**MTA Joint LIRR and Metro-North Committee Testimony**

**Service Improvements, More Resilience Will Help Railroad Riders!**

**July 17, 2023**

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

First, a big thank you to the Metro-North workers who got service back up and running quickly after the devastating flooding from last week’s storm. Yet another once-in-a-thousand-year storm less than two years after Ida highlights the need to make our transit more resilient— it surely won’t be the last. We thank Senator Gillibrand for introducing legislation for new resiliency funding streams to help ensure the system is prepared for the future.

With congestion pricing and fare increases on the horizon—bringing much-needed funding to both the capital and operating budgets— good, reliable service is critical for getting riders back on board, and keeping them coming back.

We launched a survey this Spring to hear from LIRR riders. We heard the good— Grand Central Madison, more Brooklyn shuttle trains, and more options. We also heard what needs to change: overcrowding on Penn-bound trains, lack of timed connections leading to delays, insufficient service between Queens stations, and the dreaded up-and-over at Jamaica.

We’re glad to see that you’ve heard many of these rider concerns and are making improvements starting in September. In particular, we’re thrilled to see more peak through trains from Long Island and Far Rockaway to Brooklyn, reducing the need to transfer; having most trains that stop at both Kew Gardens and Forest Hills; adding capacity to and from Penn; and improving Penn service on nights with major events at the Garden. We’re thankful the LIRR has heard the concerns of riders headed to and from Atlantic Terminal and will soon better connect Brooklyn to Long Island.

But we’ve heard from countless riders about the loss of timed connections, and hope you’ll make every effort to bring them back. Missing an eastbound connecting train can mean waiting upwards of an hour at Jamaica— particularly frustrating when your first train was delayed getting in. Bringing back timed connections would save time and frustration for many commuters.

We’re also looking forward to hearing more updates on Penn Access today. Bringing Metro-North service into Penn with the addition of four new stations in the Bronx will make for a more connected region and open reverse commute opportunities. Thank you.