



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

Mid-Hudson Gop Delegation Calls for Mta Audit, Launch Website & Petition Drive

[WILLIAM J. LARKIN JR.](#) May 21, 2009

State Senator William J. Larkin, Jr. (R, C – Cornwall-on-Hudson) and Assemblyman Greg Ball (R, C, I – Patterson) today were joined by Dr. John D'Ambrosio, President of the Orange County Chamber of Commerce, to unveil an official legislative letter signed by a dozen state lawmakers demanding an independent audit of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA).

"I believe it is absolutely ridiculous that an independent audit was not conducted prior to the approval of the state's multibillion dollar MTA bailout. My colleagues and I in the Hudson Valley are demanding the Governor, Senate Majority Leader, and Assembly Speaker call for an audit of the MTA's books immediately. If the Hudson Valley's businesses, not-for-profits, hospitals and schools are going to have to pay for the errors of this historically mismanaged and wasteful authority, it is essential we are certain that the numbers being presented by the MTA are one hundred percent accurate," said Larkin.

Larkin and Ball went a step further, to step up the heat on their fellow legislative leaders and the Governor, by unveiling a statewide petition and new website demanding that Malcolm Smith, Sheldon Silver and Governor Paterson immediately conduct an independent and forensic audit of the MTA at a press conference today.

"If this issue is allowed to die, this tax hike is going to be the final nail in the coffin for the State of New York. Voters and taxpayers across this state must join this grassroots attempt to hold this Governor and this legislature accountable. Majority members, even those who voted 'no' on the floor but who were otherwise silent, need to join our fight, sign this legislative request, and demand an independent and forensic accounting of this bloated and unwieldy authority before another bailout is necessary," stated Ball, who is the Ranking Member of the Assembly Corporations, Authorities and Commissions Committee, which has oversight of the MTA.

Signed by the entire Mid-Hudson GOP delegation, the letter requested that the Governor, Senate Majority Leader and Assembly Speaker immediately use their legislative authority to call for an independent forensic audit of the MTA's finances. This power comes from the passage of S.5451/ A.8180, or the MTA Bailout Bill, which authorizes the legislature to conduct an independent audit of the MTA, including its subsidiaries, beginning every two years after 2009.

Additionally, the delegation announced the launch of a Web site, www.auditthementa.com, where members of the public can sign an online petition calling on the three leaders to immediately audit the MTA.

Assemblywoman Nancy Calhoun (R, C – Blooming Grove) stated, "I am pleased to be able to join my Senate and Assembly Republican colleagues in order to send a message to Governor Paterson, Senator Smith and Speaker Silver on behalf of the people in the Mid-Hudson region. The recently passed MTA bailout was nothing but a \$1.8 billion gift to New York City on behalf of the state at taxpayer expense; mostly notably Hudson Valley businesses, schools, hospitals and not-for-profits. I believe an independent forensic audit of the MTA is the very least the state should do in order to prove to the residents of the Hudson Valley that they are not being used as an ATM."

State Senator John J. Bonacic (R, I, C – Mt. Hope) said, "The MTA is nothing more than taxation without transportation for Orange County residents. Higher license and auto registration fees, along with the new payroll tax are all unfair to Hudson Valley residents and businesses. We need to keep the pressure on the MTA to improve service in the Hudson Valley."

"I am disappointed in the gross negligence exhibited by the MTA and its backers in Albany concerning the transit authority's finances," said Annie Rabbitt (R, I, C – Greenwood Lake). "For too long, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's spendthrift ways have gone unchecked by state leaders who could rely upon flush tax revenues while protecting MTA's irresponsible board of directors by keeping its balance sheet safely out of public view. I applaud the members of the Legislature's Hudson Valley delegation for demanding a full vetting of the MTA's budget as soon as possible. Thanks to the new payroll tax, nonprofits, school districts, hospitals, and businesses are paying for the transit authority's mistakes. My colleagues and I need Governor Paterson to take action immediately on a forensic audit or we risk turning the recent MTA bailout into another expensive handout for a politically-connected agency with a dismal record of serving the public good."

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