



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

Sanders Calls for Far Rockaway to be Included in LIRR's Discount Weekend Fare Program

JAMES SANDERS JR. March 24, 2016



State Senator James Sanders Jr. today joined with community leaders and transportation advocates to demand that Far Rockaway be included in the LIRR's discount weekend fare program known as CityTicket. Sanders has introduced legislation called the Long Island Rail Road Fare Act (S6741), which would facilitate such a plan. A companion bill is being introduced in the Assembly by Assembly Member Michele Titus.

Currently, the Long Island Rail Road's CityTicket program offers \$4.25 trips for single

direction travel within New York City on weekends. However, trips to and from Far Rockaway are excluded from this program because the train passes through Nassau County. Commuters at the Far Rockaway station can purchase an off-peak ticket, which is valid on the weekends, for \$8.25, which is less than the cost of a peak ticket, but nearly double the price of a CityTicket.

Sanders legislation seeks to correct this problem, and if passed, would create economic growth in the Rockaways and other parts of the city, making weekend travel to and from beach communities more affordable.

"It is unfair for residents of Far Rockaway and visitors from other parts of the city to be deprived of the reduced fare because their train happens to pass through Nassau," said **Senator Sanders**. "This law will stimulate the local economy in an area where transportation options are severely limited."

"How can a city benefit not be extended to people who live in the city?" **asked Assembly Member Michele Titus (D-Far Rockaway)**. "How can we not be afforded the same benefit that is afforded to all Queens residents? It's a no brainer. I am happy to stand here with my community and to see all the tremendous support that the senator has behind our bill, and we are moving forward."

"Expanding CityTicket would not only go a long way towards saving Far Rockaway residents money, it would finally bridge a transit equity gap that has existed for far too long," said **Council Member Donovan Richards (D-Far Rockaway)**. "Far Rockaway suffers from a severe lack of transportation options, so it is only fair that they pay the same fare on the weekends as other New York City Long Island Rail Road riders. I'd like to thank Senator Sanders for taking up this issue in Albany."

“We should do everything we can to make public transit a convenient, affordable option for New Yorkers from throughout the five boroughs - it's the only way that opportunity and prosperity can reach every corner of the city,” said **John Raskin, Executive Director of the Riders Alliance**. “I commend Senator Sanders’ proposal to make more New York City residents eligible for the popular CityTicket program, as one step in a broader campaign to make public transit affordable and accessible to the people who need it most.”

“The New York City Transit Riders Council supports transportation improvements in those parts of Queens where transit is not available, affordable or convenient to use,” said **William Henderson, the Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC), which is an umbrella organization comprising three riders’ councils including the New York City Transit Riders Council (NYCTRC)**. “Better use of existing commuter rail through CityTicket and our proposed Freedom Ticket can make transportation affordable for residents. No New York City resident should lose access to employment, education, medical care, and all the City has to offer due to a lack of adequate and affordable transit service.”

“The Rockaway Youth Task Force fully supports Senator Sanders and his Long Island Rail Road Fare Act,” said **Milan Taylor, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Rockaway Youth Task Force**. As residents of New York City, Far Rockaway residents should not be excluded from the LIRR's City Ticket program. Far Rockaway's exclusion is an oversight that needs to be corrected immediately.”

“Ridership is key at the Far Rockaway LIRR station, and if we don’t have the same benefits that other people do with the CityTicket program, we can’t increase ridership,” said **Kevin Alexander, President & CEO, Rockaway Development & Revitalization Corporation**. “We’re building more housing centered around transit hubs and the Far Rockaway station is the main transit hub for the Rockaway Peninsula. We should not be excluded from CityTicket.”

“We support the LIRR Fare Act wholeheartedly,” said **Phil McManus, president of the Queens Public Transit Committee.** “It's a no brainer. Why do they exclude Far Rockaway now? It's outrageous.”

“It is absurd that the Far Rockaway station is not included in the Long Island Rail Road's weekend reduced fare program,” said **Danny Ruscillo, Co-Chairman of Queens Community Board 14's Transportation Committee.** “It is also preposterous that this situation has gone on for so long. Far Rockaway residents including visitors from different parts of our city should have this reduced fare put in place immediately.”

“I strongly support Senator Sanders' efforts to pass the LIRR Fare Act,” said **Martin Ingram, Co-Chairman of Queens Community Board 14's Transportation Committee.** “Far Rockaway and the entire Rockaway Peninsula is a transportation desert. The area lacks transportation options. This legislation will help benefit the people of Far Rockaway like those in other parts of Queens who are already receiving this option.”

“Improved transportation in Far Rockaway will provide affordable and convenient travel options for its residents,” said **Joe Hartigan, a Far Rockaway transportation advocate for over 20 years.** “Additionally, better transportation will allow residents access to better paying jobs, competitive schools and the economic development for an area of the city that has, for too long, been neglected. Furthermore, if there is a LIRR fare discount in other areas of Queens, then Rockaway residents should be given the same consideration for an improved and affordable mass transit option.”