



2 Broadway, 16th Floor, New York, NY 10004
(212) 878-7087 mail@pcac.org

RANDOLPH GLUCKSMAN CHAIR
NEAL ZUCKERMAN VICE CHAIR

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ELLYN SHANNON ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
ANGELA BELLISIO TRANSPORTATION PLANNER
BRADLEY BRASHEARS TRANSPORTATION PLANNER
KARYL BERGER CAFIERO RESEARCH ASSOCIATE
DEBORAH MORRISON ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

**Testimony of the Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council
To the Board of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority
on Proposed Fare Increases
New York Power Authority, Jaguar Room
123 Main Street, White Plains, NY
December 2, 2014**

Good Evening. I am Randy Glucksman, the chair of the Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council (MNRCC) and the chair of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Council to the MTA (PCAC), appointed by Governor Paterson to represent Rockland County. I care deeply about all transit riders, not just those on Metro-North and am a regular West of Hudson, Pascack Valley Line rider.

While 2013 was clearly a devastating year for Metro-North, culminating in the recent NTSB report, we look forward to a positive resurgence under the new leadership of Joe Giulietti. The Council is seeing many necessary safety improvements instituted, but also acknowledges that both the MTA and Metro-North still have a lot of work to do.

Today however, we are concerned with the impacts that this fare proposal on the balance of the financials for the Railroad's operation. This Council's position has long been to support predictable, moderate fare increases that are designed so that riders pay their fair share of increasing operating costs. While the increase in 2013 averaged 8 to 9 percent, we feel that the increase under discussion today, with the average being less than 4%, is more in line and manageable for our riders. Likewise it is on par with overall cost of living raises, and the two-year cost of living raises of 1.7% that Social Security beneficiaries will receive in January 2015.

I have a lifelong love of transit and always encourage my friends to ride the Railroad. But, many friends of mine have told me frankly that when it comes to taking trips with family members it is less expensive to drive. It is to this end that we again recommend a "Family Fare" type pass for weekends and holidays that would enable a family with children to ride for a flat fare. This system has proved viable elsewhere: Chicago's Metra offers a \$7 Weekend Pass, which allows unlimited riding on Saturday and Sunday, and in Los Angeles, Metrolink sells a \$10 Weekend Pass that is valid either on Saturday or Sunday.

We appreciate this Board's commitment to mitigate the other commuting costs that it can control and the recent 91% reduction in parking fees is an excellent example of that. We believe there should be additional common sense policy changes, like accepting a prior month's monthly ticket for passage until noon on the first business day of the month, which would mirror NJ Transit's policy.

Additionally, West of Hudson riders would benefit greatly from two projects for which I would like the Board's support: the **7** Line Extension to Secaucus Junction and construction of the yet-to-be-built sidings along the Pascack Valley Line.

The MNRCC concludes that New York State must reexamine how the MTA is funded. The Council's consistent position has been that the MTA's funding sources must be stable, reliable, and able to grow to meet increasing costs. We believe that our present unstable funding mix is failing the test, and we ask for your commitment as Board members to be forceful advocates with our elected representatives for changes in this area.