**MTA Capital Program Committee Meeting Testimony**

**“Congestion Pricing, yay!”**

**By: Lisa Daglian, Executive Director, PCAC**

**May 22, 2023**

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

I have three words to start us off: Congestion Pricing, yay! With the Letter of Legal Sufficiency signaling approval of the EA, issuance of the draft FONSI and 30-day Notice of Public Availability – accompanied by mitigation measures for potentially affected communities in the Bronx *and* New Jersey – we’re closer to cleaner air, less clogged streets, and critical funding for the transit infrastructure that riders rely on. The state’s FY24 budget included transparency and open data provisions that will help sceptics of congestion pricing see where the money is going and how it will benefit them directly – and it will!

Improved signals and more accessible stations (like Mets-Willets Point), expansion projects like phase two of the Second Avenue Subway and Penn Access, along with new equipment that means less reliance on dinosaurs that should be gathering dust – talking to you, M3s. It’s a great opportunity to bring riders the system they need and deserve and will provide the service they need and deserve. We’re hopeful that means finally resolving the quality issues with the M9s. LIRR riders are feeling the pain of the problems at the plant and will still be waiting for delivery of the remainder of the cars into late 2023. We appreciate the oversight by the Michael Baker team, especially as it demonstrates that the vendor’s problems could easily run over into delivery of the R211s, which are needed for testing, per the 8th Avenue line CBTC program mitigation plan.

Less visible perhaps, but equally as important is congestion pricing’s role in the MTA’s debt and how that affects operations. State Comptroller DiNapoli released a report last week that noted, “Additional assistance in the state budget … and federal approval for congestion pricing — are positive signs that the MTA can gain greater control over its long-term finances and reduce pressure from the capital program on its operating budget.” He also stated that “Our regional economy needs the MTA to regain its strength and win back riders to a safe, reliable and on-time transit system.” That, right there, is what we are all here for, and we look forward to working with you to make it so.