



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George M. Borrello

Senator Borrello Calls on Governor Hochul to Withdraw Penn Station Redevelopment Plan

GEORGE M. BORRELLO September 14, 2022

| ISSUE: **PUBLIC AUTHORITIES CONTROL BOARD, PACB, PENN STATION REDEVELOPMENT**



ALBANY, NY – In the wake of the Public Authorities Control Board (PACB) recent vote approving a controversial funding arrangement for the redevelopment of Penn Station, Senator George Borrello called on Governor Hochul today to withdraw any further elements of the project plan from consideration by the PACB until more transparency can be brought to the process.

“While the redevelopment of Penn Station holds the promise of tremendous economic and transit-related benefits for both New York City and the state, there are still too many unanswered questions about the financing and the scope of the plan, which will extend far beyond the station itself,” **said Senator Borrello**. “There are projections that the project could end up costing taxpayers \$40 billion in the coming years, which is a staggering figure that underscores the critical need for full transparency and accountability. Both are sorely lacking from the current process.”

“Economic development should always be a priority of our elected officials, but when it comes to investment of taxpayer dollars – particularly on the massive scale of the Governor’s proposed Penn Station project – New Yorkers deserve nothing less than full accountability and oversight. This project should not move forward until many critically important questions on the actual costs and scope of the project are addressed in an open and transparent manner,” **said Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt**.

Senator Tom O'Mara said, "This massive redevelopment project is yet another example where a lack of transparency and accountability at the highest levels of New York government could wind up forcing taxpayers to foot the bill for billions upon billions of dollars in excessive, unnecessary, unsustainable, and wasteful government spending. In more ways than one, the alarm bells are sounding for the future of taxpayers in New York State."

Senator Borrello also called on the Governor to approve his appointment as one of the PACB’s two non-voting members. Republican Leader Rob Ortt nominated Senator Borrello for the post several months ago, but the required final approval by the governor has not occurred, depriving the Senate Minority of its statutory role in the process.

“As a member of the Legislature and someone who seemingly has met all the requirements in the law, the months-long delay in my approval to the board is inexcusable, particularly as

PACB is making decisions on this critically important project,” said Senator Borrello. “The board must have *all* of its members prior to any other votes on this issue.”

Senator Borrello noted that two bills awaiting the governor’s signature are aimed at addressing some of the key issues related to PACB’s transparency and openness and he urged her to sign them as soon as possible. Senate Bill S.7337 would repeal changes made to the PACB law pushed through by Governor Cuomo that reduced the power of the Legislature and S.8419 would make community advisory committees created by Empire State Development (ESD) and other agencies more accessible to the public.

“The redevelopment plan for Penn Station has magnified many weaknesses in the state’s economic development processes. From development-restricting regulations, to opaque approval processes, to ethically-questionable practices, there is a clear need for broad reforms,” Senator Borrello said. “Of particular concern is New York State’s exorbitantly expensive infrastructure projects. New York is home to four of the five most expensive transit projects worldwide. Controlling the costs of major construction projects, especially transit projects, should be a priority moving forward.”

“Watchdog groups have echoed many of our concerns about the stunning lack of information on the size, cost, and other essential aspects of the Penn Station redevelopment plan,” said Senator Borrello. “Ignoring these numerous calls for more transparency and steamrolling this project through are tactics that were the hallmark of the previous administration. Governor Hochul came into office vowing to be different. This is an opportunity for her to make good on her promises.”

A copy of the letter sent by Senator Borrello to Governor Hochul is attached.

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