



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Todd Kaminsky

Kaminsky to LIRR Pres: The Time for Action is Now

TODD KAMINSKY April 17, 2018

| ISSUE: **LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD, PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

(Rockville Centre, New York) - Today, Senator Todd Kaminsky wrote a letter to the new Long Island Rail Road (“LIRR”) President, Phillip Eng, calling for him to act on the issues that the LIRR is plagued with.

****Background****

Senator Kaminsky has led the fight to provide relief to Long Island commuters. He held a rally, attended by scores of people, to “Sack Amtrak”. He also twice penned letters to legislative leadership requesting they hold emergency hearings on conditions at Penn Station. In response, the Assembly held hearings during which Amtrak and MTA officials testified, disclosing new, actionable information. He has repeatedly spoken out against the increase in LIRR fares while performance has declined, and challenged the MTA Director in Senate hearings on the poor state of several stations in his district. Senator Kaminsky was the sole Long Island Senator to question MTA Chairman Joseph J. Lhota at the Legislative Budget hearing about the LIRR’s performance in January 2018.

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April 17, 2018

Phillip Eng

President

Long Island Rail Road

Jamaica Station

Jamaica, New York 11435

Dear President Eng,

As you assume your new position as President of the Long Island Rail Road

("LIRR"), I wanted to wish you luck and invite you to Nassau County to have an in person discussion with riders. Commuters consistently tell me that they have never seen the railroad in such bad shape, that delays and cancellations have upended their lives while conditions on the trains have been hazardous and unpleasant. Further, the communication that riders rely on has been poor. While the challenges you are about to undertake are numerous, an important first step is leveling with riders and having an honest conversation about the state of the LIRR.

Commuters feel that your agency is distant, remote and uncaring. They are

constantly in the dark about what is happening during their commutes, but communication issues exist beyond the lack of in-travel updates. Riders simply feel that no one is listening and the LIRR is a faceless organization that does not take their complaints and suggestions seriously. As a result, it would be worthwhile for you to hold forums on Long Island where

riders can tell you firsthand what they have been experiencing and share ideas for making improvements. This would also provide a good forum for you to share your vision for the agency. For all the money commuters pay, it is actually shocking that such forums do not already exist. I would be happy to host one in Nassau and feel that the several hours spent conversing with commuters would be time well spent.

While riders are likely to mention to you localized concerns about their branch and station, they do share some universal concerns. Mainly, they are: 1) The escalating cost of commuting at the same time service has been declining with no apparent accountability; 2) The unsafe conditions riders experience on crowded trains and platforms, and your vision for Penn Station, which is hazardously jammed and dangerous; and 3) Your vision for improving the LIRR's infrastructure, including the East River tunnels, in which riders increasingly find themselves stuck.

Over the past year, the LIRR has been by far the number one issue my constituents have asked me to address. They are rooting for you and hope that you will bring a sense of urgency to the agency. I hope you will accept my invitation to speak at a forum as soon as you are able. The time for action is now and Long Islanders are counting on you to deliver the sane and dignified commute they deserve.

Sincerely,

Todd Kaminsky

Senator, 9th District