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Leaders say strike DMV fee increases

*By Jenny Lee-Adrian
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Assemblyman Marc Molinaro, R-Red Hook, and Dutchess County Clerk Brad Kendall have called for repeal of increases in driver's license and vehicle registration fees.

For example, the vehicle registration renewal fee of a 2003 Ford Taurus station wagon would go from \$45 to \$126.25 in Dutchess County on Sept. 1, according to Kendall. The fee hike includes a basic increase, a vehicle use tax and a surcharge that goes to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority since Dutchess is in the 12-county MTA region.

Molinaro blasted Gov. David Paterson and legislative leaders for including the fees in the 2009-10 state budget.

"They're forcing everyone else to shoulder the burden," Molinaro said.

Lawmakers will come back to Albany in September to address a \$2 billion deficit in the 2009-10 budget, Molinaro said.

Waste-cutting recommended

The fees generate about \$150 million to \$170 million in revenue, Molinaro said. To make up the shortfall if fees were repealed, he said cut out the waste.

The MTA region includes Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Bronx, Kings, Queens, Westchester, Suffolk, Nassau, Richmond and New York counties.

Driver's license fees for residents in the 12 counties will go from \$50 to \$80.50, which includes a \$16 MTA surcharge, according to Kendall.

"It's just unconscionable Dutchess County residents are asked to pay dramatically higher registration fees, so Wall Street bankers can still ride the subway for (\$2.25)," Kendall said.
