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MEMO OF SUPPORT

Rider-First Fare Agenda:

S.4435/A.5384 (Comrie/Seawright)

A.7017 (Kassay)

S.4411/A.6646 (Comrie/Alvarez)

S.3887A/A.7316 (Comrie/González-Rojas)



The
Business
Council



Community
Service
Society



NEW YORK STATE
RESTAURANT
ASSOCIATION



NYPIRG
Straphangers
Campaign



Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA • Business Council of New York State • Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York • Community Service Society • Disabled in Action • New York Lawyers for the Public Interest • New York League of Conservation Voters • New York State Restaurant Association • NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign • Queens Chamber of Commerce • Regional Plan Association • Reinvent Albany • Riders Alliance • Rise and Resist Elevator Action Group • StreetsPAC • Transportation Alternatives • Tri-State Transportation Campaign • Open Plans • Vision Long Island

TITLE OF BILLS IN FORMATION:

An act to amend the public authorities law, in relation to certain tickets on the Long Island Rail Road and the Metro-North Commuter Railroad Company

An act to amend the public authorities law, in relation to establishing a family fare ticket policy for any metropolitan transportation authority facility or system

An act to amend the public authorities law, in relation to tickets purchased for the Long Island Rail Road and the Metro-North Commuter Railroad Company

An act to amend the public authorities law, in relation to the Fair Fares act

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT:

As our state grapples with a cost-of-living crisis, public transit remains a lifeline of affordability. This is particularly true of New York’s subways, buses and commuter rail lines. With the MTA’s planned fare increases scheduled to go into effect later this year, and the January 2025 launch of Congestion Pricing, the need for “carrots” – fare incentives – to keep costs down for New Yorkers has never been greater.

Ensuring that our region’s residents, visitors and workforce have equitable access to an affordable transit system, and that our shared goals of a healthful environment and vibrant economy are met is deeply concerning to us, the undersigned groups. So too do we recognize that these issues are deeply intertwined. The MTA remains by far the most affordable and efficient method to move millions of daily riders, more than the total number of North American airline passengers on any given day, around a vast service territory. As MTA Chair & CEO Lieber frequently says, transit is like air and water to New Yorkers – our economy, environment, and indeed our entire region would not be possible without it.

However, several aspects of the MTA’s current fare structure are detrimental to our shared goals of enhancing New York’s equitable access to affordable transit.

The proposals outlined in the [“Rider-First Fare Agenda”](#) offer a variety of low-cost fixes to address myriad and ongoing challenges:

1. Introduce A.M. peak discounts on the LIRR and Metro-North for senior, disabled, and Medicare-eligible riders – S.4435/A.5384 (Comrie/Seawright, included in last year’s Senate One-House Budget Resolution)
 - Senior, disabled, and Medicare-eligible New Yorkers are unable to use their fare discount on the LIRR and Metro-North during the A.M. peak period, creating unnecessary barriers to accessing affordable transit and workforce and training participation.
2. Provide a discount for twelve- to seventeen-year-olds on the LIRR and Metro-North – A.7017 (Kassay)
 - This would reduce costs for school-age railroad riders who use the LIRR and Metro-North for their commutes and encourage the next generation of railroad riders to get onboard.
3. Create a weekly CityTicket with transfers to subways and buses – S.4411/A.6646 (Comrie/Alvarez) – Senate One-House, TEDE Part AAAA, Subpart B
 - There are far too many New York City residents priced out of the commuter railroads that serve their neighborhood; New York City commuters who commute on both a railroad and a subway or bus pay nearly \$10 during peak periods.
4. Expand Fair Fares to the commuter railroads within New York City – S.3887A/A.XXXX (Comrie/González-Rojas) – Senate One-House, TEDE Part AAAA, Subpart A
 - There are 39 commuter rail stations in New York City, many in subway deserts. The lack of a fare discount option for low-income individuals on the railroads within NYC creates hurdles for workforce participation.

5. Expand Fair Fares to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level – S.3887A/A.XXXX (Comrie/González-Rojas, included in last year’s Assembly One-House Budget Resolution)
 - New York City’s income-based fare discount program “Fair Fares,” leaves minimum wage workers behind – contributing to our state’s labor shortage and the sense of disorder in the MTA system caused by persistent fare evasion.

Beyond New York City Transit and the railroads, we encourage the Legislature to examine ways to continue to improve Access-A-Ride service, including fare capping and unlimited cards for Access-A-Ride users who currently do not have the benefits afforded to riders of the other MTA services and potentially expanding the Fair Fares program to Access-A-Ride users over 64 years of age.

For these reasons we, the undersigned organizations, urge passage of S.4435/A.5384 (Comrie/Seawright), A.7017 (Kassay), S.4411/A.6646 (Comrie/Alvarez), and S.3887A/A.7316 (Comrie/González-Rojas), the [Rider-First Fare Agenda](#), this legislative session.