



PCAC

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Statement by Lisa Daglian, PCAC Executive Director, Regarding the Timing of the MTA Budget Vote and Potential Fare Increases MTA Board Meeting December 12, 2018

My name is Lisa Daglian, and I am the Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA.

Monday's Finance Committee meeting was one of the more interesting I have attended – and I'm sure I'm not alone. It was a first: the proposed budget was moved forward to the MTA Board for a vote without a recommendation either way from the Finance Committee. One of the many concerns raised by Committee members was that the proposed budget includes anticipated revenue from the proposed fare hike, but a vote on the hikes won't be taken until January – and there is no certainty that they will be passed, or in what form.

That's a concern that we share, especially as we will be in Rockland County tomorrow night for the final fare hearing. Taking a vote on a budget that includes revenue from fare hikes sends a message to West of Hudson riders that they don't count, and to all riders that the increases are a foregone conclusion.

Therefore, we urge the Board to delay a vote on the budget until January, and then only after a vote is taken on fare hikes to ensure that an accurate accounting of anticipated revenues is included in the budget.

Assuming that members' questions are answered and the budget passes at that time, it would be enacted in late January, thereby avoiding doomsday scenarios of not having a budget passed at all and still ensure that the MTA is within its 120-day statutory requirements.

Committee members were also concerned about the timing of the budget vote and potential fare increases when we have no idea how much the state and city will contribute to the MTA – and both **must** contribute. There is no clarity on whether Congestion Pricing – or other funding options – will be enacted. We haven't heard from the Sustainability working group to even know what some of the proposals might be, their timing and feasibility, and how much revenue they could potentially bring in.

Going forward, we look forward to hearing more about Commissioner Vanterpool's proposal to change the MTA's fiscal year to better align with the state and city fiscal years. Its simplicity is amazing; we're frankly surprised that such a proposal hasn't been acted upon before. It just makes sense.

We look forward to another lively discussion on this issue today. Thank you.