



July 21, 2021

Mr. Matthew Driscoll
Executive Director
New York State Thruway Authority
200 Southern Boulevard
Albany, New York 12209

Dear Director Driscoll,

We are calling on the New York State Thruway Authority to reconsider its decision to award Applegreen the lease for our state's Thruway rest stops. As LGBTQ leaders and advocates we share grave concern that Applegreen has included on its list of approved concessions the restaurant chain, Chick-Fil-A.

As you are aware, the Chief Executive Officer of Chick-fil-A is actively making contributions to national anti-LGBTQ organizations. Some of these organizations include The National Christian Charitable Foundation and The Salvation Army. The National Christian Charitable Foundation is currently lobbying the federal government against passing the Equality Act, a law that would amend the Civil Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing, public accommodations, education, federally funded programs, credit, and jury service. Now, more than ever, the Equality Act is needed to curtail the ongoing culture war being waged against LGBTQ Americans by the very same organizations being funded by the owner of Chick-Fil-A.

We do not think it is consistent with the laws and policies of New York State for the Thruway Authority to award leases to and do business with a company that is so publicly hostile to and vigorously seeking to curtail the rights of our state's LGBTQ citizens. New York State has been at the forefront of protecting the civil and human rights of LGBTQ individuals, from strengthening anti-discrimination protections by adding Gender Identity and Expression to our state's Human Rights law, to banning the controversial practice of Conversion Therapy, and much more. We believe that continuing to move forward with this lease agreement, without requiring Applegreen to remove Chick-Fil-A from the list of approved concessions directly contradicts New York's longstanding commitment to ensure the rights of all LGBTQ individuals. We therefore urge you to pause the process of awarding the rest stop lease unless and until Applegreen removes Chick-Fil-A from the list of approved concessionaires

Thank you,

Elisa Crespo
Executive Director



cc: Hon. Andrew Cuomo
Hon. Carl Heastie
Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Frank Hoare, General Counsel NYS Thruway Authority
Joanne Riddett, Chief Information Officer NYS Thruway Authority

The organizations below endorse this letter:

