

**Statement of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee
to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Before the Senate Standing Committee on Finance, the Senate Standing
Committee on Corporations, Authorities, and Commissions and the Senate
Standing Committee on Transportation on the Nomination of Jay Walder as
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Metropolitan Transportation
Authority**

Tuesday September 8, 2009

Good morning, my name is Ira R. Greenberg. I am the Chairman of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC). The PCAC is the umbrella organization for three legislatively-mandated Councils representing the interests of public transportation users: the Long Island Rail Road Commuter's Council, the Metro-North Rail Road Commuters Council, and the New York City Transit Riders Council. These members of the Councils, who are ex officio members of the PCAC, are volunteers who are appointed to their position by the Governor at the recommendation of local officials within the service area covered by each Council. A representative from each Council participates as a non-voting member on the MTA Board. In addition to chairing the PCAC, I am privileged to serve as the Long Island Rail Road Commuter's Council's representative to the MTA Board. The Councils were created by the New York State legislature in 1981 and the PCAC was officially established in State law earlier this year.

We welcomed the Governor's announcement in July that he had nominated Jay Walder to be the next Chairman and CEO of the MTA. We were pleased that the Governor's choice for this position is a respected transportation professional. Mr. Walder's enjoys an exemplary reputation from his work in rebuilding the London transit system and his experience with McKinsey and Company. His broad perspective on the future direction of transit would be a great resource in leading the MTA into the future. Further, his strong background in management and finance issues is a good fit for an agency where many of the most critical issues are grounded in management and finance.

We also believe that Mr. Walder's experience in his years with the MTA an invaluable asset in leading this organization. The MTA is unique among public transportation

providers. By almost any measure, the MTA dwarfs the other transit agencies in the United States and most of the rest of the world as well. The MTA can create a market for a new design of transportation equipment by itself, but this size can also make it difficult to change directions and take advantage of opportunities. It's critical for the MTA to have a leader that understands the advantages and limitations that confront the Authority. More than his experience within the MTA, however, Mr. Walder has knowledge of the MTA gained as a New Yorker who grew up using the system; he will not have to spend valuable time orienting himself to the system when so much needs to be done.

Several of our members dealt with Mr. Walder when he was with the MTA in the 1980's and 1990's. Those of us who are familiar with him found him to be thoughtful, willing to listen to others' views, honest, and straightforward. We believe that these qualities are essential to moving the organization forward, particularly in view of the issues of transparency and trust that have surrounded the MTA in recent years.

Throughout the transition of leadership at the MTA this year, we called upon the Governor and the State Senate to act promptly to select a permanent Chairman and CEO. The issues facing the MTA and its operating agencies demand permanent capable leadership. Although the legislature and the Governor provided new funding sources for the MTA, financial challenges remain, and balancing the budget into the future will require difficult choices. The draft Capital Program that is before the MTA Board faces a funding gap of almost \$9 billion over five years, and this plan only begins to meet the needs identified for 2010 through 2014.

The MTA needs a leader who can work with the Governor and State Legislature to secure full funding for the operating and capital needs of our transit system. You continually hear from transit advocates about the importance of our transit system to the economic future of our City, region, and State. I won't review the facts and figures, as it is clear to us all that a well-run public transportation system returns far more than its cost in economic benefits. As advocates for the riders, we look forward to working with Mr. Walder on securing full funding of the Capital Program and implementing passenger-oriented improvements throughout the MTA network.