Good morning, I’m Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC. Phil, it’s hard to believe this will be the last Joint Committee meeting for you. The work you’ve done for the Long Island Rail Road – and its commuters – is an impressive legacy. From the darkest days of the pandemic to the brightest on time performance the LIRR has ever seen, all while overseeing significant projects like Third Track, the opening of the first new passenger station in half a century, and East Side Access, your dedication and commitment to the Rail Road, its riders and workers has always been clear, and we thank you.

We feel good knowing that you’ll be stepping in, Cathy. You know the key issues facing commuters and railroads as we emerge from the COVID crisis, and are certainly no stranger to major projects and the ravages of climate change. We look forward to continuing to work with you in your dual role, on behalf of riders from Wassaic to Montauk.

Unfortunately, as we saw from the shooting incident at Ronkonkoma last week, the challenges facing the railroads are greater than they’ve ever been. The fear and horror of 1993 came flashing back to too many commuters, just at a time when people are feeling more comfortable on transit again. We’re hopeful this was a one-off, but it points to the need for strengthening partnerships with local law enforcement and community organizations, including those whose goal is to get illegal guns off the streets. Ensuring the safety of riders and workers is essential, no matter if it’s one in the morning or one in the afternoon. Getting people back on board is critical to our region’s recovery, and the MTA’s success is a core element of that.

The new fares that take effect next week will help entice commuters and occasional riders back onboard, and we look forward to working with you to ensure their successful roll-out. Keeping fares flat, thanks to federal funds and the Governor’s commitment, helps. We encourage you to steadily increase service to keep pace with return to office, and as Platform F enters regular service, ask you to retain the one-seat ride to Atlantic Terminal during rush hours. Thank you.