**Testimony to the**

**Metropolitan Transportation Authority**

**on Proposed Fare Increases on behalf of Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council**

**June 2023**

My name is Christy Tolbert. I live in Suffolk County and am a regular rider on the Ronkonkoma line. I am speaking on behalf of the Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council.

The top priority of most riders is having a reliable, fast commute, so it’s important that commuters on the LIRR and across the system see improvements with our fares. No one likes a fare increase, but we understand that smaller planned increases are needed to keep it in good financial health. Improvements funded with congestion pricing money will help speed up our rides.

Adding more creative and flexible fare offerings will help encourage ridership while reducing the financial burden of a fare increase. Discounts and deals to incentivize frequent ridership are key, as is improving service on the LIRR and beyond.

We support capping the cost of monthly ticket fares for commuters living the farthest from New York City at $500.

We support the 4.5% increase on weekly and monthly tickets that would still be at a lower cost than pre-pandemic because of the 10% discount implemented last year.

We support capping any ticket increase greater than 6% at a maximum increase of $0.50 per trip.

We appreciate CityTicket expansion to include peak travel and support rolling Atlantic Ticket into it, but also support keeping the weekly ticket option that allows transfer to and from subways and buses and adding it to eTix.

Without the investment in transit passed in this year’s budget, riders would be facing far greater fare hikes and potential service cuts. We’re thankful that Governor Hochul and the state legislature reduce the planned biannual fare increase.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for considering our input.