



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elaine Phillips

Senator Phillips Joins Long Island Majority Delegation To Call For MTA To Protect LIRR Riders From Fare Increase

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Introduces Legislation Creating the Long Island Rail Road Commuter Relief Fund

Continuing her efforts to protect LIRR commuters from unwarranted fare increases Senator Elaine Phillips joined Majority Leader Flanagan and the Senate Majority's Long Island Delegation at a press conference at the Bethpage Train Station today to announce efforts to force the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) to provide fare relief to the region's long-suffering commuters.

"Not a day goes by that I don't hear from constituents frustrated with the MTA's lack of reliability and service. Raising fares while service continues to falter 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 start listening to LIRR riders – and my colleagues and I are here to make sure those voices are heard. Any and all fare hike plans need to be scrapped until measurable improvements in service are made and there is better on-time performance and customer satisfaction."

The focus of the press conference was the delegation's joint call for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to put any proposed 2019 fare hike on hold through at least 2021 until it makes measurable improvements in service, equipment failures and delays.

To further protect commuters from facing even more disruptions due to the LIRR's loss of any revenue, legislation, S.9166 sponsored by Senator Phillips, would create the "Long Island Commuter Relief Fund" which would provide a dedicated state fund that would provide operating money for the agency. This fund, which would consist of no less than sixty million dollars from yet-to-be allocated extraordinary monetary settlement funds, would be dedicated to the operating budget of the LIRR to ensure that LIRR riders are not forced to endure reduced service while simultaneously protecting fares at the current rates.

Currently, the MTA has scheduled an authority-wide four percent fare and toll increase that would take effect in March of 2019.

"The reality is that the Long Island Railroad has this year delivered what is measurably their worst performance year in the last twenty years, but still preparing to increase fares in spite of this poor service. To force commuters who have been asked to deal with cancelled trains and poor on-time performance to pay more is

unconscionable, and we are joining to say our residents deserve better. I thank my colleagues for joining this effort and calling on the MTA to do the right thing for our constituents,” stated Senator Flanagan.

The LIRR would be able to receive their share of this funding only if they are able to achieve an average on-time performance of ninety-four percent or better and increase their overall customer satisfaction score by at least five percent commencing with their next scheduled survey.

The delegation, again led by Senator Phillips, has established a petition drive that enables their constituents to voice their disgust that the LIRR would increase fares while they continue to suffer from delays and cancelled trains.

Any residents or commuter who would like to join the call for the MTA to provide riders with better service before considering fare increases is urged to visit www.phillips.nysenate.gov.