

**Statement of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA  
Before the MTA Board  
December 17, 2008**

My name is William Henderson. I am the Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC). The PCAC is the coordinating body for three legislatively mandated riders' councils, the Long Island Rail Road Commuter's Council, the Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council, and the New York City Transit Riders Council. Our members are riders appointed by the Governor at the recommendation of local officials.

As I have stated on behalf of each of our constituent Councils at the committee meetings held over the past week, the members of the PCAC stand firmly against the proposed 2009 budget that you are considering today. The PCAC views this budget as a triple threat to the riders. Not only does it include a 23 percent fare and toll yield increase, resulting in a somewhat larger actual fare increase, and a potential 150 percent fare increase for Access-A-Ride customers, riders will also get a lesser system for the greater fares that they pay. That's less in terms of open station booths and ticket windows, less in terms of cleaning and maintenance, and less in terms of station staffing with the elimination of the Station Customer Assistant program to highlight a few areas.

The proposed reductions in service are of the greatest concern to the PCAC. I won't recite the litany of service cuts in this budget, but the elimination of subway lines and trains, elimination or reduction of bus service, shortening of commuter rail consists, and increases in loading standards and headways compromise the system. We remain uncertain why some of these choices were made, as the savings that they generate are in most cases quite modest and pale in comparison to the harm they do. Suffice it to say we would have made different choices.

We understand the competing demands that this board faces, but to approve this budget and walk away would be unconscionable. We are encouraged that several Board members have committed to working with our state legislators to find an alternative solution. Whatever the outcome today, we must move on and prevent these onerous budget provisions from taking effect. To allow this budget to be fully implemented is unacceptable.