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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Statement: Alcohol Policy on Commuter Railroads

An MTA Board Alcohol Policy Task Force was formed in December 2006, chaired by Board Member Barry Feinstein, to reassess the MTA's position on the sale and consumption of alcohol on its commuter railroads.

The Task Force met monthly from February through May, interviewing relevant internal and external stakeholders, reviewing existing MTA policy and research completed by MTA staff. Following the May meeting, the Task Force issued its final report to MTA Chairman Peter Kalikow and Executive Director and CEO Elliot Sander.

The final report unanimously recommended that the current policy should not be changed. Upon review of the report, Chairman Kalikow and Executive Director and CEO Sander agreed with the recommendation.

"I'd like to thank Barry Feinstein and all of the members of the task force for taking a hard look at the MTA's policy on alcohol sales and consumption and reaffirming our current position," Chairman Kalikow said.

"Many of our customers enjoy this amenity, and I am pleased that the Task Force confirmed that the current policy provides a benefit without compromising safety," said Executive Director and CEO Sander.

The report based its conclusion on four main findings:

- Based on MTA Police Department testimony and data, State DWI/DUI statistics, and the polling of police departments along MTA railroad Rights-of-Way, no correlation was able to be drawn between the sale or consumption of alcohol on MTA facilities and DWI incidents in or around either railroad (since 2003, only four DWI cases were reported on commuter rail property, and not a single one was attributed to drinking on MTA trains or facilities);
- The sale of alcohol, beverages and snacks were considered an amenity for customers, particularly for those traveling longer distances;
- Alcohol was readily available for purchase in multiple locations in or around LIRR and MNR stations/terminals; and
- Preventing the consumption of alcohol prior to arrival at or on commuter railroad trains was not feasible.

Alcoholic beverages are currently sold on select Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad trains and facilities. On Metro-North, this includes 9 café cars on the New Haven Line, operating weekdays, and 16 bar carts in Grand Central Terminal. Customers on the LIRR can purchase beverages at 11 platform carts (at Penn Station, Jamaica, Flatbush and Hunterspoint), two on-board car carts each evening out of Penn Station, and seasonally in two reserved cars on The Cannonball service.

Staff serving alcohol on MTA property are rigorously trained and strictly follow MTA policy which dictates that customers are allowed no more than two drinks, no intoxicated people may be served alcohol, and no one under the age of 21 may be served.