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Metro-North/Long Island Rail Road Committee – November 16, 2015

Good Morning, I am Randy Glucksman, Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council chair.

Rockland County Executive Ed Day and I remain unhappy about the response that because there were no complaints to Metro-North, no action was taken to provide a suitable alternative for the cancelation of Train #1601. But I wonder if anyone checked with NJ Transit?

The 2015 – 2019 MTA Capital Program has very little for the Pascack Valley Line, just station improvements at the Spring Valley station which are scheduled for 2017 and 2018. However, I am glad to see that there are a number of projects for the Port Jervis Line.

So here is how you can do something to help Pascack Valley Line riders. In order to encourage off-peak ridership, and the ability to operate a schedule that can provide hourly service in both directions during off-peak hours, this line desperately needs funding and Metro-North staff cooperation for the construction of two passing sidings that would permit this level of service. While I do not have cost figures for Metro-North's share of the project, I am not talking about a lot of money. In fact, funds for this project were allocated years ago, however, when only four of the proposed six sidings were constructed; Metro-North was refunded their share. This project would of course require the cooperation of NJ Transit, and so my rail advocate colleagues in New Jersey and I have spoken with NJ Transit management about this project, and I reiterate that Metro-North staff must begin to have an active involvement with their counterparts.

I am not asking for the same service levels as East of Hudson Lines have, but there are far too many two plus hourly service gaps, especially in the midday that make riding the train not a viable option for discretionary riders. As an example, there is no inbound service from Nanuet between 8:56 and 10:54 AM and between 3:51 and 9:17 PM. In the morning, the first train arrives in Rockland County at 10:02 AM. There are no such examples on this side of the Hudson.

No doubt you have heard Amtrak's not-good news about the condition of the North River Tunnels built in 1910 that connect New Jersey and New York. Some of you may wonder why this should be an issue here. The answer is that many of your West-of-Hudson customers ride trains to Secaucus Jct. and transfer to other trains to Penn Station, and if one of these tunnels is shut down for much needed repairs, the number of trains operated gets reduced from 24 trains per hour to just six. So if this topic comes up in any of your future discussions, please take interest in it.

Thank you.