Silver Sky bridge tolls are a lesser evil

By Josh Rogers

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver called his plan to be revenue from the state’s toll roads "the lesser of three evils" in the days leading up to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA) budget vote.

"It is less evil than raising state income and sales taxes," Silver told reporters at a Lower Manhattan news conference. "The other two have a much more negative impact on people, particularly in this time when the economy is not doing so well."

He said his compromise plan has the support of Democratic leaders, but the rank and file MTA workers have not been won over.

"It’s a tough sell, but I think it’s the lesser of two evils. I think it’s more palatable than a tax hike."

When asked if the MTA would make a push in the budget to reduce the tolls before the final vote, Silver said no. "We’re not talking about eliminating them," he said.

He said the Assembly is not considering tolling during peak hours to reduce traffic.

"It is not on the table," Silver told Dowd. "I don’t think it’s a good idea."

Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s plan to change drivers from EZ-Pass tolls to the state Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s (MTA) E-Z Tolls driving budget plan.

"The tolls are going to be an immediate impact," Silver said. "It’s a plan that the MTA has been working on for a long time."

Silver said the tolls are expected to generate $1.5 billion in revenue for the state.

"I think it’s the lesser of two evils," Silver said. "I think it’s more palatable than a tax hike."

He said the plan is a "good idea" because the MTA needs the money to operate.

"I think they’re going to have to do something," Silver said. "I think it’s the lesser of two evils."