



LIRRCC

LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD
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Testimony of the Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council to the Board of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority on Proposed Fare Increases

Hilton Long Island/Huntington, 598 Broad Hollow Road, Melville, NY

November 29, 2018

Good Evening. My name is Gerry Bringmann. I am a regular commuter on the Long Island Rail Road and Vice Chair of the Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council, the official voice of Long Island Rail Road riders established by the New York State Legislature in 1981.

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.

Money needs are great and funding options are not. It's critical that sustainable funding be identified for the entire transit system. We must all work together to ensure that our elected officials explore the entire gamut of funding options and consider each carefully.

Whatever the increase – and we do believe you will impose one – we want a fair deal for the LIRR's most frequent customers: monthly and weekly ticket holders.

At the most basic level, we want on-time trains that are not overcrowded. While we recognize that efforts are being made to improve service, there is still a long way to go. If the fares increase, so should service and reliability. The new double track and upcoming third track construction will help move trains faster and around incidents, but these improvements must be accompanied by other advances to help riders and alleviate overcrowding and delays: we need reliable cars and locomotives; working signal and electrical systems; and properly maintained tracks and rights of way.

Another significant area is communication. We should have up-to-the minute information available before we reach the station, at the station, and while on board. Clean, safe, and comfortable waiting areas should be available for riders' use to the maximum extent practicable. Station amenities should include clean bathrooms and newsstands or kiosks. This is also a source of revenue.

The bottom line is that we expect any fare increases to translate to better, more reliable service. The LIRRCC appreciates the opportunity to share our views with MTA management and the members of its Board.