**Long Island Rail Road Riders Will Benefit From Congestion Pricing**

**Larry Rubenstein**

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Good evening. I’m Larry Rubenstein and I am Vice Chair of the Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council and a member of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC). I’m here tonight to speak in support of Congestion Pricing on behalf of Long Island Rail Road commuters.

Love it or hate it, we need Congestion Pricing. As both a frequent driver and a regular rider of the Long Island Rail Road, I understand both sides. But I know that the Long Island Rail Road needs the funding brought in by Congestion Pricing to pay for critical repairs and improvements that will help make transit the best option for even more Long Islanders. Many transit improvements are already on the way, including East Side Access and Third Track, that show the MTA’s commitment to improving transit for Long Island— including making it easier for reverse-commuters traveling Eastbound for work, which will revitalize the Long Island economy.

Congestion Pricing will raise billions for critical LIRR projects like upgrading the signals that keep our trains moving from Babylon to Patchogue; platform and station repairs and accessibility projects throughout the system to make sure that the disabled and elderly can rely on transit; new (and more) train cars – more M9 “unicorns” to replace M3 “dinosaurs” that are back from retirement; and state-of-good-repair projects that will mean faster, more reliable rides with fewer delays.

Without this critical funding from Congestion Pricing, we risk delaying important repairs that will slow down commutes and bring us closer to another, or worse, “Summer of Hell.” Long Island has seen its fair share of storms and extreme weather over the last decade, leading to service outages on many lines, and we have to prepare for the worst. This capital funding will also help protect the Long Island Rail Road from damage caused by rain, flood, wind, and snow.

All of these improvements will make riding the Long Island Rail Road more reliable, accessible, and enjoyable. And for those of us who do not end our trips at Penn Station or Atlantic Terminal — and soon, Grand Central — it’s clear that the city’s subways and buses desperately need more maintenance and upgrades. This funding will help the majority of Long Islanders who take transit into the city by speeding up trains and buses and improving our transit system as a whole. Investing in our transit system means investing in our economy and our entire region, and the funds brought by Congestion Pricing are more important now than ever. Thank you.