**MTA Board Meeting Testimony**

**“Celebrating Climate Week with Transit (and Congestion Pricing!)”**

**By: Kara Gurl, Research and Communications Associate**

Good morning! I’m Kara Gurl, Research and Communications Associate at the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC).

This week is Climate Week, and there’s no better way to celebrate than with transit. The MTA singlehandedly helps millions of New Yorkers reduce their carbon footprints every day. It’s only going to get better with more electric buses, more frequent and reliable service, and state of good repair improvements that prove to riders that transit is their best choice. Transit, biking, and walking are the answer to reducing the large amount of emissions caused by cars and trucks. We’re encouraged by your work on the first and last mile micromobility study on the commuter rails, and look forward to seeing your bike and pedestrian access strategic plan in the coming months. Getting riders around the region to transit without driving is the next step to ensuring that riders get on, and stay on, trains and buses.

That’s why Congestion Pricing has the potential to be one of the most transformative policies of our lifetimes. We can’t overstate the importance of implementing it as soon as possible—for transit riders, for our region, and for future generations. Getting more drivers out of cars and onto transit by discouraging nonessential car trips will reduce congestion and pollution, improve air quality, and fund critical transit improvements, cementing New York’s place as a national leader in fighting the climate crisis.

Congestion Pricing will also help the MTA fund the critical resiliency projects it needs to protect our existing transit infrastructure from extreme weather and flooding. Hurricane season isn’t over, and mother nature isn’t slowing down anytime soon, as we’ve seen from the devastation Fiona left in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. The few storms that have hit us this season left flooding in multiple stations and caused service outages on multiple lines. We thank you for restoring service quickly, but know that it’s only a matter of time before the next Sandy inundates us. Our city and region can’t afford to delay resiliency improvements, and we’re confident that you can work together with the city to expand sewer capacity and decrease the potential for the next big storm to put our transit system underwater. Let’s make this Climate Week Count. Thank you.