**MTA Board Testimony**

**Gloom, Doom and Despair**

**Governor Hochul: Congestion Pricing is the Law, Unpause the Pause**

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

Doom, gloom and despair. There’s a dark cloud hanging over the heads of millions of transit riders across the region since the Governor decided to pause congestion pricing – the 2019 law she pushed aside to allow the desires of the few to outweigh the needs of the many.

Facts speak louder than diner patrons:

* Some 85% of people commuting into the Central Business District take transit, including from New Jersey.
* Congestion costs some $20 billion a year, according to the Partnership.
* More than 100,000 jobs and billions of federal dollars are at risk.
* Only 1% of drivers into the CBD have incomes below $50,000, and they’d get tax credits.
* Low-income New Yorkers take transit – and subways, buses, LIRR, Metro-North and Staten Island Rail will all see concrete improvements from the $15 billion raised through congestion pricing.
* Traffic speeds in the CBD are abysmal. A chicken can run faster than buses. Reducing congestion is in the name of the program, and cutting gridlock will increase bus speeds, improve emergency response times, and help deliveries. Drivers will benefit from a smoother ride.
* Improving air quality and addressing the climate crisis will not be met by throwing an IOU at the problem.
* Hundreds of millions of dollars of mitigation measures for and across environmental justice communities will benefit residents across the region – including New Jersey. They just need congestion pricing to start.
* Even Governors can’t arbitrarily decide to change the agreed upon toll at the eleventh hour. It’s not the way the federal process works.

We should be celebrating a June 30th start date, not waiting to hear what accessibility projects are going to get cut, how long we’ll wait for signal upgrades and station improvements, how long we have to hold out hope the M3s can keep it together or that there isn’t another mudslide on the Hudson line. Governor Hochul, congestion pricing is the law. Unpause the pause.