

May 21, 2015

Writer's Extension: 206
Email: dsciannameo@avgny.com

Mr. James Ferrara
President
MTA Bridges and Tunnels
347 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10017

**Re: Motorcycle Access
Hugh L. Carey Tunnel ("HLC")**

Dear Mr. Ferrara:

I would like to ask you to consider a change to the unwritten policy regarding motorcycle access to the HLC Tunnel via the HOV lane from Brooklyn to Manhattan.

I commute daily from Staten Island to my Midtown Manhattan office via motorcycle daily. I have been doing this for years for convenience and energy conservation. As you are aware, motorcycles (and scooters) are permitted to utilize HOV lanes.

I assume you are also aware that the HOV lane from the Gowanus Expressway leads directly to the HLC (in fact to use the HOV, you must use the HLC and have an e-z pass) in the morning till 10 AM. Till that time, the HLC operates three lanes Manhattan bound; one 2-way tube (one lane in each direction) and one 1-way tube (two lanes Manhattan bound).

The Manhattan-bound HOV from the Gowanus leads directly to the toll booths directing vehicles to the 2-way tube only. Traffic cones/barriers prevent vehicles from accessing the 1-way Manhattan bound tube.

However, TBTA police force motorcycles to use the 1-way tube and to cross through traffic cones/barriers into moving traffic from the non-HOV lanes to do so. I note that there are no posted signs that require this, but it appears to be an established, but unwritten, policy at the HLC.



This creates several problems.

The first is a safety issue.

The traffic cones/barriers that motorcycles are forced to cross through are arranged to create a lane for vehicles that are not in the HOV (but in the regular Manhattan bound lanes) to access the 2-way Manhattan bound tube (this tube ALWAYS has less traffic).

On a daily basis, I, and other motorcycle riders, are endangered by having to cross through these traffic cones/barriers into moving traffic. Stopping and looking (although I always do) doesn't seem to solve the danger issue, as traffic is moving so fast at this point, and car drivers either do not see us, or do not care. Many days (including more than once this week), I have stopped, crossed through the barriers when it was clear, and a car goes around me to enter the toll booth first. Yesterday, a TBTA police officer had to come over and admonish a car driver for doing so.

It has gotten so bad that I am no longer willing to cross through the traffic cones/barriers into moving traffic unless a TBTA police officer stops the oncoming traffic from the non-HOV lanes.

This policy is creating a dangerous situation for motorcycle riders. If this policy is going to be continued, it should be posted so that the MTA assumes all liability for any injury caused to motorcycle riders forced to cross these barriers into moving traffic.

Secondly, this policy defeats the energy- and congestion-saving purpose of both riding a motorcycle and utilizing the HOV.

Motorcycles are permitted to use HOV lanes under federal law because they aid in saving fuel and lessen traffic congestion. Daily I am forced into the 1-way tube with cars from the regular (non-HOV lanes). This tube almost always exhibits bumper-to-bumper traffic. 99.9% of the cars and trucks in this tube have one occupant; the driver.

On the other hand, the 2-way tube typically moves quite freely and is used by buses and vehicles with three or more occupants. Typically, during the AM rush hours a trip through the 2-way tube takes no more than 5+ minutes or less. Conversely, the same trip through the 1-way tube takes 15+ minutes and many times longer.

Forcing motorcycles to use the 1-way tube wastes time and fuel, increases congestion and endangers lives.

And apparently there is no reasonable rationale for this policy because later on at night, usually 8 PM or later, one tube is shut down for maintenance and there is only one 2-way tube providing access between Manhattan and Brooklyn.

At these times, motorcycles are permitted in the 2-way tube. I use the HLC several times during the week at these hours and utilize the 2-way tube (Brooklyn bound). If it is safe at these times (the traffic is actually more congestion in the tube at these times), then it only makes sense that it is also safe for motorcycles to use the 2-way tube during the AM rush hours.

I hope you can assist in implementing a reasonable change to this policy at the HLC that wastes time and energy, increases traffic congestion, and endangers the lives of motorcycle riders.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Daniel F. Sciannameo". The signature is stylized and somewhat circular.

Daniel F. Sciannameo, MAI
President

cc: New York Motorcycle and Scooter Task Force
Councilwoman Deborah Rose