



THE ASSEMBLY
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MTA Should Hit the Brakes on Fare Increase and Work With Legislators to Pass Budget Bill

Statement by Assembly Member Micah Z. Kellner

“Today I was part of a coalition of state legislators, city officials, and other organizations that released a joint letter calling on the MTA to hold off on a fare increase until April 15, 2008 to allow Governor Spitzer and the state legislature a chance to pursue alternative funding options.

“The letter was signed by New York City Comptroller William C. Thompson, Jr., twenty-two state legislators from all over the metropolitan region, the Disabled Riders Coalition, New York City Environmental Justice Alliance, NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign, Transportation Alternatives, the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, and Vision Long Island.

“I am a co-sponsor of legislation (A.9424) introduced by my colleagues, Assembly Member Jim Brennan and State Senator Tom Duane, that would provide an additional \$703.2 million to the MTA to avoid a fare increase. Fare increases create real hardship to New Yorkers and should always be a last resort.

“A recent report by New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli determined that the MTA has enough money to avoid a fare hike in 2008. Millions of New York commuters rely on the MTA for reliable transportation each year. It is wrong for the authority to be underfunded, but the MTA should postpone fare hikes to give the public process a chance to meet the MTA’s needs in the State’s 2008 budget negotiations. The MTA should not raise fares unless and until it is actually out of options.

“Some people think that tax dollars and fare increases all come from New Yorkers’ pockets, so what does it matter which way the money is raised? There is a big difference to the average New Yorker. Fare increases disproportionately affect low- and middle-income New Yorkers who rely on the system to get to and from work. An increased budget allocation from the City and the State is the fair and equitable way to make sure the MTA gets the money it needs to safely maintain and operate this essential service.”

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