually 3 side-by-side tunnels) about 10 years ago, the project was going to be privately financed through the sale of bonds that were guaranteed by the State (you and me). Shortly after this proposal was unveiled at a meeting at Oyster Bay Town Hall, the economy tanked, and Bear Sterns (the company floating the bonds) went out of business. If that misguided proposal had been in place at the time of the crash, we all would have been left holding the bag and paying the bill. Isn't one white elephant project (Shoreham) enough? Generations of Long Islanders are still paying off that debt through the highest electric rates in the country.

The supposed cost of the Sound tunnel project suggested by the study is \$55.4 billion. However, pie-in-the-sky public works projects are notoriously over budget. The Hudson River rail tunnel originally was suppose to cost \$7.7 billion and is now calculated to cost \$13 billion. Similarly, the East Side access tunnel was suppose to cost \$4.3 billion when first proposed. It then ballooned to \$6.3 billion in 2006, \$8.4 billion in 2012, and is now expected to cost \$10.2 billion. You get the idea. Don't forget another hidden cost--the graft and corruption attendant to multi-billion dollar public works projects. Remember Buffalo Billions?

The idea that tunnels are invisible and, therefore, more acceptable is simply not true. All tunnels require large chimney towers for venting vehicle exhaust. They present air pollution and visual pollution issues. How many of these exhaust towers spewing huge amounts of diesel and gasoline fumes into our communities will be needed for 3 massive tunnels under the Sound and how will they blot our scenic landscape? How will the pollution impact the health of our residents? Also, the thought that running a tunnel under communities somehow makes all questions or concerns disappear is simply wrong. If the State thinks it can bypass eminent domain proceedings by building tunnels 50 feet below our homes (yes--that is what the Polimeni project wanted), it is severely misguided. Would anyone stand for tunnels transporting 80,000 vehicles a day to be constructed and operated 50 feet under their home—just a stone's throw—and not feel the effects without destroying houses, families, and communities? I think not.

The North Shore Communities are working hard to improve our

environment and the water quality of Long Island Sound. While much work remains, the latest reports show improvements. Why even chance a reversal?

The residents of Nassau County only recently rejected the idea of a publicly guaranteed private financing of the rebuilding of the Nassau Coliseum. The stakes were far lower than those at issue here. Long Islanders revel in the fact that we live on an island for all of the beauty, recreation, and enjoyment it brings. We don't need nature's idyllic beauty harmed by some recurring bad idea. The Sound crossing idea has always been dead. Like the zombie, it just needs one final blow.

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