



PERMANENT CITIZENS
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**Testimony of Lisa Daglian, PCAC Executive Director
MTA Needs the HEROES Legislation!
MTA Board Meeting, May 20, 2020**

Good afternoon, I'm Lisa Daglian, executive director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA.

The MTA continues to move the essential workers who save lives and care for the sick, and all those who allow us to flatten the curve. We thank the transit workers who make this happen and mourn the loss of too many.

It's critical the MTA emerge from this crisis ready to serve riders and support the region's recovery; with nearly 10% of the U.S. GDP, as the region's economy goes, so goes the nation's fiscal health. But the MTA can't sustain itself without substantial support – the kind that only the federal government can provide.

On May 6th, the MTA asked Congress for an additional \$3.9 billion in funding and on Friday, the House voted to support that ask through the HEROES legislation. We thank them.

These emergency funds are an investment in the future health of the region and the millions of riders who rely on the very transit system that will ultimately allow us to get back in business and looking forward to a new normal.

That's going to take a while. In the meantime, we're learning to live with overnight subway closures. We're looking forward to hearing more about the re-opening plan, particularly for the 4 – 5 am time period, which has the heaviest overnight usage – which will only grow as the city and region reopen and construction resumes.

We also look forward to resumption of capital construction. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of improving the system as a whole. Reducing crowding by running more trains, faster, will be essential to our recovery efforts. The capital program is the lever that'll make that happen.

But the MTA can't begin those vital upgrades until there is federal funding certainty to cover the necessary costs. Those funds will allow the MTA to keep the network operating without having to dip into capital funds—to avoid unlocking the lockbox that keeps the funds separate.

If New York doesn't succeed—if transit doesn't succeed—it will have a long-term negative impact on national Covid-19 recovery efforts.

We hope Congress is listening!