**MTA Board Meeting Testimony**

**Congestion Pricing: History in the Making!**

**December 6, 2023**

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

Today, you will make history by moving the TMRB’s thoughtful congestion pricing recommendations down the track and closer to reality. Congestion pricing will be good for transit riders, good for the region and good for our economy. It will even be good for those who choose to – or must – drive into the CBD and who will find it easier to get around. The same goes for emergency and paratransit vehicles and buses that are caught in torturous gridlock.

The benefits are many-fold: cleaner air, less traffic and funding for critical transit projects around the region totaling some $15 billion. That’s an investment in our future, including critical state-of-good-repair and accessibility work, essential resiliency and sustainability efforts, and expansion projects like IBX and Penn Access. Conversely, we’ve seen the cost of disinvestment and it’s way too high. It’s time to move full speed ahead.

The recommendations are fair, equitable, reasonable, rational and realistic, and reflect a long, deliberative and very public process. The base rate of $15 charged once per day is a good balance: high enough to make people think twice about driving, but not too high for those with no choice.

We thank TMRB members for the time they put in and thought they gave over months of deliberations. With over 120 exemption requests, we don’t envy the herculean task of balancing the disparate needs and interests of communities around our four-state megalopolis. We are, however, confident in the process by which these recommendations were formulated.

Congestion pricing is not just a good idea, it’s the law. As always, when New York leads, the rest of the nation will follow. Our thanks to Governor Hochul and the elected leaders in Albany and across the region who have remained steadfast in their dedicated commitment to transit and the millions of us who rely on it.

To fans of congestion in New Jersey who give short shrift to transit improvements their own constituents will benefit from, we say this: get on board or get out of the way! To you, we say vote yes, and thank you!