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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Encourages New Yorkers to Dump the Pump

Avoid High Gas Prices by Riding Public Transportation



Caption: Left to right: Joseph Smith (back to camera), President of the MTA Bus Company and MTA Long Island Bus; Elliot G. Sander, Executive Director and CEO of the MTA; Mary W. Bossart, Mayor of the Village of Rockville Centre; Helena Williams, president of MTA Long Island Rail Road.
Credit: MTA/Patrick Cashin

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today reminds New Yorkers to avoid high gasoline prices by riding mass transit – the affordable and environmentally friendly alternative.

As part of the American Public Transportation Association's third annual national "Dump the Pump" Day celebration, MTA officials dumped a decommissioned service station gasoline pump at the Rockville Center Long Island Rail Road Station. The event, held to emphasize the cost savings consumers can obtain by riding transit and leaving their cars parked at home, was attended by Elliot G. Sander, the Executive Director and CEO of the MTA, Helena Williams, President of MTA Long Island Rail Road and Joseph Smith, President of MTA Long Island Bus and the MTA Bus Company.

"People often say that the suburbs are 'car dependent,' but thanks to the rail and bus services provided by the MTA, that's not true in our region," Sander said. "The Long Island Rail Road provides convenient travel all the way from Montauk to Manhattan, and Long Island Bus provides frequent bus service throughout Nassau County and into Queens. One doesn't need a car even to access our railroad stations that are walkable, bike-friendly and bus accessible."

To encourage new customers to begin riding the railroad and to use the railroad's convenient mail-and-ride monthly ticketing service that lets passengers avoid lines at ticket windows, the Long Island Rail Road offers a sweepstakes to first-time mail-and-ride customers. By signing up for a monthly ticket under Mail-and-Ride, LIRR customers are automatically entered for a chance to win a free monthly ticket. Four new customers are selected at random each month. Others are also able to enter the contest. For complete rules, visit www.mta.info/lirr/pubs/MailAndRide/

"Try us, you'll like us," Williams said. "More and more Long Islanders and New Yorkers are deciding to take the LIRR instead of sitting in their cars in traffic and paying high gas prices. What's more encouraging, they are sticking with us once they try us. We are experiencing record ridership levels, not just because of high gas prices but because our on-time performance is the best it's ever been. So, relax. Read the paper. Catch up on some sleep. Leave the rest to us."

Joseph Smith said: "MTA Long Island Bus dumped the pump in 1992 when we committed to a natural gas program for our entire fleet of 330 transit buses. We estimate that to date our natural gas program prevented about 40 tons of particulate matter from entering the environment. With our newly organized regional bus network, it will become easier for Long Islanders to travel from work, school or recreation without ever having to see high gas prices. So relax and leave the driving to us!"

The MTA officials were joined by Mary W. Bossart, Mayor of the Village of Rockville Centre, and William Henderson, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA.

Mayor Mary W. Bossart said: "I am glad to join the MTA this morning in urging our residents to make use of public transportation as much as possible. For most of our community, the train station is only a short walk or bus ride away. Walking and riding are healthier, both physically and financially, than driving."

William Henderson said: "There are a lot of good reasons to dump the pump. Save yourself some money, save the planet by reducing greenhouse gases and other pollutants, save the wear and tear on your vehicle, or save yourself the aggravation of driving. Whatever your reason, you'll find that public transportation is the smart way to go. See what you've been missing; give transit a try."

To determine how much you can save by using mass transit, log onto www.publictransportation.org (<http://www.publictransportation.org/>)to use the American Public Transportation Association's cost calculator.