



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

The Summer of Hell

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WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

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The Summer of Hell

You should know that this week begins what Governor Andrew Cuomo has forecast as the Summer of Hell, which will mean 8 weeks of chaos for commuters who use Penn Station during all of the planned train track repairs.

It is important for you to know that the same taxpayer-funded MTA that celebrated the New Year's Day Grand Opening of the Second Avenue Subway (a boondoggle subway line that has been underway for decades) is now responsible for this new mess they will create at Penn Station.

You should know that I join the ranks of many who applaud the selection of Joe Lhota's return to the MTA to serve as its Chair during this crisis. Joe Lhota is an expert, his leadership is unparalleled, and he is only accepting an annual salary as MTA Chair of \$1.

Every MTA Board Member should be an expert in the field, so they can guide and ratify important decisions that impact the lives of the commuters who ride our trains to get to work so they can pay their bills and raise their families.

However, if we take a look at the current Board Members who comprise the MTA, how many of them are experts and how many of them are just lackeys or political appointees?

I will give you a clue: All Board members are appointed by the Governor, some on the recommendation of City and County officials in the MTA service region.

My dear reader, MTA Board Members need to know more than how to ride a train.

We need experts who know how to fix this mess, how to run the trains, how to prioritize the repairs, and how to do triage for this sick patient, our public transit system.

Joe Lhota needs experts, not political hacks, to get through the expected hell in 8 weeks with everything going in and out of Penn Station and to determine how to prevent the next train derailment?

Joe Lhota needs experts, not hangers-on, to figure a way to update the hodgepodge of our subway's signal system that is clearly inadequate and is responsible for the breakdown of the flow of subway traffic.

It is unfortunate that New York commuters have to go through this hassle because we have some political appointees, instead of qualified transit experts on the MTA Board.

Ladies and gentlemen, I respectfully recommend for Joe Lhota to look at who is serving on the MTA Board with him, and politely ask some of them to resign if they don't know how to help.

I have no doubt that this MTA crisis will last well beyond 8 weeks, and while I wish Joe Lhota well, as it's already been said, he's in for one helluva ride.

I am Senator Reverend Rubén Díaz and this is what you should know.