



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

## Senator Fuschillo Opposes LIRR Fare Increase Proposal

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. November 27, 2012

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

November 27, 2012

Members of the Board

Metropolitan Transportation Authority

347 Madison Avenue, 5th Floor

New York, New York 10017

Dear Members of the Board:

I am writing to strongly urge you to reject the proposed MTA fare increases because of the harmful effect they will have on your customers.

Since 2003, Long Island Rail Road customers have been subjected to five fare increases totaling over 55 percent. For the sixth time in ten years, the MTA wants them to pay higher fares.

Long Island Rail Road commuters are already paying some of the nation's highest fares. A monthly LIRR ticket from one of the Nassau stations along the Babylon line in my Senate district currently costs \$254 a month. It is even higher in Suffolk County, with a monthly ticket to commute from Amityville, Copiague, or Lindenhurst costing \$299 a month. As a result, Nassau commuters in my district are paying over \$3,000 a year to ride on the LIRR. Suffolk commuters in my district are paying over \$3,500 a year.

The MTA's proposed fare increase would increase these costs by 8.7 percent, far above the rate of inflation. If the Board approves this fare increase, my constituents in Nassau and Suffolk Counties would pay \$264 and \$312 more a year, respectively, to commute using the LIRR. For those that also use New York City Transit or MTA Bus, both of which are considering proposed fare increases as well, those costs will be even higher. That is unacceptable.

As you know, families are suffering during these trying times. Residents are dealing with high taxes and a challenging economy. Over 106,000 Long Islanders are currently unemployed. Making matters worse, many are coping with the tremendous devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy. Some have lost everything they have. This is the worst time to further burden them with higher costs.

Like the MTA, New York State is facing its own fiscal challenges. To address these challenges, the Legislature and Governor Cuomo worked in a bipartisan manner to close \$13 billion in budget deficits by reducing spending, streamlining agencies and operations, and improving efficiencies. All this was accomplished without raising taxes or fees. The MTA must take the same approach to solve its own fiscal problems instead of raising fares once again.

In spite of its fiscal difficulties, New York State continued to invest in the MTA. The 2012-13 budget included nearly \$4 billion in funding for the MTA, a 5 percent increase over the prior year. Additionally, the budget also approved the financing plan for the last three years of the MTA's \$22.2 billion 2010-14 capital program, including authorizing \$770 million in new state funding.

To its credit, the MTA has begun taking steps to reduce costs and find internal savings. These measures have already begun to yield results. That progress must continue, because the MTA cannot continue to ask riders to act as its ATM.

Once again, I strongly urge you to reject these proposed fare increases because of the harmful effect they will have on your customers.

Sincerely,

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO, JR.

New York State Senator

cc: Joe Lhota, MTA Chairman & CEO