



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elaine Phillips

Senator Phillips' Public Hearing Statement Regarding Third Track Proposal

ELAINE PHILLIPS January 19, 2017

| ISSUE: **MTA (METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY)**

Following is the statement which Senator Phillips gave tonight at the public hearing soliciting comments on the MTA's Third Track Proposal:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak this evening.

Thank you as well to the representatives from the MTA and the Governor's office for holding this public meeting in the affected community. Getting input from the people and businesses most directly impacted by this project is critical. I have been informed that many elected officials and organizations from Suffolk County have spoken over the past few days, and while I respect their opinions, we must never lose sight of the residents and businesses that actually live and work along the 9.8 mile construction corridor.

The Third Track proposal has been called a transformative project. Those who characterize it in that manner are absolutely correct.

It is a transformative project, but it is also a disruptive project. It is a massive undertaking requiring years of construction in residential areas.

Many in the audience tonight are worried what this combination of disruption and transformation will be for their neighborhoods.

Respectfully, I'd ask that as you sit here tonight collecting their comments, don't just hear them. Really listen to them.

Because the concerns they have are real, and the questions they are asking are important.

Small business owners in downtown New Hyde Park and Floral Park are worried about surviving the years where construction makes it so hard for customers to get to their stores that they simply go elsewhere.

Homeowners are worried that rerouting traffic from major thoroughfares down their residential side streets will impact their families' safety.

People who live right along the tracks where Agent Orange and other pesticides were sprayed decades ago are scared about what happens when all of those chemicals sitting in the soil are dug up.

Local school districts are concerned that the construction will prevent them from transporting all of their students to school.

The MTA and other Third Track proponents often equate this project with progress, and I understand and respect their reasoning.

But I also ask them to understand and respect that everyone raising concerns about this project also supports progress.

We all want Long Island's economy to grow. We want to see people getting jobs. We want a stronger infrastructure. Everyone benefits from that.

However, those worthy goals must be achieved in a way that respects all communities.

Many people here don't feel that's happening right now with this project.

So often, when people want something, they have a tendency to see things as they wish them to be rather than as they really are.

When you consider this project, don't just look at what you hope it will be. Look at what it really means to everyone sitting here tonight. Look at the disruption. Look at the impact on quality of life. Look at the economic impact.

These concerns must be respected, answered and addressed. Nothing should be finalized unless this happens.

Thank you once again for listening.