

DON'T GO THERE!

Keep road and bridge projects public. Stop the proposal for public private initiatives and design-build.

The state Legislature is considering proposals that would sell public assets for private profit — “public-private initiative” and combine both the design and construction of transportation projects into a single bid — “design-build.”

Proponents of these proposals make them sound attractive as a way to speed the construction of infrastructure and tap new funding sources, but reality is quite different. These proposals would reduce government transparency, invite fraud, increase the state's reliance on costly consultants limit public oversight and cost taxpayers more.

Privatizing major public assets such as the Tappan Zee, Peace and Grand Island Bridges or the Staten Island and Van Wyck Expressways, would place major transportation routes in the hands of long-term operating monopolies and lead to significantly higher

tolls and user fees. That's because privately financing projects costs more and builds in a hefty profit; these costs would be passed on to you.

Worse yet, these projects require long-term agreements, some as long as 75 years, which means if a deal is bad, it's bad for a long time.

Nationally, public-private partnership roads have been spectacular failures — defaulting on loans in Virginia and going bankrupt in Texas. Public-private toll roads in South Carolina, Florida and California are also careening toward default.

“Design-build” projects don't fare much better, and they limit bidding and competition. Only the largest contractors will be able to do both project design and construction. Remember the “Big Dig” in Massachusetts? It's one of the biggest examples that proves “design-build” is a road to disaster.

The commonwealth chose to design and construct the “Big Dig” as a design-build project. A project that was initially estimated to cost \$4 billion in today's dollars wound up costing \$14.6 billion, resulted in a litany of issues regarding oversight and cost overruns, and spawned lawsuits of more than \$150 million against the project managers.

We don't need this in New York. We already own our bridges and roads and can finance, build and maintain them better and at a lower cost than any private entity. *New Yorkers, tell your legislators you don't want to go there!*

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