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A Difficult Budget for Challenging Times

PCAC Statement on the FY2021 NYS Budget April 1, 2020

"We applaud the Governor and legislature for crafting this difficult budget for challenging times. The promises made in the Executive budget of an increase in operating funding and \$3B commitment to the capital plan – along with a new MTA Capital Assistance Fund, which will also hold monies for paratransit services – are included in the legislation, and that's good news for riders in tough times.

"Unfortunately, the COVID-19 crisis is claiming the MTA lockbox as a victim, at least for the immediate future. We're thrilled that congestion pricing seems to have survived but dismayed that the lock on the lockbox has been picked. The long-fought-for lockbox was designed to keep congestion pricing funds apart from other funds so that wouldn't get sideswiped for other uses. Obviously, we're in tragically disruptive times and recognize the need to rob capital Peter to pay operating Paul but hate this as precedent. The good news here is that federal funds can be used to reimburse what might be spent and it does sunset. The reporting on what might have been used and how will be a good way to keep track of what's gone out of the lockbox and anticipate either what might be replaced or will have to be made up from another source.

"Despite the dire news we hear every day, this budget portends that riders can expect that the subways, buses, LIRR and Metro-North will get back on track, along with the rest of the region and state. We all look forward to that day."