



April 1, 2026

Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins  
Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie

Sen. Jeremy Cooney, Chair, Senate Transportation Committee  
Sen. Leroy Comrie, Chair, Corporations, Senate Authorities and Commissions Committee

Assemblymember Ed Braunstein, Chair, Assembly Corporations, Authorities and Commissions Committee

**Re: Oppose renewed legislative push on subway staffing**

Dear Speaker Heastie, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Chairs Cooney, Comrie, and Braunstein:

We urge you to oppose [S9586 \(Parker\)](#) and [A10706 \(Chandler-Waterman\)](#), that would restrict the MTA's use of one-person train operation (OTPO), the industry standard for subway systems in the U.S. and internationally. Under your leadership, the Legislature has done an outstanding job supporting the MTA through new dedicated tax revenues. We thank you for this and hope you continue focusing on big picture questions like the MTA's financial sustainability as it faces out-year budget gaps and federal funding challenges.

The bills require each New York City Transit subway train to have at least two crew members: a conductor, and operator. This is not required for any other U.S. transit system, except for the Port Authority Trans-Hudson (PATH), or the world's other major transit systems. This legislation would prevent the MTA from adopting the industry standard and realizing operational efficiencies as it deploys new trains designed to work with the billions of dollars of advanced signal technology being installed throughout the subway system.

A 2025 report by NYU's Marron Institute of Urban Management's Transit Costs Project, "[How Many People Does it Take to Operate a Train?](#)" found that less than 6% of 400 rail lines around the world use two or more train operators. Of the 94% that use one or fewer operators, many are completely automated and more are working towards automation as modern signal systems are installed. These systems have operated safely without conductors, or any staff in

some cases, on board. The MTA has also safely and successfully operated one-person subway trains since 1996 on shuttles and at off-peak hours.

We supported Governor Hochul's veto of [S4091/A4873](#) in 2025 because leaving operational strategies and decisions to management is the best, most flexible path to high-quality service at the lowest cost. The MTA should be able to follow facts and implement national and international best practices for staffing and technology investments. Good management and good transit service are based on facts, not special interest politics.

Mandating specific staffing levels by law also risks squandering the billions in capital investments to modernize subway signals that are being spent by the MTA and NY State government, including \$5.4 billion in the 2025-29 capital program, and \$5.0 billion in the 2020-24 program. It will also make it harder for the MTA to improve service—the key to building higher ridership. We look to you as proven champions of better transit to focus your efforts on forward-looking investments, not policies micromanaging subway staffing and operations.

Thank you,

John Kaehny  
Executive Director  
Reinvent Albany

Andrew Rein  
President  
Citizens Budget Commission

Blair Lorenzo  
Executive Director  
Effective Transit Alliance

Eric Goldwyn  
Professor and Program Director  
NYU Marron Transit Costs Project

Steven Fulop  
President and CEO  
Partnership for New York City

Tom Wright  
President and CEO  
Regional Plan Association

Cc: Governor Kathy Hochul  
Janno Lieber, Chair and CEO of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority