**Congestion Pricing Public Comment Period**

**Riders Need Congestion Pricing**

**March 1, 2024**

Good afternoon. I’m Jack Connors, Research and Communications Associate at the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee, PCAC.

I’m testifying today in support of congestion relief for the central business district and better transit for our entire region. The TMRB recommendations unveiled just a few months ago constitute an equitable, common-sense approach to this program that meets the statutory requirement of $1 billion in annual revenue, generating $15 billion for our capital program once bonded.

By taking a disciplined approach to the more than 120 exemption requests that were submitted, the TMRB kept the toll lower for all New Yorkers – and even New Jerseyans. We were pleased to see different fare structures for motorcycles, equitable exemptions for people with disabilities, and a commercial vehicle tolling structure that will encourage more overnight deliveries.

After decades of debate, 2019 legislation paved the way for an extensive public review that culminated in one of the longest Environmental Assessments in history, clocking in at more than 4,000 pages. The time for deliberation has passed; riders are already experiencing the consequences of delays to this crucial program, with signal upgrades to the A, C, B, D, F, and M trains and ADA upgrades at 20+ stations on pause – not to mention phase 2 of the long-promised Second Avenue Subway.

Congestion pricing’s critics point out the myriad challenges the transit system is facing. However, gouging a $15 billion hole in the capital plan will only exacerbate these issues and halt the progress we’ve seen since the Governor and legislature’s historic investment in fixing the MTA last year. As a speaker at this week’s MTA board meeting put so eloquently: the bottom line is the bottom line. Congestion pricing is the law of the land and the path forward to remedy decades of disinvestment and deliver the system that millions of daily riders deserve.