



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mario R. Mattera

## Senator Mattera Joins Supervisor Romaine, Fellow Elected Officials, Business And Community Leaders Call For Electrifying Port Jefferson Branch

MARIO R. MATTERA June 13, 2022

| ISSUE: LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD, MTA (METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY), HUNTINGTON, PROTECTING COMMUTERS



Under the lead of Supervisor Ed Romaine, Senator Mario R. Mattera (2<sup>nd</sup> Senate District) participated in a press conference at the Stony Brook Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) station to urge the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to extend electrification on the Port Jefferson line. The press conference, which included multiple elected officials including Assemblyman Steve Englebright and Councilmember Jonathan Kornreich, sought to raise public awareness of the need for the MTA to include the project that will improve LIRR service, provide a much-needed boost to

**the local economy and benefit the environment as well.**

In addition to Senator Mattera, Assemblyman Englebright and Councilmember Kornreich, the Supervisor's call received across the board support including from Mitch Pally, CEO of the Long Island Builders Institute; George Hoffman, Co-Founder of the Setauket Harbor Task Force; Kyle Strober, Executive Director of the Association for a Better Long Island; Herb Mones, Chairperson of the Three Village Civic Association; Carl Mills, Interim Assistant Vice President of Government and Community Relations at Stony Brook University; and Pat McClellan, Policy Director of the New York League of Conservation Voters and more.

The LIRR tracks east of Huntington are currently not electrified and use dual-mode locomotives that switch from electric to diesel, which are slower and more harmful to the environment. The Supervisor noted that the Port Jefferson branch is one of the busiest branches of the LIRR, serving more than 19 million riders a year according to a pre-pandemic, 2018 LIRR Ridership Report. He also noted that electrification would support economic development in the communities along the lines.

Supervisor Romaine said, "Thousands of Brookhaven residents use the LIRR to commute to work every day, and many others ride the train for day trips, Broadway shows, sporting events, shopping and more. Electrification would provide faster, more efficient service and attract people to live in the communities with close access to the railroad. The economic upside would be felt throughout the town as more people choose to live here, and our young people decide to stay because of the improved LIRR service and easier access in and out of New York City. I also urge the State, MTA and LIRR to fully electrify the Main Line and Montauk Branches as well."

"With the East Side Access and Third Track projects finally nearing completion, electrification of the entire Port Jefferson branch would ensure that our region benefits

from these infrastructure projects. It will help build our economy while protecting the environment and provide our commuters and residents with greater access in both directions. And, it will help create construction jobs for our hardworking men and women of labor. That will help strengthen every area along this vital route and that should always be our main goal," stated Senator Mattera.

State Senator Anthony Palumbo (1<sup>st</sup> Senate District) said, "I want to thank Brookhaven Town Supervisor Ed Romaine for his continual advocacy for greater rail service to the town and our east end communities. The electrification of the Port Jeff Line would help to reduce our carbon footprint, alleviate traffic congestion, and be a boost for our region's businesses and tourism industry."

Councilmember Kornreich said, "We need electrification. Whether you're a commuter just trying to get to work in the morning, a visitor trying to come out to visit our area on a weekend, or a neighbor in Port Jefferson station who has to listen to diesel trains idling in the yard all night -- enough is enough. Let's get it together and upgrade not even to 21st century tech. We'll settle for 20th century."

Assemblyman Englebright said, "Electrifying the Port Jefferson LIRR is necessary to meet New York State's climate action goals. The air contaminating diesel locomotives that are now in use are both an anachronism and embarrassment. Ending our reliance on outdated and unclean diesel engines and switching to electrical power will not only cut down on travel times but also reduce the profoundly negative impact that the trains have on the environment which is a win for everyone. Local governments in Suffolk County have, for example, advanced a realistic plan to utilize the former Lawrence Aviation Property in Port Jefferson as a new terminus for the North Line. The LIRR needs to begin to implement this important vision for a higher quality of life for our citizens."

George Hoffman, Co-founder of the Setauket Harbor Task Force said, “We need the Port Jefferson line electrified, now! The current diesel trains are dumping tons of carbon into the air each day adding to the climate crisis we are now experiencing everywhere on the planet. With New York pursuing an aggressive climate action agenda we need to get rid of diesel trains and replace them with cleaner electric powered train engines. That can only happen if we electrify the Port Jefferson, Main Line and Patchogue branches.”

“The Long Island Association supports electrification of points east of Huntington Station, Port Jefferson, and Babylon to better serve communities on the East End of Long Island and support economic development and growth,” said Matt Cohen, President & CEO of the Long Island Association.

"The Long Island Railroad is critically important for reducing Long Island commuters' carbon footprint, but we could be doing more to reduce both our greenhouse gas emissions and emissions of harmful pollutants like particulate matter that are produced by diesel engines," said Patrick McClellan, Policy Director for the New York League of Conservation Voters. "We thank Supervisor Romaine for leading the charge to electrify the Port Jefferson branch of the LIRR."

Carl Mills, Assistant Vice President, Government Relations for Stony Brook University said, “The Port Jefferson line is a critical method of transportation for Stony Brook University faculty, students, staff and visitors to get to and from New York City, airports, and other locations across Long Island. Stony Brook University fully supports electrification of the Port Jefferson line, which will improve service for thousands of riders each day.”

**Herb Mones, Chairperson of the Three Village Civic Association** said, "Kudos to the Supervisor for his leadership on this issue. The electrification of the Port Jefferson line would undoubtedly benefit so many for generations to come. Certainly, it will be a big win

for our community, and our environment.”

"The electrification of the LIRR tracks between the Huntington and Stony Brook, reflects Long Island's evolving needs for energy efficient mass transportation that will directly protect and preserve Long Island's economic viability. It will also serve to strengthen this area's connectivity to the city and, indirectly, bolster our region's property values. Also important is this project increases the mass transit connectivity to Stony Brook University, one of our state's premier research institutions, which makes it easier for students to commute as well as attract more researchers and scientists to the university," said Kyle Strober, Executive Director, Association For a Better Long Island, a leading regional economic development advocacy group.