

Long Island Rail Road Commuters Council

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For Immediate Release

Commuters Council Releases 1998 LIRR ReportCard

The Long Island Rail Road Commuters Council today released the results of its 1998 Report Card, in which riders were asked to grade the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) on various aspects of service. This year, Council members and staff collected over 2,000 report cards during the morning and evening rush hours in April and May.

For the third consecutive year, the overall grade was a C+, and of the remaining 45 indicators, grades changed in only 12. Some 7 attributes improved and 5 areas declined. However, the report cards were collected before the summer, when conditions on the railroad deteriorated significantly.

Categories improving in 1998 include several indicators related to home stations. The grades for waiting area cleanliness, rest room cleanliness, building access hours, and station maintenance all improved. Council Chairman Larry Silverman credits this positive trend to the attention the LIRR has paid in recent years to upgrading stations.

"We are pleased to see four improving grades related to home stations," Mr. Silverman said. "We believe this reflects riders' appreciation of the renovations completed or underway at many stations, for which the railroad's capital program deserves great credit."

Unfortunately, despite the gains in these areas, grades in several critical areas either declined or remained the same this year. The grades for morning and evening on-time performance, morning peak service, and midday service all dropped, and the railroad received poor scores for train cleanliness and air conditioning.

"We are not surprised that the railroad continues to receive low grades in the most important service categories," noted Mr. Silverman. "And after its failing summer session, we hope that the railroad will continue to increase its regular maintenance, and accelerate fleet overhaul and replacement."

At the press conference, the Council also announced the winning designs for its "Happy Rails to You" customer courtesy campaign. Three designs were selected focusing on loud cell phone conversations, litter on trains, and riders who place their bags or feet on seats.

The entries were done collaboratively by LIRR commuters Joe Giglio of Deer Park and Laura Patterson of Port Washington.

Mr. Silverman presented Mr. Giglio and Ms. Patterson with a certificate of recognition and expressed his appreciation to the twenty-two people who submitted ideas. "Our program to let riders share their feelings with one another has been a great success," Mr. Silverman said. "Report card responses to our question about riders' on-board conduct were robust and enlightening. The drawings and slogans received were creative, thoughtful, and sometimes too outrageous to print."

Copies of the full report are available upon request.

The LIRRCC was created in 1981 by the New York State Legislature to represent the riders of the Long Island Rail Road. The thirteen volunteer members are commuters appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the Nassau and Suffolk County Executives and the Brooklyn and Queens Borough Presidents.