

**Statement of the Long Island Rail Road Commuter's Council  
Before the MTA Board Long Island Committee  
September 16, 2009**

I am William Henderson, Executive Director of the Long Island Rail Road Commuter's Council. The LIRRCC, which was established in 1981, is the legislatively mandated representative of Long Island Rail Road riders.

The Council has reviewed the Long Island Rail Road's portion of the proposed 2010-2014 capital program. We are pleased to see the Rail Road's commitment to maintaining core infrastructure and investments, such as the full Main Line second track between Farmingdale and Ronkonkoma, which will allow the LIRR to respond to changing demands for mobility. We have also had productive discussions with MTA staff on the Capital Program and have found them responsive to the concerns we have expressed. In particular, we have been pleased with movement toward developing a detailed parking and station access program to respond to the demands that will accompany the opening of East Side Access.

Still, we have several concerns with the LIRR's proposed Capital Program that we would like to share with this Committee. We believe that the omission of the Main Line Corridor Improvements Project from this document is a serious shortcoming. The funding may not be available to proceed to the construction phase of this project in the next five years, but we believe that money should be included for the design and planning of the project in order to keep it moving forward, particularly in view of the many issues that will need to be resolved prior to its completion. The Council supports the LIRR's intention to pursue several projects in this corridor to immediately address state of good repair issues. The Council recommends that the LIRR immediately enter into discussions with the FTA to determine these projects' impact on Federal funding and how these near term projects can be coordinated with moving forward with the EIS process for the Main Line Corridor Improvements project.

The Council is also deeply concerned with the quality of the LIRR diesel fleet. In the agenda book today is a report stating that efforts to improve diesel fleet performance have met with some success, but the diesel fleet continues to frustrate riders who depend upon it. The performance of the diesel electric and dual mode locomotives remains woeful, and they remain unable to meet even a mean distance between failures goal that has recently been adjusted downward from 30,000 to 18,000 miles. While the proposed capital program includes funding to develop a diesel multiple unit car, we are not convinced that this will be enough to raise reliability in diesel territory, Long Island's growth area, to an acceptable level.

We appreciate the opportunity to present our views. Thank you for your time and attention.