



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

Statement From Senator Fuschillo on Mta Board's Decision to Raise Fares

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. October 7, 2010

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"I am extremely disappointed that, for the third time in four years, the MTA Board has again voted to raise fares, with LIRR riders facing an fare increase of up to 9.4%. Once again, Long Islanders are being treated like an ATM for the MTA.

With their decision, the MTA Board has ignored the voices of the thousands of Long Islanders who told them "we can't afford to pay more!" Over the last several weeks, I visited train stations throughout my district and collected over 3,100 signatures through an online petition I organized against the fare hike. I shared this information with Chairman Walder and the MTA Board of Directors at their public hearing in Garden City and told them that the message was the same from everyone: Long Islanders are sick and tired of repeatedly having to pay more to the MTA and receive less service in return.

We are already paying over \$341 million a year more in higher fees, fares, and taxes to fund the MTA. This includes the job killing MTA payroll tax which was imposed on every Long Island employer, including small businesses, municipalities, non-profits, and school districts. These taxes and fees, all of which I strongly opposed, were supposed to be enough to avert the need for another fare increase. We now know otherwise.

The MTA should have done more to find savings internally before raising costs on Long Islanders yet again. State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli estimates the MTA could save about \$60 million annually through better overtime management, an area which saw spending increase by 26% between 2005-09. In another report, the Comptroller said better management of the MTA's vast real-estate portfolio could yield additional savings. Overall, six reports issued by Comptroller DiNapoli on the MTA since 2009 found \$296 million in wasteful spending and unrealized savings opportunities.

It's a shame that the MTA Board ignored the concerns of their riders. At a time when so many are barely living paycheck to paycheck, the MTA is becoming increasingly unaffordable for those who depend on its services."

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