**Testimony to the Capital Program Committee**

**January 29, 2024**

**Critical Transit Upgrades Hinge on Congestion Pricing**

Good afternoon! I’m Kara Gurl, Planning and Advocacy Manager at the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC).

We’re looking forward to hearing more today about many of the vital projects going on around the MTA region to upgrade, repair, and improve our transit system.

Resiliency and flood-proofing improvements on today’s agenda, like the 207th Street Yard and in Far Rockaway, only get more important with each storm. We’ve seen this year that torrential downpour and extreme weather are only becoming more frequent, and are no longer limited to the warmer months. Protecting our infrastructure from flooding and downpours will help ensure that riders can continue to depend on transit, rain or shine.

State of Good Repair work in the backend shops and yards that riders can’t see is equally as important as the expansion projects like the Interborough Express and Second Avenue Subway Phase II. We’re thankful that the Governor included funding for advancing both in her Executive Budget— they’ll help improve transit access for people around the city.

We’ve also been impressed by the speed at which the MTA has completed ADA upgrades around the region in recent months. From Scarsdale to Beach 67th Street, 2024 is off to a great start— and it’s just the beginning. We hope that Mets-Willets Point will be on the list soon, so that even more people can benefit from taking the 7 train or LIRR to all that the Willets Point area has, and will soon have, to offer.

These are just a few of the many critical projects in the pipeline for the MTA, all around the system and region. But many of them are at dire risk if congestion pricing doesn’t get over the finish line, as the Regional Plan Association found in new maps released last week. The petty lawsuits aimed only at delaying this critical law must stop, so New Yorkers and New Jerseyans alike can benefit from better transit, cleaner air, and less traffic. We urge the millions of riders who know that congestion pricing will improve our transit to testify in support at the MTA’s upcoming public hearings. Our transit infrastructure and improvements depend on it. Thank you.