**MTA Transit Committee Testimony**

**Good News In Transit; Hard Work is Paying Off (But Still Work to Do)**

**By: Lisa Daglian**

**May 22, 2023**

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

I’d like to echo your thanks to Will Schwartz, Cate Contino and Meagan Molino for bringing home so much in this budget, including funding for more subway service, ABLE, the pilot for five free bus lines — and oh yes, recurring and sustainable funding for the entire system. Kudos to the whole team and to MTA leadership, and also our colleagues in advocacy, who accomplished so much for riders. The biggest thanks go to Governor Hochul and our elected leaders for making our dream a reality.

Why this year, finally? It could have to do with trust. The laser focus on the North Star of customer satisfaction is making a difference. As ABLE is implemented across the bus system, and as we see the resulting faster buses, we’ll see more people take them — the work horse of the transit system.

Buses will be particularly important due to the incredible number of upcoming weekend GOs. While they are inconvenient while they’re underway, in the long run riders will benefit with more service, updated signals — leading to faster speeds — and station improvements.

Thanks to Jose LaSalle and his team for helping us navigate weekend mishegoss; to Frank Annicaro and the bus team for all they’re doing, including working with City DOT and Government Relations to spur more bus lanes and help buses move faster than chickens; to Demetrius Crichlow and team for continuing to improve the ridership experience; and to Judy McClain and her team at Ops Planning for all they do. I’d also like to thank David Soliman and his team for the ReNEWvations — they make a difference in our underground environment.

Obviously, things aren’t all rosy, and we were very saddened by the recent tragedy on the F train that should never have escalated to the level that it did. It highlights the need for better support, resources, and response services. We’ve come a long way since Cops, Cameras and Care was introduced, but greater needs still exist.

Safety underground is on the rise, as are ridership levels. There is more good news than bad; it’s a real accomplishment compared to just one year ago. Hard work has paid off, and riders reap the benefits.