**Testimony to the**

**Metropolitan Transportation Authority**

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

**June 2023**

My name is Mike Stanton. I live in White Plains and am a regular rider on the Harlem line and the subway. I am speaking on behalf of the Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council.

No one likes a fare hike, but we recognize that supporting the system with reasonable, planned increases is critical to keeping it in good financial health – and for maintaining the reliable service that is crucially important to riders.

Adding more creative and flexible fare offerings will help encourage ridership around the system while reducing the financial burden of a fare increase.

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 support standardizing the off-peak discount across Metro-North and the LIRR.

We also support rolling Atlantic Ticket into CityTicket, but the newly expanded CityTicket must include the option to purchase a weekly ticket that allows transfer to and from subways and buses. Removing the weekly takes away opportunity from people who need it most— instead, it should be expanded so that Metro-North riders within the city have access too.

Without the transformative investment in transit passed in this year’s budget, we would be looking at far greater fare hikes and potential service cuts. We appeciate that Governor Hochul and the state legislature acted to reduce the planned biannual fare increase.

Investing in transit means investing in millions of riders around the region who depend on trains and buses every day. Better transit means access to more employment, education, and recreational activities.

Discounts to incentivize frequent ridership are key to getting this right, as is improving service on Metro-North and around the MTA system. Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for considering our input.