



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

Bonacic to Mta: Stop the Fare Hikes; End the m.t.a. Tax

JOHN J. BONACIC September 15, 2010

| ISSUE: **TRANSPORTATION**

State Senator John Bonacic attended the MTA Public Hearing in New Windsor on September 13, 2010 and spoke out against the MTA fare hike:

<http://www.recordonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20100914/BIZ/9140331/-1/SITEMAP>

Senator Bonacic's prepared remarks on the MTA fare hike hearing are re-printed below.

"Good evening. My name is John Bonacic, I am a State Senator representing all or parts of Delaware, Sullivan, Orange, and Ulster Counties.

Thank you for coming to Orange County. As you know, resentment in the Hudson Valley, over the MTA tax allowed by Assembly Speaker Silver, and Senate President Smith, and their New York City allies, cannot be overstated; so I appreciate your coming, for what promises to be an evening of your hearing blunt concerns.

Ridership is down at the MTA. The answer, however, is not to raise fares.

I know times are difficult all over. The \$14 billion in new taxes imposed by Governor Paterson, Assembly Speaker Silver, and Democratic Senate President Smith, and those who have voted with them, have not helped the MTA at all. Those taxes are chasing your riders out of the State.

According to the television channel New York 1, ridership was down by 63 million trips between 2008 and 2009 on MTA owned trains, subways, and buses.

So when the MTA starts to tell the State what it needs to survive – I would suggest the MTA telling the Governor and Legislature that the best way to increase your ridership, is to cut red tape for small business, and reduce taxes on families and business. A stronger economy, not another tax or fare hike, is the MTA's salvation.

When it comes to your West of Hudson lines however, bettering your ridership, comes by lowering rates, and increasing services, not raising rates and decreasing services. That might strike you as the transit equivalent of supply side economics – charge less and more people will use it. I suggest however, charging less and increasing service, is the only logical thing left to do. We know that charging more and offering less is not working.

If you want to boost West of Hudson ridership, you need more service. That might mean making the people in Manhattan wait a few minutes longer for each train. But if the people in Port Jervis and Middletown have to wait hours between trains, the people in Manhattan can wait an extra twenty minutes between subway cars, particularly during off peak hours.

It is easy for me to say these things to you. I fully understand that. Truthfully, however, I can't believe anything anyone says tonight, will change the MTA's mind when it comes to yet another fare hike.

However, if we did not come, that would be to lead you to believe we have given up. We have not. The MTA is still foisting taxation without transportation upon Hudson Valley families, small businesses, and property taxpayers. For any official to sit by silently, would be a disgrace.

My hope is there will come a day when we can restore the balance of power in New York State, so that the Hudson Valley, and in particular, the West of Hudson River portion of the Hudson Valley, are treated to service as good by the MTA, as residents of Connecticut are.

So I will leave it at this: there will come a day, when your ridership hopefully increases, when New York's Governor and Speaker Silver will understand that freedom from higher taxes and more regulation will actually help the economy.

When that day comes, you may have the opportunity to do right by your riders. We in the Hudson Valley deserve more from an agency that takes more from us, than it gives. When you have that opportunity, don't just come here for the moment, and drive back down to Manhattan, or wherever you all are from, but come back here, and actually boost service to make the MTA usable by Orange, Sullivan, and Ulster county residents. Thank you. "