



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Toby Ann Stavisky

State Senate passes MTA budget, prevents bridge tolls and fare hikes, and promotes reform

TOBY ANN STAVISKY May 7, 2009

The State Senate passed the MTA budget late Wednesday night, closing the book on decades of mismanagement and fostering reform and a new accountability in the agency. This budget minimizes the devastating fare hikes and service cuts that had previously been suggested as a way to close the MTA's budget gap, restores service cuts and enacts much-needed oversight.

Senator Toby Ann Stavisky, a member of the Senate Transportation Committee, hailed the budget as a step in the right direction.

"When the MTA first announced last fall that one of the bus lines in my district, the Q74, was among those to be cut there was huge public outcry among my constituents. This budget minimizes fare hikes and saves crucial subway and bus service in the five boroughs – including the Q74," Sen. Stavisky said.

The MTA budget requires an independent audit of the agency's Finances and Operations, and requires it to post on its Web site the budget, financial information and capital plans in plain English with supporting documents. The new budget expands fiscal oversight by the State Comptroller, and adds two non-voting board members to be appointed by the Majority Leader and Speaker.

"This budget also expands state oversight of the MTA, ending its long-standing policy of keeping two sets of books and its illegal perks for board members. It will stop the endless cycle of threats by the MTA to raise fares and cut service every time their business practices get them in trouble," Sen. Stavisky said.

The MTA's budget gap will be closed using various measures including a payroll tax; a supplemental fee on driver's licenses, learner's permits and registration/re-registration of motor vehicles; an additional 5 percent sales tax on car rentals; and a 50-cent surcharge on taxi services for yellow cabs.

?###?