



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lee M. Zeldin

Zeldin to DiNapoli: Expand Audits of MTA

LEE M. ZELDIN May 16, 2011

| ISSUE: **MTA (METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY)**

Senator Sends Comptroller Open Letter Requesting Thorough Top- Down Forensic Audit While Highlighting Potential Solutions to MTA Fiscal Woes

In an open letter to Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, State Senate Lee M. Zeldin (R-C-I, Shirley) today called on the Comptroller to greatly expand the scope of his audits of the MTA.

Senator Zeldin also highlighted a dozen potential cost saving solutions, some which have been discussed in the past by the Comptroller, and some which have not. These include:

- Eliminate overtime abuse- well over \$400 million is spent on overtime annually;
- MTA should share in enforcement camera fines in MTA bus lanes;
- Competitive bidding/ privatization of NYC bus system;
- Public/private partnerships;
- Reduce outside litigation costs by increasing utilization of in-house attorneys or the NYS Attorney General's office;
- Sell some of the MTA's capital assets currently valued at over \$50 billion;

- Reduce the cash and investment float, which amounts to billions;
- Reduce the amount of managers and supervisors, which is currently over 10,000 of the MTA's 66,000 employees;
- Crack down on pension padding where possible;
- Cashless tolls throughout the system;
- Reduced "vacancy/absentee" coverage of MTA Bridges and Tunnels; and
- Improve process for approving personal and miscellaneous services contracts.

On March 15, 2011, the State Senate adopted its one house budget resolution including a provision calling for a thorough top-down forensic audit to be initiated within 60 days of the adoption of the budget. Unfortunately, this did not make it into the final budget agreement reached a couple weeks later.

"This is a time where federal, state, and local governments are all tightening their belts.

Businesses, families, and individuals are doing so as well. It is time for the MTA to do more to cut expenses and become more efficient and self-sustaining," said Zeldin. "I will do everything in my power to help lead the fight for more MTA accountability and reduced dependence on government subsidies like the MTA Payroll Tax."

Zeldin is currently drafting legislation for a multi-year phase out of the MTA Payroll Tax, which will be introduced this legislative session.

"MTA Chairman Jay Walder has repeatedly suggested that if the payroll tax is repealed he would be left with no choice but to cut services and increase fares," continued Zeldin. "I

simply do not buy this argument and strongly believe that the MTA can and should survive with less taxpayer funded subsidies.”

Zeldin also noted that real estate transfer collections are starting to increase beyond original estimates due to a recovering economy, which will help offset the loss of the payroll tax revenue following repeal.

A copy of Senator Zeldin’s letter to Comptroller DiNapoli [can be read here](#).