**MTA Board Testimony**

**Riders Need Congestion Relief**

**February 28, 2024**

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

Since last month’s board meeting, riders, contractors and the businesses who depend on them have gained chilling insight into the consequences of further delaying congestion pricing.

As if the $20 billion that traffic costs our region’s economy every year wasn’t enough, bad-faith lawsuits threaten to derail phase two of the Second Avenue Subway, bus electrification projects, signal upgrades on the A, C, B, D, F, and M trains, and ADA accessibility at 20+ stations in all five boroughs, stretching from Wakefield -241st Street to Parsons Boulevard to Clifton on the Staten Island Rail, affecting millions of riders.

The LIRR and Metro-North are not exempt, with delays to projects — including getting new M9A rail cars. Please, it’s time to sink those M3s!

This isn’t just a New York City problem: 23,000 jobs and millions of dollars across New York State are at risk.

Pro-traffic advocates, professional protagonists, twitter doomsday sayers and Insta reelers are concocting sky-is-falling scenarios about how cleaner air and better transit will spell the end for a region that has literally run on transit for over a century.

New York isn’t going anywhere — but neither are New Yorkers unless we fund the state of good repair work needed to keep our legacy system moving.

Hey, New Jersey and all the Chicken Littles out there, cut it out!

Last year, Governor Hochul and the legislature made historic investments in the MTA’s operations, including increasing frequency on many lines. They know that transit is an essential service that keeps our region running.

But now we’re at a crossroads: we can either keep up the progress, or blow a $15 billion hole in the capital budget and return to the bad old days, like the all-too-recent summer of hell.

That’s why it’s crucial that riders make their voices heard during the upcoming public hearings starting tomorrow, February 29th, and on March 1st, and March 4th. For those who can’t make it, we’ve made it easy to submit public comments to the MTA by going to PCAC.org/bettertransit. Thank you.