



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Stephen M. Saland

Senator Saland Calls for Mta Restructuring Similar to Nyra

STEPHEN M. SALAND July 5, 2012

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The MTA's July 1st cry of unfairness in response to the Poughkeepsie Journal's June 23rd Editorial "Dissolve the MTA and Start Fresh" has made it abundantly clear that the leadership at the MTA just doesn't get it. In response Senator Saland said, "The only time the word "unfair" should be used in relation to the MTA is when we are talking about the treatment of taxpayers and transit riders who are continually called upon to support the MTA's ever increasing appetite for spending". In addition to legislation introduced in June, 2012 (S. 7516) to cap MTA spending; eliminate the egregious MTA payroll tax, supplemental license/registration fees and reduce scheduled fare increases, Senator Saland will shortly introduce legislation proposing the creation of a MTA Restructuring Board similar to the NYRA restructuring legislation recently enacted into law.

"This is an agency which manages by "annual crisis," said Senator Saland. "They have relied on crisis management instead of sound management to the detriment of everyone who has to foot the bill. It is an agency fraught with excessive spending, lax internal controls and a corporate atmosphere that has convinced itself that the vast majority of its nearly \$14 billion budget is beyond the ability to constrain or manage."

In 2012, the MTA's budget will exceed \$13.8 Billion making it larger than the combined operating budgets of all cities (except NYC), towns and villages in the entire State. According to a recent NYS Authorities Budget Office release nearly 4,400 workers of reporting authorities earned more than \$100,000 in 2011. In comparison, a look at the MTA's 2010 payroll shows approximately 8,000 employees earning over \$100,000 – nearly twice the number of all other reporting authorities combined. This is just one example of MTA spending unnecessarily burdening taxpayers and riders alike. In 2012, the MTA is spending almost \$100 million annually just on vice presidents, lawyers, media and government relations staff. It will spend another \$24 million annually for outside lawyers working on retainer and this figure excludes legal expertise hired for specialized services such as bond issuances. These examples are just the tip of the iceberg.

“An efficient, cost effective, properly managed public transportation network may well be vital to the economic health of the downstate metropolitan region. That does not, however, require Dutchess and the other so called “quarter pounder” counties – Putnam, Orange and Rockland, to endure being held revenue hostage to the MTA,” stated Senator Saland. “The MTA has had more than 40 years to “get it right” and it has failed to deliver year in and year out. It is time to establish a Board similar to that established recently for the New York Racing Association to reorganize the MTA; improve the delivery of mass transportation services; and ensure that taxpayers and riders are treated fairly. For too long the MTA has been fiscally irresponsible and poorly managed.”

“I call for the passage of the MTA spending cap (S. 7516) legislation along with legislation establishing a MTA Reorganization Board at the earliest return of the Legislature,” concluded Saland. This package of legislation will ensure the delivery of effective mass transportation at service and cost levels essential to the economic vitality of the region while providing greater equity to Dutchess County and the MTA's other most northern counties.