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NY State Senate Budget Puts Long Island Transit Projects at Risk

Major Cuts Would Harm LI Jobs, Economic Growth

Transportation advocates warned today that the state budget proposed by the New York State Senate could lead to the cancellation of needed transit projects on Long Island.

The State Senate's proposed budget does not include \$770 million in state funds or a \$7 billion increase in the bond cap that is needed for the MTA's 2010-14 Capital Program. Both were included in Governor Cuomo's executive budget and the Assembly's budget. The Senate proposal would leave the final three years of the capital program almost entirely unfunded, putting many Long Island projects at risk of delay or cancellation, including:

- **East Side Access**, which will connect the LIRR to Grand Central Terminal. This project is expected to save commuters up to 40 minutes per trip. Funding for this project is included in years 2012-14.
- **LIRR second track between Ronkonkoma and Farmingdale**, which would reduce commuting time and delays on the eastern part of the system and which Long Island elected officials have said is critically needed for economic growth. Funding for design of this project is planned for 2013.
- **Jamaica Capacity Improvements** to reduce delays around Jamaica station. Funding for this project is included in 2014.
- **Great Neck Pocket Track**, which will allow for increased service west of Great Neck. Funding for this project is included in 2013.
- **Station platform replacements** at Massapequa and Wantagh, currently planned for 2013.
- **Regular maintenance of the LIRR system**, including repair of tracks, elevators and escalators, and signals.

"The State Senate's proposed budget jeopardizes basic maintenance of the transit system, and it jeopardizes the expansion projects that Long Island needs for economic

growth,” said Veronica Vanterpool, associate director of Tri-State Transportation Campaign. “Commuters need and deserve better service. They won’t get it if these cuts stay in the budget.”

Manufacturing and construction related to the last five-year capital program supported 50,000 Long Island jobs, according to the MTA. Over 280,000 people ride the LIRR on an average weekday.

Earlier this week, the U.S. Senate passed a transportation bill that could allow for the prioritization of Long Island transit projects. It would postpone a federal mandate requiring the LIRR to install Positive Train Control signaling, which could cost the agency \$324 million. But the cuts proposed by the State Senate would far outweigh any benefit from the federal bill.

“The U.S. Senate could take Long Island transit a step forward, but the State Senate would take it three steps back,” Vanterpool said.

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The Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a non-profit organization working toward a more balanced, transit-friendly and equitable transportation system in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.