

**NYPIRG STRAPHANGERS CAMPAIGN
PRATT CENTER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES
TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN**

NEWS RELEASE

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For Contact Info:
See Joint Statement

**GROUPS ANNOUNCE OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED
2011 MTA FARE HIKE**

**HOLD LEGISLATURE TO BLAME FOR “PUNISHING
TREATMENT OF RIDERS”**

Four leading transportation groups announced their “strong opposition” to the proposed 2011 MTA fare increase outside the first of nine MTA hearings on proposed rate increases.

The groups issued a joint statement saying “we hold the New York State Legislature and Governor Paterson responsible for the punishing treatment riders in the last year.” (See attached.)

The four groups are the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign, the Pratt Center for Community Development, Transportation Alternatives and the Tri-State Transportation Campaign.

“The State Legislature played a big part in getting New York subway and bus riders into this fiscal mess. In December 2009, the state legislature cut \$143 million in taxes already dedicated to transit from the MTA,” said Paul S. White, Executive Director of Transportation Alternatives.

“We are here to speak on behalf of the millions of beleaguered New York City subway and bus riders. Riders are unfairly being asked to pay more for less, with a fare hike close on the heels of the worst service cuts in many decades,” said Gene Russianoff of the Straphangers Campaign.

“There are real alternatives to a fare increase. Why, for example, should transit riders pay to cross the East River, but drivers on the East River bridges get a free ride?” said Veronica Vanterpool, Associate Director of the Tri-State Campaign.

“There is no excuse to saddle subway and bus riders with yet another fare hike. To those who think the fare is more politically palatable than congestion pricing or increasing transit taxes, we have a message for you: You are wrong and you will be held accountable,” said Elena Conte, Organizer for Public Policy Campaigns for the Pratt Center for Community Development.

STATEMENT IN OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED 2011 MTA FARE HIKE

(September 13, 2010)

Our groups are here to announce our strong opposition to the proposed MTA fare increase in 2011. We also want to make it clear we hold the New York State Legislature and Governor Paterson responsible for the punishing treatment riders have received in the last year.

The State Legislature played a big part in getting New York subway and bus riders into this fiscal mess. In December 2009, the state legislature cut \$143 million in taxes already dedicated to transit from the MTA. This was followed by a sharp downturn in the revenues coming from dedicated transit taxes. Those taxes called for the various beneficiaries of transit to contribute to the MTA, including riders, drivers, property sellers and employers.

Unless the State Legislature makes funding the transit system a real priority, subway and bus riders will continue to face a world of hurt – from soaring fares to cuts in service to more unreliable trains and buses to a crumbling system.

We are here to speak on behalf of the millions of beleaguered New York City subway and bus riders. Riders are unfairly being asked to pay more for less, with a fare hike close on the heels of the worst service cuts in many decades. These include the loss of two subway lines, reduced service on a dozen more and the elimination of 36 bus routes and 570 bus stops. The cuts mean longer waits, more crowding, extra transfers and lengthier commuting times for literally millions of transit riders.

At the same time, the fare just went up both in 2008 and 2009. If the fare goes up at the end of 2010, this will be an unprecedented string of fare hikes three years in a row in the century history of New York City mass transit.

Look at the harsh numbers. The increases would mean real financial hardship for many people: The 30-day unlimited-ride MetroCard would go up from \$89 to a proposed \$104 a month at the end of 2010 – a 17% increase. For a rider who takes 30-day MetroCard trips to work all year, that will mean a \$180 more for taking transit.

Since 1998, the 30-day MetroCard would have gone up 65%, from \$63 in 1998 to a proposed \$104 a month at the end of 2010! The pay-per-ride bonus fare will go from an actual \$1.96-a-ride to a proposed \$2.10 a ride – a 7% increase. For a rider who takes discounted pay-per-ride trips to work all year, that will mean a \$70 more for taking transit.

Since 1998, the pay-per-ride bonus fare would have gone up 56% – from \$1.35-a-ride to a proposed \$2.10-a-ride by the end of the year!

The combination of fare increase and service cuts mean that riders will likely end up paying a higher share of the costs of running the transit system.

Our groups believe that the MTA's and its customers face real financial problems. The MTA is taking action to reduce costs by making substantial cuts to administration, reducing overtime, renegotiating contracts with vendors and consolidating such services as legal, human resources and accounting among its operating subsidiaries.

Both the MTA and State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli have focused on overtime costs, which have ballooned by \$600 million over the last few years. The MTA says the spiral in overtime is due to inefficient work rules. Labor officials say it is the product of hundreds of layoff. Our groups continue to urge the MTA and the union representatives of its workforce to find common ground. And we await the results of the State Comptroller's audit of transit overtime.

We believe that there are real alternatives to a fare increase. The New York State Legislature should dedicate taxes for transit that were cut last year. Why, for example, should transit riders pay to cross the East River, but drivers on the East River bridges get a free ride?

Can we expect help from the government in 2011? That's a tough question. In 2010, we are still waiting to hear from Washington D.C. about the fate of legislation calling for \$2 billion in emergency transit operating aid nationwide. And we got cuts instead of help from Albany and faced a budget crunch at City Hall. Governments are in financial turmoil, which may not get much better in 2011.

But this is no excuse to saddle New York's subway and bus riders with yet another fare hike. To those who think the fare is more politically palatable than congestion pricing or increasing dedicated transit taxes or other more equitable environmental revenue generating measures, we have a message for you: You are wrong and you will be held accountable.

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