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May 11, 2009

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### Assembly GOP keeps heat on MTA bailout

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Ball, Calhoun, Molinaro, all oppose MTA bailout

its approval of an MTA bailout bill last week that will see imposition of a payroll tax on every business in the entire MTA region, which includes Orange, Dutchess, Putnam, Westchester and Rockland counties.

Standing at the Salisbury Mills Metro-North Train Station, Members Nancy Calhoun, Marc Molinaro and Gregory Ball all called for a forensic audit of the MTA's book. And Ball made it clear by what is meant by forensic audit – a look into possible criminal activity.

The lawmakers concede there is not much that can legally be done about the tax since the state legislature approved and the governor signed it. But, they continued to maintain that the state's leadership, all from New York City, used the northern counties to bail out their transportation system, and that is wrong. The Republicans said they would write to state officials demanding an audit and urged the public and the media to keep the heat turned up on the issue.

Ball called the new tax "a job killer" and said state leaders have done "the Hudson two-step... a game."

He said the issue should have been addressed in the budget, instead of being set aside where the Democrats created a "doom's day scenario," he said.

Molinaro said the MTA deal holds the Mid-Hudson Valley hostage and perpetuates "the great divide" between Upstate and Downstate.

Calhoun the MTA tax is unfair because Orange and Rockland counties are paying between \$30 million and \$40 million more than they are receiving in services from the transit agency. "The MTA should have imposed a payroll tax on New York City alone," she said.

Last week, the county legislatures in Rockland and Orange counties voted to ask the state to allow them to withdraw from the MTA region.

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