



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Murphy intros legislation to hold MTA accountable to commuters

TERRENCE MURPHY May 23, 2016

ALBANY, NY - A two alarm fire under Metro North tracks in Harlem last week shut down service indefinitely with one northbound train stranded only five blocks from the fire.

Senator Terrence Murphy, who has been leading the fight to improve the safety of grade crossings across New York, has introduced new legislation calling for the MTA to review all structures and storage areas under elevated tracks as well as a study of the MTA's notification system to perspective users.

"Considering how many people were impacted by last week's events, and how much money New York State continues to pour into the MTA, we need a full assessment of the structures and storage spaces under the MTA's elevated tracks to ensure there are no potentially dangerous concerns that are being overlooked," Senator Murphy said. "New Yorkers also deserve an assessment of the MTA's notification system which should properly communicate any delays or emergencies to those looking to utilize its service."

Senate bill 7891 directs the MTA to study and report on potentially hazardous structures and storage areas under elevated train tracks, and its commuter notification system. Multiple reports confirm that the fire on May 17th was caused by a fuel spill on a hot generator. In addition, twenty propane tanks were also found at the Urban Garden Center, located directly under the viaduct, prompting the MTA to beg the question if such hazardous material should be allowed in such potentially sensitive areas.

For many witnesses, last week's chaotic incident reminded them of the 2014 gas explosion that leveled two buildings, killing eight, and damaging the very garden center in question today.

"This is about safety," Murphy added. "There was clearly an oversight that needs to be properly assessed and rectified. New York City and the surrounding suburbs are constantly being targeted by terrorists both domestically and abroad. We must remain vigilant and ensure the necessary safety measures are in place."

The bill has been moved to committee and is expected to pass the Senate before the 2016 session concludes next month.