

**Statement of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA
Before the Finance Committee of the MTA Board
March 23, 2009**

I am William Henderson, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA. The PCAC is composed of the members of three riders' councils established by the State legislature in 1981 and addresses regional issues as well as coordinating the work of the councils.

The fare increases that were presented today in the proposed tariff change released today will result in real pain for your customers, but this is only a part of the very real burden that will be imposed on the riders whom we represent. The proposal for service cuts is yet to come, and these cuts will be a real blow to riders. They will mean that some will not be able to travel efficiently to work, some will not be able to visit family members, others will have no direct path to school, and some will find it difficult to access medical care. We've become a bit numb to the numbers that have been discussed in terms of a fare increase, like \$103 for a 30-day MetroCard and \$2.50 for a subway fare.

Still, some of these numbers still take your breath away. I have to look twice when I see \$216 for a monthly Metro-North pass to Mount Vernon and the highest priced monthly pass on the Long Island Rail Road at \$452. Because time based MetroCards will no longer be valid on Long Island Bus, the monthly cost of travel for someone who uses both NYC Transit and Long Island Bus could go from \$81 to about \$240. That's a real burden on working families.

We're disappointed to see these increases, but we're mainly disappointed in our elected representatives. We had a good process in place with the Ravitch Commission, where respected experts weighed the options and crafted a reasonable plan to not only get through the current budget crisis, but also to lay a firm foundation for the future. Unfortunately, this process went off track.

There is still time to bring the process to a successful conclusion, but our legislators, and particularly our State Senators, must get serious about MTA financing. The time for rhetoric is past. We call upon our elected representatives to enact stable, reliable, inflation sensitive operating and capital funding for the MTA, and more importantly, for its customers. We can't afford to settle for anything less.