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LIRRCC CALLS ON MTA TO LISTEN TO LONG ISLAND

One Fare Hearing for Long Island is Not Enough

In advance of Thursday's Long Island Fare Hearing, the Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council (LIRRCC) calls on the MTA to listen to Long Island Rail Road riders and hold a second hearing on Long Island. The Council also noted that Long Island is underrepresented on the MTA Board.

LIRRCC Chair Mark Epstein stated:

"We're very disappointed that only one fare hearing is being held on Long Island, and that it isn't even being held at a transit accessible location. There is also another fare hearing being held on Thursday, in the Bronx. That means that not all Board members will hear all of the testimony that will be relevant to their vote. This is not the first time the MTA has done this, but we had hoped that they would remedy it. Clearly that isn't the case, and it sends the wrong message to LIRR riders. Further, holding satellite hearings only in Ronkonkoma and Hicksville, and only on one day each in the morning when commuters are rushing to get to work, isn't opening the process up to everyone who wants to comment. Again, our request for additional locations was not acted upon.

"We're also extremely concerned that Long Island won't be adequately represented when the Board takes a vote in January to impose a fare hike: there is no Nassau County representative serving on the Board, and the LIRRCC member who does serve has no right to a vote. At the end of the day, fares will be raised without Long Island's full voice, or its vote.

"Our Council is concerned about ever-increasing fares, especially for financially stretched commuters. In addition, many riders also pay to use subways and buses to complete their journeys, so they are being hit twice by the proposed fare increases. Moving forward with a single hearing for all of Long Island, especially when LIRR riders won't be heard by all Board members, is wrong. Voting on higher fares without representation is not fair. The process as currently designed regarding Fares is not Fair."

The Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council (LIRRCC) was created by the New York State Legislature in 1981 to be the official voice of Long Island Rail Road riders. Its 12 volunteer members are appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the Nassau and Suffolk County Executives, and the Brooklyn and Queens Borough Presidents.