**MTA Board Meeting Testimony**

**Money and the MTA: Slamming the Gate on Fare Evasion**

**April 27, 2022**

Good morning, I’m Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC. Today I’m going to talk about money, something near and dear to everyone’s heart, and critical to the MTA’s future.

We’re incredibly fortunate to have Senator Schumer in our corner. He and the rest of the New York delegation brought home the billions, putting the MTA on reasonably stable fiscal ground through 2025. Governor Hochul also came to riders’ rescue by holding off fare increases at least through the end of this year. But tomorrow comes too soon, and we need to think about how to fill looming budget gaps today.

We’re committed to working with you all, with our elected officials, the business community and good government groups, our partners in environmental justice and advocacy – and anyone who will join us – to identify new sources of dedicated operating revenue.

A “no brainer” place to start is by plugging the giant fare evasion hole. The $500 million a year in losses would pay for more frequent and reliable service, key to getting more riders back on board. Yesterday, Janno announced a new initiative that will have as its pillars equity, education and enforcement; ensuring that enforcement is handled fairly will be vital to its success. We're pleased that panelists will include MTA Board members; business, not-for-profit and community leaders; and educators. We’d also like to see a rider rep named. Using technology and investing in new fare arrays will also be welcome. We hope the city will explore changing the eligibility criteria for Fair Fares to the higher New York City poverty level to expand its reach.

Continued investment in signals and tracks, stations and structural improvements, and the most resilient and sustainable system possible is essential. Congestion Pricing is key to making that happen. Understandably, the feds have questions. We’re optimistic that your answers will satisfy them and encourage your prompt reply. This week, we heard that funds will first be realized in 2024. We hope the process can be accelerated. It’s too important to be a political football (again) and we’ll keep our eyes sharply focused on this prize.

We look forward to working with you to get the MTA – and riders – the money that’s critical to keeping trains and buses running, so our region can keep running.