



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

## Senator Schumer Recommends Senator Fuschillo to Serve on Amtrak's Board of Directors

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. November 18, 2013

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*Photo caption: Senator Fuschillo (right) is recommended for appointment to the Amtrak Board of Directors by Senator Schumer (left).*

New York State Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick) today was recommended by United States Senator Charles Schumer to serve on Amtrak's Board of Directors.

Senator Fuschillo was recommended to the position by Senator Schumer to represent the interests of Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) riders, as every LIRR train into and out of Penn Station passes through the East River tunnels controlled by Amtrak. There have been numerous incidents in the Amtrak-controlled tunnels which caused substantial service delays, interruptions, and cancellations for LIRR riders.

"New York State serves over 11 million Amtrak passengers a year, and Penn Station is by far the busiest Amtrak station in the country. Penn Station also serves hundreds of thousands of Long Island Rail Road commuters each day, and as the owner of the East River tunnels, Amtrak's actions and policies affect every LIRR rider going in and out of Penn Station. Long Islanders have endured numerous service delays, cancellations, and disruptions because of conditions in those tunnels. Amtrak is taking positive steps to improve the tunnels, but giving LIRR riders a voice on the board is critically important to ensure that Amtrak understands and hears their concerns. I am honored that Senator Schumer is recommending me for appointment to Amtrak's Board of Directors to be that voice," said Senator Fuschillo, who is Chairman of the New York State Senate's Transportation Committee.

Amtrak is a nationwide rail system which serves 46 states and the District of Columbia. New York plays a vital role in the Amtrak system. New York State Amtrak stations served over 11 million people last year. Penn Station is by far the busiest Amtrak station in the country, serving over 9 million people last year. Penn Station also serves the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR), whose riders make up the largest portion of the station's approximately 500,000 daily users.

As the owner of Penn Station and the East River Tunnels going into and out of Penn Station, Amtrak's decisions and operations directly affect the hundreds of thousands of LIRR riders who commute to and from Penn Station each day. Over the past year, there have

been numerous LIRR delays due to track issues maintained and operated by Amtrak. For example, this past July 12th, LIRR trains were delayed and some were canceled after debris struck the third rail at Penn Station. This past July 17th, LIRR trains were delayed during the evening rush-hour due to a broken rail inside Amtrak's East River Tunnels. This past August 19th, an eastbound LIRR train was stuck in the East River Tunnel after power to the third rail went out. Most recently, this past Thursday a joint rail bar failed in Tunnel 3 of the East River Tunnel overnight, causing delays during the morning rush-hour commute.

In addition, Senator Schumer and Senator Fuschillo announced that Amtrak has agreed to implement a new plan to improve the condition of the East River Tunnels to prevent further disruptions to LIRR service. The plan includes:

- An overhaul of the existing track inspection program so that trouble spots are inspected sooner and more often;
- Replacing all of the old "jointed rail" segments prone to failure, and;
- Implementing a new fix it first policy that will prioritize upgrading all aspects of the aging infrastructure before it breaks down.