



PCAC

PERMANENT CITIZENS
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**PCAC Testimony to the MTA Board
Delivered by Lisa Daglian, Executive Director, PCAC
October 20, 2021**

Good morning, I'm Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC. Janno, please accept our condolences on the loss of your mother. She sounds like a remarkable woman. We also welcome the new leadership team and look forward to working with them.

One week ago, we stood with Senator Comrie and Councilmember Grodenchik at the Woodside Station to release our report "*Freedom Ticket Phase II, Now, More Than Ever!*" Its recommendations include improving Atlantic Ticket and further expanding commuter rail discounts on Metro-North and the LIRR throughout New York City, and adding free transfers to subways and buses. Freedom Ticket could be a ticket to opportunity for tens of thousands of riders in the outer boroughs.

It will help reduce long travel times and offer a more equitable – and affordable – regional fare structure, allowing the MTA to attract commuters back, bring in new riders, and better accommodate regional essential workers, while filling empty seats on both railroads with paying customers – thus bolstering the MTA's bottom line.

Atlantic Ticket has been a success for the LIRR and riders, with over 2 million tickets sold. To help shepherd the expanded proposal, including ticket price, we call for the formation of a Freedom Ticket Task Force to oversee a fare restructuring study and provide timely recommendations; make ridership and revenue data public; identify funding opportunities; and provide quarterly reports to the MTA Board. We also suggest repurposing funds from the Outer Borough Transportation Account to offer more significant discounts to riders than had been originally included.

For the second phase of Freedom Ticket, timed for after the return of Peak ticketing, we are calling for Off-Peak & Reverse Peak Suburban Discount Pilot Programs. These would also be guided by the Freedom Ticket Task Force, and based on the successes of the earlier pilot.

But suburban commuters shouldn't have to wait for discounts. As we did on Monday, we're calling for a 20-trip ticket with a 20% discount. Our slogan: When it comes to new commutation patterns, the MTA's vision is a perfect 20-20.

Thank you for your consideration.