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**Testimony of the Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council to the
Board of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority
on Proposed Fare Increases
New York Power Authority, Jaguar Room
White Plains, New York**

December 5, 2018

Good Evening, my name is Rhonda Herman. I am a member of the Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council. The MNRCC is part of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC), which was established by the New York State Legislature in 1981 and is the official voice of Metro-North riders.

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. At the same time, we recognize that the MTA and Metro-North Railroad are faced with looming budget holes that must be filled. The fare increases being proposed will help reduce, but not eliminate, the increasing deficit. Therefore, we reluctantly support the proposed fare increase that provides the fairest deal for the MNR's most frequent customers: monthly and weekly ticket holders. However, we cannot and will not accept any service cuts. The bottom line is that the level and quality of service should be commensurate with any fare increase.

At the most basic level, we expect safe and reliable service. December 1st marked the fifth anniversary of the deadly Spuyten Duyvil crash, and we continue to mourn the loss of life. Positive Train Control – PTC – is being installed on passenger rail throughout the nation to help eliminate these horrific incidents. That has led to some slippage of service over recent months, but declines in on-time performance of East of Hudson service performance cannot be blamed solely on installation of this critical safety feature. While we recognize that efforts are being made to address already identified service issues, more work needs to be done to restore reliability to Metro-North.

Finding long-term, consistent funding sources is critical to achieving President Rinaldi's well-documented *Way Ahead* program for the Railroad. While Congestion Pricing is absolutely a part of this sustainable funding package, it is just a drop in the bucket of what's needed. We strongly support the battle to identify and secure sustainable MTA funding sources, in addition to a minimal fare increase. The system is the lifeblood of the region and must be appropriately funded. Thank you!