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**Protecting Transit from Mother Nature and Human Error**  
**PCAC Executive Director, Lisa Daglian**  
**September 13, 2021**

Good morning, I am Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, PCAC. Much has changed since we last sat in this room in July! Craig: you may be an Interim President, but you have presided over an incredibly challenging time and come out on top. The same can and must be said for everyone at the MTA who worked tirelessly through storms and power failures and heatwaves to get riders where they needed to go – sometimes wet and late for dinner, but safely, and that’s job 1. Thanks to you all.

These last few weeks have been a wake-up call for all of us. More must be done to protect the transit system that is the lifeblood of our region from Mother Nature – and human error.

First, the power outage. It’s clear from the Governor’s review that new systems and processes must be put into place to keep this kind of human error from recurring, and redundant power must be installed as back-up. Revising internal organizational processes, including retraining staff, is something that can begin to happen immediately, while system upgrades will take longer. It’s another indication of the essential system modernization that must continue across the board.

The storms – Henri, Ida and whatever comes next – are another clear indication that new solutions must be found. The fact that service was restored as quickly as it was is a testament to the hard work of everyone at the MTA. Riders counted on you, and you delivered. Thank you. But we all saw clearly how fragile is the ecosystem in which we live. No, subways aren’t submarines, but people do ride in a hole in the ground, and that’s the level water seeks. Working with the city to accelerate its review of drainage system capacity can’t come too soon. Same with examining what you need to do to handle weather that will continue to come at us with increasing frequency.

This will all take money. That’s why it’s so critical that funding come to the MTA from federal, state and local sources, and highlights more than ever the importance of congestion pricing. We will be speaking in support of it at upcoming meetings and urge others to do so as well. Thank you.