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NEW YORK
STATE
SENATE



SENATOR JAMES F. GAUGHRAN
SENATOR, 5TH DISTRICT

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SYOSSET, NY 11791
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ALBANY OFFICE
848 LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BLDG.
ALBANY, NY 12247
(518) 455-3250

GAUGHRAN@NYSENATE.GOV

Sent via email

March 3, 2021

Patrick Foye, MTA Chairman and CEO
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004-2207

Dear Chairman Foye:

We are writing to express our concern about the MTA Long Island Rail Road's decision to reduce weekday service to a skeleton schedule mirroring the limited service offered on weekends. This plan, slated to start March 8, 2021, will have a detrimental effect on Long Island commuters, particularly as New York works to reset and recharge our economy.

In addition, legislators and the public were advised these cuts were a temporary reduction in service to accommodate the reduction in ridership as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we have since learned that the MTA intends to keep these service cuts beyond the end date in May.

The Biden Administration has worked tirelessly to advance a significant economic recovery package for Americans, including delivering the funds necessary to keep our State's transportation system open and operating. In addition, New York has begun to open businesses across the State, including economic hubs in our region like Madison Square Garden and Barclays Center. It will be difficult, if not impossible, for our region to rebound if commuters and consumers lack appropriate public transportation to frequent struggling restaurants and entertainment centers. Now more than ever, New Yorkers and small businesses are relying on the MTA to safely transport consumers between New York City and Long Island.

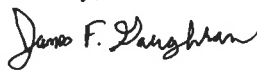
Countless frontline workers, including medical personnel, police officers, and teachers commute between New York City and Long Island each day, and rely on adequate transportation services to keep our State moving forward, to keep our hospitals staffed, to keep our streets safe, and to keep our children learning. These cuts will have a disproportionately detrimental impact on Long Island Rail Road commuters, while New York City subways and bus schedules remain largely unaffected.

The hard-working men and women of the MTA have worked a thankless job for the past year. As we mark the one-year anniversary of the beginning of this pandemic, it is the work of these frontline heroes that has carried us through. They have ensured a safe and sanitized transportation system, put themselves at risk on a daily basis in front-facing roles, and continued shuttling fellow essential workers to and from work. These ridership cuts will negatively impact countless essential workers, like the workers of the MTA, who rely on public transportation to earn a living, support their families, and contribute to our economy.

We urge you to reconsider this decision and withhold implementation of the planned service reduction. New York's recovery continues to hang in the balance and it is vital that the MTA provide customers with the frequent access they deserve and upon which our economy relies.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



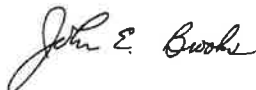
James F. Gaughran
Senator, 5th District



Timothy M. Kennedy
Senator, 63rd District



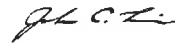
Leroy Comrie
Senator, 14th District



John E. Brooks
Senator, 8th District



Anna M. Kaplan
Senator, 7th District



John C. Liu
Senator, 11th District



Kevin Thomas
Senator, 6th District



Todd Kaminsky
Senator, 9th District

cc: Phillip Eng, Long Island Rail Road President



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General Chairperson

VINCENT TESSITORE
Vice General Chairperson

MICHAEL DENN
Secretary

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Sent via email and US mail

February 24, 2021

Patrick Foye, MTA Chairman and CEO
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004-2207

Re: March 8, 2021 - Long Island Rail Road Service Reduction

Dear Chairman Foye:

I am writing on behalf of our entire Organization with deep regret toward the MTA Long Island Rail Road's plan to reduce weekday service to a weekend schedule beginning on March 8, 2021. In a brief Staff Summary provided in board materials it stated that this reduction in service is to accommodate projects throughout the railroad, and it included that those new schedules will be introduced to operate more efficiently. Our Organization has since learned that these service cuts will remain beyond the original date projected in May and are not being communicated openly to the riding public as weekend service with some added trains.

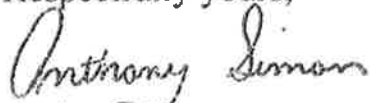
The Federal Government has delivered to the MTA on the funds necessary to keep the MTA running safely for New Yorkers, including Long Islanders, to prepare for a return to the system. The State has already began the process of opening up the region by accepting fans back to Madison Square Garden and Barclays Center which are both served by the LIRR. Movie Theaters, Restaurants and Businesses throughout the city are beginning to come alive again as we approach the spring season. **While the MTA should be incentivizing customers back to the system, why would we choose now to reduce service further?** It makes no sense that riders should now have to return to a system with limited service options and potential concerns for safe distancing capabilities when vaccine availability is improving and both federal and state leaders are attempting to stimulate the economy.

Mr. Chairman our members have weathered the effects of this pandemic as the heroes you have gratefully declared them to be time and time again. They have delivered to the riding public

through some of the most difficult times in the history of our railroad. Now is the time for them to continue delivering by leaving the adjusted weekday schedule as is and not seek a limited savings opportunity by creating a disincentive for our customers to come back. We believe that the stimulus funds should be used for ample service to entice people back to the safe, clean and reliable system we have maintained throughout the pandemic.

I strongly encourage you to not implement the reduction in service outlined for March 8th and let us join you in welcoming back our customers with the safe service they deserve.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anthony Simon".

Anthony Simon

General Chairperson