



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

Senator Fuschillo Calls on Mta to Explore Takeover of Maintaining Rails in and Out of Penn Station

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. May 12, 2011

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Following a number of significant LIRR service disruptions and cancellations caused by Amtrak maintenance, Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick) today called on the MTA to explore a takeover of maintaining the rails in and out of Penn Station and the East River tunnels.

In a letter to MTA Chairman Jay Walder, Senator Fuschillo called on the MTA to “re-evaluate its current operating agreement with Amtrak and see what steps can be taken to have the authority of maintaining the rails in and out of Penn Station.”

“The LIRR and its riders have repeatedly been held hostage because of Amtrak’s maintenance practices. That is unacceptable. The recent Amtrak derailment, which continues to result in significant cancellations and delays to LIRR riders, shows why the MTA/LIRR, not Amtrak, should maintain the rails in and out of Penn Station,” said Senator Fuschillo, Chairman of the Senate’s Transportation Committee.

Amtrak currently owns and maintains Penn Station and the four East River tunnels. Amtrak’s ownership prevents the LIRR from overseeing maintenance operations on its tracks, even though the LIRR operates more than three times as many weekday trains as Amtrak. While the LIRR cooperates with Amtrak on some maintenance and repair projects, it ultimately has no authority over maintenance operations that directly affect LIRR service.

LIRR riders have experienced a number of service disruptions over the last several weeks because of Amtrak maintenance. Most recently, an Amtrak derailment has led to significant delays and cancellation for LIRR riders. LIRR and MTA officials have recently publicly questioned Amtrak’s maintenance practices.

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A copy of Senator Fuschillo's letter to the MTA is attached below: