



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elaine Phillips

## Senator Phillips: Scrap LIRR Fare Hike Until Service Improves

ELAINE PHILLIPS August 21, 2018



*Calls on MTA to Scrap Plans for '19 Hike Following Record Service Failures. Cites \$8 Million 'Summer of Hell' Ticket Discount as Precedent for Linking Fares and Service*

State Senator Elaine Phillips is calling on the MTA to link any future LIRR fare hikes to service improvements on the beleaguered line and said that without measurable gains, next year's planned increase should be scrapped.

In a letter to MTA Chairman Joseph Lhota and the 22 members of its governing board, Phillips cited the railroad's worst on-time performance in 20 years, and said the \$8 million

ticket savings that commuters received during the “summer of hell” Penn Station reconstruction was precedent for linking service levels with commuting costs. Phillips was first to call on the MTA to provide discounts to riders who faced delays and changes to their commuting routines.

“Raising fares while service continues to falter on a daily basis is a misguided move and will only further hurt the thousands of commuters who are already facing the worst rail service in two decades,” said Senator Phillips. “The MTA needs to scrap its fare hike plans until it can achieve measurable improvements in service, on-time performance and customer satisfaction, as well as a reduction in equipment breakdowns and avoidable delays.”

According to an audit by the State Comptroller, over 2,000 LIRR trains were delayed 15 minutes or more, impacting tens of thousands of commuters, in just the months of December and January. In just the past few weeks, the LIRR has had three derailments and three straight days of interrupted rush hour service causing over packed trains.

Meanwhile, the MTA is proposing up to a 4 percent fare increase—its seventh increase in the last decade—to take effect in 2019.

“LIRR commuters are not getting what they are paying for,” Phillips said. “And adding to their burden only brings insult to that injury.”

Phillips called on the MTA to set service improvement benchmarks that the LIRR must reach before any fare increases can go through.

She also called on the Board to reject any plan that would result in Nassau County commuters paying a disproportionate, larger share of any future fare hikes, as was recently proposed by one prominent MTA Board member.

“Additionally, the notion that the MTA would also propose to adopt an uneven fare hike plan weighted more heavily on Nassau County residents is unconscionable – and I will do all possible to ensure my constituents are not subjected to higher fares than other commuters,” Senator Phillips said.

[CLICK HERE](#) for a copy of Senator Phillips’ letter to the Lhota and the MTA Board.