



# PCAC

PERMANENT CITIZENS  
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## **Phew! Glad We Didn't End Up Like New Jersey Finance Committee Testimony July 28, 2025**

Good afternoon! I'm Brian Fritsch, Associate Director for the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC.

PCAC is proud to celebrate the progress of the staff and leadership in maintaining the agency's firm financial footing. Reducing the deficit considerably in the years to come, decreasing fare evasion, and keeping the agencies' debt load to 15% are big steps in the right direction, worthy of applause. We know C&D and the Strategic Initiatives teams have been working hard to reduce costs while being more productive on both the capital and operating sides of the agency, all while continuing to put the needs of riders first.

It's not lost on anyone following the agency closely that the July Financial Plan is an important marker of how well the agency has navigated many turbulent years that have taken a huge toll on transit agencies around the country. We don't have to look far to see how much worse it could have been: New Jersey Transit's 15% fare increase, or as we learned this morning a proposed 10% increase on Connecticut commuters on the New Haven Line, or—worse still—SEPTA's proposed 21.5% fare increase and an absolutely crippling 45% service cut. Averting the fiscal cliff, implementing Congestion Pricing, and fully funding the 25-29 Capital Plan in short succession is a massive achievement, and we owe Governor Hochul, federal partners, and the State Legislature a huge debt of gratitude for helping the agency overcome these tall hurdles.

Serious challenges remain, however, such as finding \$3 billion in savings for the 25-29 plan, fighting for federal dollars – while anticipating the potential worst from federal cuts – and keeping operating costs low as we approach the biennial fare increase and pre-pandemic ridership levels.

We look forward to continuing to think creatively and strategically about how to best support the riders struggling in the current affordability crisis, while keeping the agency firmly in the black. Thank you!