



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elaine Phillips

## Senator Phillips: Reduce Fares for LIRR Riders During Penn Station Construction

ELAINE PHILLIPS May 3, 2017

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Senator Elaine Phillips (R-Manhasset) is calling for LIRR fares to be reduced during Amtrak's extensive rehabilitation of Penn Station's infrastructure that's expected to significantly impact service for LIRR riders. Senator Phillips called on Amtrak to fund the fare reductions during the project, which is expected to last throughout the summer.

"LIRR riders have been enduring recurring nightmares at Penn Station for weeks. Amtrak improving Penn's infrastructure is a necessary step, but those repairs will also mean even more delays, cancellations and service disruptions for Long Island commuters. Passengers should not be charged the same amount for less service; if service is going to get cut, then fares should be reduced by the same amount," said Senator Phillips, a former commuter who spent more than 20 years taking the LIRR to Penn Station.

Amtrak is the owner and operator of Penn Station, one of the largest transit hubs in the Western Hemisphere. The LIRR is the station's largest tenant, serving nearly half of the more than 650,000 passengers who pass through it each day.

Over the last several weeks, there have been numerous incidents, including two derailments, which severely impacted LIRR service operations. Each of the incidents

stemmed from station infrastructure problems, such as weakened rail ties, mismatched pieces of rail and hanging overhead electrical wires.

Amtrak is undertaking a comprehensive review of the station's infrastructure, which Senator Phillips requested, and is formulating a repair plan to address the issues. Media reports noted that a draft of the plan called for approximately 6 weeks of repair throughout the summer, causing "significant service impacts" for LIRR users and passengers of the other railroads served by Penn Station.

"Major service disruptions on the country's largest commuter railroad are more than an annoyance. Leaving over 300,000 people without a reliable way to get to work causes major impacts to the commuters themselves, their employers and the economy as a whole. What Long Island commuters have endured over the last several weeks is totally unacceptable, and it appears there is more in store during the summer construction. Amtrak is the responsible party, they need to do the right thing and give Long Islanders a break," Senator Phillips added.