



**For Immediate Release**

September 5, 2013

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**Tri-State Transportation Campaign Announces First Annual Long Island Rail Road *Laggy* Awards**

*Delays on Babylon, Ronkonkoma and Huntington Branches cost region the most in lost time and economic productivity*

*Hicksville* — Today, the Tri-State Transportation Campaign announced the winners of its first [Laggy Awards](#) given to those branches of the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) with the greatest lost economic productivity, delay per rider and lost time. The awards are a signal to state legislators whose districts are home to the *Laggy* branches that additional capital investment is needed to ensure LIRR continues to serve as an asset to Long Island residents, commuters and visitors and not an impediment to the Island's growth. The next capital program of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, of which LIRR is a subsidiary agency, will cover 2015-2019; planning for the program will begin this fall.

Research conducted by the Tri-State Transportation Campaign found the total lost economic productivity due to late, cancelled and terminated trains on the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) from July 2012 through June 2013 was **\$60,760,661**. This figure approximates the total lost time affecting all LIRR riders over a 12-month period, and represents economic value drained from the region's economy due to delays on the LIRR.

"LIRR's frequent delays truly add up to lost economic productivity and commuter time over the course of a year," said Ben Rosenblatt, the research fellow for the Tri-State Transportation Campaign who conducted the analysis. "In fact, estimates of total lost productivity are greater than last year's profits of some of Long Island's largest companies, such as VOXX International, Nathan's, and 1-800 FLOWERS."

Disruptions in service on the **Babylon, Ronkonkoma** and **Huntington** branches contributed the most to **lost productivity**, with the research finding:

<u>Laggy Award</u>	<u>Branch</u>	<u>Total Economic Cost (\$)</u>
1. Gold	Babylon	\$14,743,781
2. Silver	Ronkonkoma	12,285,067
3. Bronze	Huntington	9,805,101

Tri-State Transportation Campaign also found the total lost time due to late, cancelled and terminated trains on the LIRR from July 2012 through June 2013 was **1,380,924** rider hours. This figure approximates the aggregate lost time affecting all LIRR riders over a 12-month period.

The **Babylon, Ronkonkoma** and **Huntington branches** contributed the most to **lost time**:

<u>Laggy Award</u>	<u>Branch</u>	<u>Total Hours Lost</u>
1. Gold	Babylon	335,086
2. Silver	Ronkonkoma	279,206
3. Bronze	Huntington	222,843

Finally, the Campaign also found the average LIRR rider lost **15.8 hours** due to late, cancelled and terminated trains over the same time period. This figure approximates the average lost time affecting any given LIRR rider over a 12-month period, representing the average experience for riders who use the system on a regular basis.

The **Port Jefferson, Montauk** and **Ronkonkoma** branches provided the greatest levels of **delay per rider**:

<u>Laggy Award</u>	<u>Branch</u>	<u>Average Annual Delay per Rider (Hours)</u>
1. Gold	Port Jefferson	22.3
2. Silver	Montauk	20.5
3. Bronze	Ronkonkoma	19.1

Tri-State used MTA-provided ridership, on-time performance, and other lateness, termination, and cancellation data, along with 2010 Census-derived income assumptions regarding the value of lost time, to develop the *Laggy* award methodology. Each *Laggy* identifies elected officials whose districts house the *Laggy* branches.

The report does not identify the causes of delays and terminations, but news reports of signal failures and track breaks indicate that increased funding resources are needed to ensure the system is in a state of good repair and to improve reliability. While the awards identify branches, the actual recipients are New York State's elected officials who approve funding for the system and are responsible for ensuring dedicated transit funds make their way to the MTA system and are not diverted to other uses.

"As discussions begin on how to fund the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's 2015-2019 Capital Program begin in a few months, it is imperative that Long Island's elected officials in both the New York State Assembly and Senate identify the funding needed to ensure the Long Island Rail Road is in a state of good repair," said Ryan Lynch, associate director of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign. "Not doing so will only continue to negatively impact the Island's economy and put further strain on regional and local businesses."

The report called on Governor Cuomo and Long Island's state elected officials to fully fund the 2015-2019 MTA Capital Program, directing funding to:

- Further fast-tracking of LIRR's Second Track project;
- Reboot of LIRR's Third Track project;
- Increased funding for signal improvements, such as the Babylon Interlocking;
- Wi-fi capabilities on LIRR trains and at stations, in order to mitigate the productivity losses associated with delays

In addition, the LIRR can:

- Better communicate with customers when facing delays and cancellations;
- Improve LIRR's online reporting to the riding public on the true causes of "cancelled" and "terminated" trains, and incorporate these delays into On-Time Performance statistics.

"When you waste folks' time it really is death by a thousand cuts," said Eric Alexander, executive director of Vision Long Island. "In order to provide efficient transportation options for people the current LIRR rail system and operations needs strategic investment and upgrades."

"Capital investment in LIRR infrastructure directly impacts the quality and reliability of the Rail Road's service. Delays caused by inadequate infrastructure investments have real economic costs, in addition to the stress and frustration that they produce in riders," said Bill Henderson, executive director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA. "We cannot afford not to maintain, rehabilitate and improve LIRR infrastructure to meet the needs of its riders and the regional economy."

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