



# PCAC

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## **Congestion Pricing: A Good Idea Whose Time Has Finally Come** **Lisa Daglian, PCAC Executive Director** **March 27, 2024**

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

It's Wednesday, March 27, 2024 – a date that will go down in history, which you will make. I only wish our rider representatives could join you in this monumental vote.

Today, congestion pricing takes the next critical step to becoming reality. That will mean better air quality and a long-awaited reprieve for emergency vehicles, delivery trucks, buses, and drivers snarled in the CBD's pollution-spewing, mind-numbing traffic.

It will mean that transit riders around the region – New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and beyond – will benefit from the tremendous investment to come from the funds raised and reinvested in subways, buses, Metro-North, the LIRR and Staten Island Rail: accessibility projects; signal upgrades; station improvements; new train cars and electric buses; and essential State-of-Good-Repair work.

This is a victory for the millions of us who rely on transit every day, and for our region's economy.

We applaud the decision to clarify some of the exemptions to include commuter vans licensed with TLC and to expand the definition of commuter buses. This will be particularly beneficial in subway deserts, and for interstate, West-of-Hudson and New Jersey riders.

Yes, there are still those who would throw up roadblocks – pick an excuse, we've heard it. We also heard the majority of speakers at the recent hearings testify in support of congestion pricing, by a two-to-one margin.

For those who are still grasping at straws, why not instead use that energy to make congestion pricing work for all our communities? Let's increase Fair Fares eligibility to 200% of the federal poverty level and expand it to the commuter rails in the city. Let's create a weekly City Ticket. Let's at long last allow seniors and disabled riders to use their discounts in the AM peak. And let's look forward to the day when 95-percent – or more – of the transit system is accessible, and when frequency and reliability are a given for all New Yorkers.

Congestion pricing: it's not just a good idea, it's the law. Today you'll make it a reality. Where New York leads, others will follow.