



PERMANENT CITIZENS
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**Testimony to the MTA Board
Federal Funding and the MTA
By Lisa Daglian
Executive Director, PCAC
September 23, 2020 Board Meeting**

Greetings. I am Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC.

September is a busy month – for many, it’s back to school time and more people are heading into the office. It includes Rail Safety Week, which has taken on even greater meaning this year when the LIRR and Metro-North will add educating riders about safe practices during a pandemic to their traditional efforts. We also recognize the importance of our infrastructure with an eponymous week stressing how investing in our nation’s transit infrastructure is critical for supporting economic recovery from the pandemic.

There is a common theme that runs through these seeming disparate events: the immediate need for funding.

More people riding the subways, buses, and railroads is a welcome sign as we settle into our next normal and hope for the continued good health of our city and region. Service must continue at levels that can accommodate the more riders, and cleaning and disinfecting must continue to the same high standards so people feel comfortable coming back to the system. The capital program would continue the MTA’s safety and rebuilding efforts with signal upgrades, new rolling stock, station and accessibility improvements and expansion projects like Penn Access and SAS phase 2.

None of this can happen without federal funding. This isn’t a New York problem, it’s a national problem borne of the pandemic. But, if Congress doesn’t deliver \$12 billion in funding for the MTA, New York’s pain will be the nation’s pain: as Chairman Foye noted last week, the ripple effect would be felt from Kentucky to California. Last week we and other advocates released a doomsday report highlighting the pain service cuts, fare hikes and job loss would cause to Long Island. Unfortunately, the prospect of the doomsday scenario is too real, and the hardship would be felt by everyone, whether they ride the system or not. The need is real, and the time for Congress to act is now. Saving the MTA is critical for the region’s recovery – and by extension of its tremendous economic contribution, the nation’s recovery.

The MTA is made up of amazing people who work to improve the system every day. Kudos to the team that got the subways up and running for Monday’s rush after the malicious act of a criminal. I’d also like to extend my warmest thanks and appreciation to Ellyn Shannon, who will be retiring from PCAC in October after 18 years. I’ll have much more to say next month, but I want to recognize her and her valuable contributions today. Thank you, Ellyn.