**Testimony to the**

**Metropolitan Transportation Authority**

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

**June 2023**

My name is Rich Cataggio. I live in Orange County and am a regular rider on the Port Jervis line. I am speaking on behalf of the Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council.

While we generally support the small regular increases on Metro-North over larger, less frequent increases, we can’t support dissimilar treatment for West-of-Hudson riders who have subpar service compared to the East-of-Hudson of Metro-North lines. West-of-Hudson riders do not have a one-seat ride into the city, and need to transfer at Secaucus. These proposed fare changes would lead to a greater increase for many West-of-Hudson riders—a fare that simply would not be fair in exchange for less service and midday service gaps.

Currently, there are 68 Hudson line trains running from Tarrytown to Grand Central every day—but on the Pascack Valley line from the similarly distanced Spring Valley to Penn Station, only 18.

There are 33 daily Hudson line trains between Poughkeepsie to Grand Central, but only 13 Port Jervis line trains.

For years, the fares on the Port Jervis and Pascack Valley trains were more or less comparable to the fares for similar distances on the Hudson line, even with less service. But in February 2022, East-of-Hudson Metro-North riders and LIRR riders got a 10% discount on monthly tickets as part of numerous fare pilot programs. That discount was not extended to West-of-Hudson riders.

This year’s proposed fare hikes use the 10% discounted monthly rate to calculate increases for East-of-Hudson Metro-North riders and LIRR riders, but the regular higher rate for West-of-Hudson riders.

This is an example of the need for parity for fare costs across all of Metro-North. We ask that you’ll look into the concerns raised by County Executive Day about increases up to 7% on some West-of-Hudson lines that already get less service.

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