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**Testimony of the Metro-North Commuter Council to the  
Board of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
on Proposed Fare Increases  
Palisades Center  
West Nyack, New York**

**December 13, 2018**

Good Evening, my name is Lisa Daglian, and I am the Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA. Tonight, I join Orrin Getz in representing our Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council, giving a voice to West-of-Hudson riders.

The MNRCC understands that a fare increase is likely going to be necessary to address the MTA's dire fiscal situation without harmful service cuts. In fact, anticipated revenue from the 4% fare increase was included in the budget that the Board passed yesterday – before West-of-Hudson riders even had a chance to weigh in. Prior to the vote, we called for a one-month deferral until all riders had a chance to speak, and until the fare increases are voted on in January. Unfortunately, that did not happen.

Over the past two years, West-of-Hudson riders have endured unacceptable service delays and cancellations, including losing one morning and one evening express train while Positive Train Control installation has been underway. Recently, our riders have also suffered with frequent cancellations of those express trains. We fully support the installation of this critical safety feature, but it should not result in a disproportionate impact on Pascack Valley and Port Jervis line riders. At the same time, these riders have had to live with ongoing critical engineer and equipment shortages and breakdowns.

We recognize that New Jersey Transit is firmly culpable for many of the delays and cancellations, but while NJT riders were given a temporary 10% discount for their travel troubles, West-of-Hudson riders paid full fare – and that's not fair. Metro-North West-of-Hudson riders should be provided the same three-month discount that NJT riders received. Only after service is reliably restored should West-of-Hudson riders be required to pay the increased fares that we expect all other Metro-North riders will end up paying.

Clearly, new revenues and reliable, and sustainable funding sources are needed to fill the MTA's looming and substantial budget gap. We strongly support the battle to identify and secure sustainable MTA funding sources, in addition to a minimal fare increase and no cuts to service. We cannot afford to lose the valuable transit resources that keep the region competitive.