



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Martin J. Golden

Senator Golden Expresses Disappointment in Vote to Cut Services Mta Chairman and Board Members to Express

MARTIN J. GOLDEN March 25, 2010

| ISSUE: **TRANSPORTATION**

URGES MTA TO USE ADDITIONAL REVENUE THROUGH STIMULUS FUNDS AND
PREVENTING FARE BEATERS AS POTENTIAL MEANS TO SAVE SERVICES

Brooklyn- State Senator Marty Golden (R-C-I, Brooklyn) today has issued a letter to MTA Chairman Jay Walder and all members of the Metropolitan Transit Authority Board in response to the Board's March 24, 2010 vote which will severely impact the transportation services in his district.

Senator Golden attended and spoke at the MTA Board meeting yesterday. The text of the letter is below.

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March 25,2010

The Honorable Jay Walder, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer

Metropolitan Transportation Authority

347 Madison Avenue

New York, NY 10017-3739

Dear Chairman Walder,

I must tell you that I am very disappointed in the Board's vote to cut services and the process that was utilized by the MTA to arrive at these cuts which will damage our city and further squeeze New Yorkers as they try to make do financially during these difficult times.

The present budget exercise, with some innovation by the MTA, could have helped create a stronger transit system. Instead, employing "conventional wisdom," the Board has resorted to budget cuts that will weaken the system and have a devastating effect on a number of communities throughout the region, including the district that I represent in the New York State Senate. The reductions planned for bus routes in my district will create travel hardships, effect the local business economy, and negatively impact the quality of life of so many.

The services cuts you have approved will leave many people waiting at bus stops for buses that will never show up; these cuts will lengthen the commute of those who depend on weekday express bus service.

The proposed elimination of the B37, the 3rd Avenue bus, which travels a busy shopping strip in the heart of Bay Ridge, is outrageous. And the plan to reroute the B70 to run along a small portion of this route is unwelcome and will be ineffective. This move does not take into account the fact that this eliminates our local connection to Lutheran Medical Center, the Augustana Lutheran Home, to our court houses and to downtown Brooklyn.

The message these cuts send to senior citizens and the disabled is that the MTA no longer considers their travel needs. And to the merchants, these cuts will only create an additional hardship in these trying economic times.

We also need to maintain separate uptown and downtown express bus service. The X37 and X38, the rush hour extension of the X 27 and X 28, has improved the travel time of many commuters of Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights and Bensonhurst, and combining these routes would be a big mistake.

Further, my community cannot accept the complete elimination of evening service on the only bus into and out of Gerritsen Beach, the B 31. You will strand people. There are no trains in Gerritsen Beach.

How can you have an entire community with no overnight public transportation?

And the complete elimination of the B 23 in Borough Park, and weekend and general service schedule cuts to the B16 and the B64, will damage the quality of life of Brooklynites.

These reductions will force our tax base out of New York City.

I believe there are a number of steps the Board could have taken which would enhance our transit system, not diminish it. You should consider the following:

- using \$100 million from the stimulus package to support the MTA's operations;
- improved fare collection. Too many people are "beating the fare." The MTA should target those subway stations and bus lines where fare beating is rampant and step up enforcement of fare collection. Such efforts could lead to up to \$45 million in additional revenue each year.
- a hiring and wage freeze should be implemented.

· Agency restructuring. The MTA presently maintains

People live where they live because they have access to good jobs, good schools, live in a safe environment, and have extraordinary transportation services which make their lives livable. These cuts will make traveling to work, and traveling for many other reasons, much more difficult, frustrating and for some, impossible.

Even getting to school will be more of a challenge if this plan is approved. We can give students choices for school, and we can build new schools, but if students can't afford to get there, they will not go. Like the rest of the plan, this will impact New York families.

The MTA should be coming up with alternatives - possibly reducing schedules, instead of eliminating complete bus routes. Or maybe go after thousands of fare beaters on buses so that commuters are not riding for free and the MTA loses the many fares each day.

I strongly oppose the M.T.A.'s approval of this budget and I urge your reconsideration.

Sincerely,

Martin J. Golden

State Senator

cc: Metropolitan Transit Authority Board Members