

**Statement of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA
Before the Finance Committee of the MTA Board
April 27, 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.

There's a joke where a pig rescues a farmer from a fire by dragging him out of his burning house. A reporter comes to see the pig and finds that the pig is missing a leg. He asks the farmer what has happened to the pig, and the farmer responds "an animal this special you don't eat all at once." I can only conclude today that Albany isn't planning to eat the MTA all at once. Unfortunately, the MTA's funding situation is every bit as absurd as the punchline of this joke.

Just over a month ago, a number of my colleagues and I spoke before this committee, and I'm sorry to say that our situation has changed very little since then. We still face onerous fare increases that will raise the cost of a 30-day MetroCard to over \$100 and push fares for some suburban commuters who use NYC Transit to reach their final destination to over \$500 per month. Piled on top of fare increases are the service cuts that will make using public transportation more crowded and confusing and less convenient and attractive. The greatest change since last month is that there is even less time to rescue the system from this fate.

Riders need a complete system; we can't be reduced to debating what services we can cut off in order to cause the least damage to our economy and way of life. Service cuts and fare increases are set to start hitting home. The problem will only get worse if nothing is done, but there's still time for our elected representatives to step up and do the right thing to protect our riders, our economy, and our way of life. We can have adequate levels of service and reasonable fares, but not without action from Albany to create a stable, reliable, inflation sensitive operating and capital funding system for the MTA and the service that is so vital to its customers

I urge the members of this committee to do make the reality of our situation clear to our State Elected officials in the strongest possible terms. The time is running out, and our riders do have long memories.

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.