



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Craig M. Johnson

Statement by Senator Craig M. Johnson, (D-Nassau), the Senate Majority's Representative to the MTA Capital Program Review Board:

CRAIG M. JOHNSON December 31, 2009



“In light of Acting Commissioner Gee's veto of the proposed 2010-2014 Capital Plan, I strongly recommend the MTA reassess its capital needs and present a better, balanced, and more responsible plan to the CPRB.

A capital plan is important to our region -- not only to strengthen our mass transit infrastructure, but also because it would create construction jobs in a sector that is currently experiencing massive unemployment.

However, there has to be a better way than the \$28.1 billion proposal passed by the MTA Board, which had a \$10 billion deficit and funding for only two of the plan's five years.

I am confident the MTA and its board can scale down the proposed capital plan in a very short time based on witnessing the breathtaking speed the MTA was able to reduce its operating budget by more than \$400 million.

As the Senate Majority's representative to the MTA Capital Program Review Board, I'm committed to opening up what has always been a closed and secretive process. I launched a Web site that would allow the residents of the MTA Region to review and comment on the plan and its supporting documents (it can be found at www.craigjohnson.nysenate.gov) and held the first-ever public hearings on a MTA Capital Plan.

I plan to continue this process with a hearing in the Hudson Valley, which will be scheduled after a revised plan is referred to the CPRB.”

BACKGROUND

The MTA Capital Program Review Board is comprised of four members appointed by the Senate President, the Speaker of the Assembly, the Governor and the Mayor of New York City. The board does not formally meet. Each member was required to approve the 2010-2014 Capital Plan, or submit a veto letter, before the end of the year. Since each plan must be approved unanimously, the veto by Commissioner Gee, the governor's appointee, automatically sent the plan back to the MTA.