



Mark Epstein – *Chair*
Larry Rubinstein – *Vice Chair*

William Henderson - *Executive Director*
Ellyn Shannon – *Associate Director*
Angela Bellisio - *Transportation Planner*
Karyl Berger - *Research Associate*
Bradley Brashears – *Research Assistant*
Deborah Morrison - *Administrative Assistant*

Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council

347 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017 • 212/878-7087 • Fax 212/878-7461 www.pcac.org

Nassau County: Owen Costello • Michael Godino • Raymond Pagano • Bryan Peranzo • Larry Rubinstein
Suffolk County: Gerard P. Bringmann • Sheila Carpenter • Mark J. Epstein • Maureen Michaels
Queens County: Ira Greenberg
Kings County: Matthew L. Kessler

Statement of the Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council (LIRRCC) before a Public Hearing on the Restoration of Weekend and Holiday West Hempstead Branch Service

September 15, 2014

Good evening, my name is Matthew Kessler. I am a member of the Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council (LIRRCC). The LIRRCC was created by the State Legislature in 1981 to serve as the official voice of the LIRR passenger. Our members, serving as volunteers, are appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of the member's respective county executive or borough president.

The Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council, with vigorous enthusiasm, supports the restoration of weekend and holiday service to the West Hempstead Branch. As you know, **regularly** scheduled **weekend & holiday** service was in place until its discontinuation in 2010 due to the severe financial problems at MTA. We firmly believe, regardless of other LIRR branch ridership levels, that it is essential to the Rail Road's mission to serve the entire LIRR network on weekends as well as on holidays.

The LIRRCC also notes that land-use and other economic development is occurring along the West Hempstead Branch. We believe that LIRR must support and partner with this growth as it will serve newly added commuters and additional businesses along this path. In addition, the lack of a weekend/holiday schedule on this branch severely inconveniences riders when weather or other situations limits LIRR operations. In these cases, while other branches may have reduced service to furnish, a West Hempstead Branch rider has no access to service at all.

Restoring this service, specifically, is an important step towards building a transportation system that LIRR riders deserve, require and need. The LIRRCC looks forward to continue working with LIRR and MTA to improve and increase service for the people of Long Island.