



Testimony of Ryan Lynch, associate director  
MTA Board Meeting, July 25, 2012

My name is Ryan Lynch, and I am the associate director for the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a non-profit transportation policy watchdog organization in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

The Tri-State Transportation Campaign applauds the MTA's recent announcement of \$29 million in service restorations, and we urge the Board to adopt the restoration plan today. The plan is welcome news to the millions of daily bus, subway, and commuter rail riders who were unduly burdened by the service cuts enacted in 2010. The MTA should be applauded for identifying cost efficiencies and reinvesting recently improved revenue gains into service restorations, benefitting many transit riders, especially those using buses.

The expansion of bus service into underserved communities is a particularly welcome move for those with few transportation options, and the partial restorations of the 2010 service cuts come at a time when transit ridership continues to surge. Metro-North had a banner year in 2011, and subway and bus ridership will continue to grow as the economy rebounds. In fact, just two months ago, subway ridership reached its highest weekday ridership in 45 years.

Still, service levels remain far below that which existed prior to the 2010 cuts, and overcrowding on subways and buses continues to be an issue.

In addition, next year's looming fare increase continues to cast a shadow over the service restoration good news.

Sometime next year, transit riders will once again be asked to shoulder a greater financial burden of a system that benefits the whole region and state. Meanwhile, legislators in Albany continue to attack dedicated MTA funding sources, like the payroll tax, and refuse to consider innovative revenue generating ideas, like congestion pricing, that would balance the responsibility of funding the region's transit system across all of those that benefit from it. The MTA's actions on the commuter lines, such as adding more peak and non-peak hours and extending the expiration time of tickets, should be a clear signal to suburban legislators that revenue from dedicated transit taxes, such as the PMT, can be reinvested back into the commuter rail network.

In order to ensure that the country's largest transit system is in a state of good repair, is an attractive, reliable, and affordable transportation option for the region, and is funded in a fair and balanced manner, our elected officials must do more to support the region's economic lifeblood.