



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

## MTA, Nassau County, State Legislature Announce Agreement to Save Long Island Bus Service

JACK M. MARTINS April 1, 2011

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The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), Nassau County and State Senate Republicans, lead by Senator Charles Fuschillo (R, Merrick) and Senator Jack Martins (R-C-I, Mineola), today announced an agreement to stave off proposed cuts to Long Island Bus that would have affected more than half of the bus routes in Nassau County.

“We have heard from many of our constituents that depend on Long Island Bus services to get to work, school or go shopping,” Senate Majority Leader Dean G. Skelos said. “They are very concerned that if these cuts go through, they will have no other way to get around. Fortunately, we were able to reach an agreement to avert the cuts and prevent any disruption in service. I want to thank Senator Fuschillo and Senator Martins for their leadership in responding to this issue.”

“A number of communities in Nassau County would have lost bus service entirely, leaving riders who live and work in those communities with no alternative way to get to their homes or jobs,” Senator Fuschillo, Chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee, said. “Riders are tired of hearing about problems, they want to hear solutions and we were happy to finally achieve a solution. I’m pleased that we were able to work together with the MTA and Nassau County to prevent the harmful service cuts as well as avoid layoffs.”

The MTA proposed cutting 27 of the 48 Long Island Bus routes this summer due to a lack of funding. The cuts would have impacted about 16,000 riders. The MTA was scheduled to vote on service cuts at its April board meeting. Several hundred Long Island Bus riders attended a public hearing at Hofstra University last week to express their concerns over the service cuts.

“I am pleased that we were able to ensure that Long Island Bus will continue to operate throughout Nassau County,” Senator Jack Martins said. “This agreement enforces our commitment to making sure mass transit is available to our residents who need it to go to work, school and doctors' appointments. I am hopeful the MTA will come up with a solution to keep Long Island Bus running. It is important for our communities. They deserve nothing less.”

MTA Chairman and CEO Jay Walder said: "We are grateful to Senators Fuschillo, Skelos and Martins for their leadership in finding a path forward for Long Island Bus and the customers who rely on its service every day. As a result, we will be able to continue operating service at current levels through the end of the year. We will work with the County to ensure a smooth transition to its private operator by December 31."

\$8.6 million in MTA monies, made available by the Senate, will be utilized to run the bus service through the end of the year. This is in addition to the \$52.4 million appropriated in the 2011-12 state budget for Long Island Bus.

Nassau County Executive Edward P. Mangano stated: "I applaud the efforts of our Nassau County State Senators for working with me to come together in support of our residents that rely on Long Island Bus for their transportation needs. Their assistance ensures that all current bus routes will remain intact. I remain committed to fostering communication and working with the MTA to ensure a smooth transition as we enter a public-private partnership starting January 2012. This public-private partnership will enable us to provide comparable bus routes at a much more affordable rate to Nassau County taxpayers."