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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Invokes Emergency Powers To Expedite Rebuilding Devastated Port Jervis Line

MTA and Local Officials Tour Catastrophic Damage, Commit MTA Bus Service Until Rebuilding is Complete

MTA Chairman and CEO Jay H. Walder today invoked emergency powers to ensure that all necessary resources are brought to bear and red tape eliminated in the rebuilding of Metro-North Railroad's devastated Port Jervis Line. Chairman Walder today surveyed the catastrophic damage inflicted on the line west of the Hudson River with MTA Board Members Susan Metzger and Carl Wortendyke, and federal, state and local officials.

"The damage suffered by the Port Jervis Line can only be described as catastrophic," Walder said. "There are sections of track literally suspended in the air, and in many places we will have to build a new railroad from scratch, from the foundation to the tracks to the signals. I have directed Metro-North to take such steps as are necessary to expeditiously and fully address the catastrophic damage suffered along the Port Jervis Line as a result of Irene. Rebuilding this infrastructure is going to be a long and difficult process, but we are taking every action in our power to continue serving our customers, to reduce unnecessary delay and to communicate every step of the way."

"The Port Jervis Line is critical to the MTA's West of Hudson customers, so it's important that we use emergency powers to remove red tape and rebuild this infrastructure as quickly as possible," said MTA Board Member Susan Metzger.

"Residents of Rockland and Orange Counties rely on this service every day, so I'm glad that we'll be able to provide a range of alternative services to our customers," said MTA Board Member Carl Wortendyke.

The MTA is committed to taking the following actions necessary to continue serving customers and to begin the rebuilding process immediately:

MTA Buses and bus operators will provide bus service on the impacted route until the infrastructure can be rebuilt and rail service can be restored. Local bus companies will also be utilized.

Emergency powers will be used to expedite the rebuilding process:

Existing funding will be tapped to begin work even as the MTA pursues FEMA and insurance compensation for the extensive storm damage. Normal procurement rules will be waived to allow Metro-North to quickly acquire the resources and assistance needed to rebuild, beginning immediately with the hiring of an engineering consultant to advise on the work.

Special efforts will be made to communicate with the communities and customers who will be faced with long-term inconvenience, including:

An MTA liaison will be assigned to meet with all local officials on a regular basis for the duration of the outage.

A special website will be posted with regular updates on the progress of the rebuilding and the alternative service that will be offered, and social media will also be used to reach as many people as possible.

The MTA will work with all local, state and federal officials to ensure proactive communication with customers on all parts of the Port Jervis Line.

The MTA has begun a careful and disciplined survey of every mile of the Port Jervis Line and all supporting structures, systems and equipment. A team of diverse specialists is being assembled to assess the full extent of damage and develop a work plan that addresses the need to rebuild miles of the right of way. This includes new foundation, tracks, switching equipment and signals, new bridges and even repair of parking areas as required. The MTA is committed to rebuilding this 100-year-old railway to 21st century standards.