

Statement of PCAC Executive Director William Henderson on the MTA Financial Effort

MTA Board Meeting
November 20, 2008

There are currently two critical areas that the MTA must increase its efforts on before the Riders Council can feel secure that the MTA is doing everything in its power to get funding for its operating system.

The MTA must create an emergency Blue Ribbon panel comprised of labor, construction and the City of New York to determine in estimates how many jobs have been created from specific MTA projects. Projects to be examined should include the South Ferry terminal renovation, the Fulton Street Transit Center rebuild, Second Avenue Subway, the Main Line Corridor and East Side Access projects. It should also do job creation estimates for the MTA's Capital Program projects including station renovation projects, signaling upgrades, and communication improvements. It must put together a package that is available to the public on how many jobs the MTA provides as a result of its services. And how many more jobs could be created if it was allowed to do the things that are on its to do list.

Once this data has been compiled, the MTA must complete the analysis with a comparison to other types of job creation efforts across the country which will likely demonstrate that the MTA is one of the best places to invest stimulus dollars.

The MTA must then take this information to Washington DC and substantially increase its presence there. While the MTA has nearly 70,000 employs and provides over 2.5 billion rides each year, it has only one staff member that goes to Washington DC as a component of his job. By comparison Continental airlines has 43,000 employees, carries 65-70 million passengers a year and has 2 full time lobbyists, American Airlines, Delta and United Airlines have 3.

Up until a few years ago the Port Authority of New York and NJ had an office in Washington with 3 full time lobbyists. With infrastructure investment and stimulation packages on the horizon MTA cannot afford to be an active presence in Washington now and for the next two years as the next authorization bill is developed and approved.

The MTA must increase its presence in Washington DC, they must have a full time lobbyist for appropriations measures and omnibus and stimulus bills by not having this full time representation the MTA will miss out on Federal funding opportunities.