**MTA Board Meeting Testimony- No Gas Tax Holiday, More Funding for Transit**

**By Lisa Daglian, Executive Director**

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Good morning, I’m Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC.

With today’s Board meeting being held so close to the start of the state’s new fiscal year, the FY23 budget is top of mind — particularly in light of some of the potentially dire funding news we heard on Monday. With the MTA’s revenue so closely tied to ridership, and fewer people getting back on board than the McKinsey forecast, it’s clearly time to ramp up the conversation about finding additional dedicated sources of operating revenue. It won’t be an easy issue to resolve, and we look forward to adding incoming Transit President Rich Davey’s voice to the chorus as we work with all our partners on solutions. But an immediate no brainer would seem to be to hold harmless the gas tax. That’s a conversation that can’t wait.

There are voices calling for a gas tax holiday – but that’s no holiday for transit, or roads and bridges for that matter. And while the people who drive would get a break, even as they tend to be wealthier than transit users and add to congestion and pollution, riders would get no relief. In fact, in the long run, riders on the LIRR, Metro-North, Staten Island Railway and our subways and buses could permanently lose the critical funds the gas tax provides if some in Albany have their way. The problem is that once the horse is out of the gate, the stampede starts. If giving drivers a break is so important, then New York should be more like California than Connecticut in its approach. We do like the fact that as gas prices go up, so does ridership, another case for not reducing taxes. However, if there is indeed money available to hold the MTA harmless if this so-called holiday is enacted, it makes more sense to us to give those available funds to the MTA on a regular basis as part of a new lock-box dedicated operating revenue rainy day fund. Because the fiscal tsunami that Pat Foye warned of may not have struck us this time, thanks to Senator Schumer and his colleagues, but it looms large in the distance if we don’t prepare for it now. Thank you.