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Press Release

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LIRR

IMMEDIATE

MTA Announces New President of Long Island Rail Road

Patrick Nowakowski Chosen to Lead Nation's Busiest Commuter Railroad

Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast today announced the appointment of Patrick A. Nowakowski as the next president of MTA Long Island Rail Road.

Nowakowski is a career railroad professional with broad experience in operations, engineering, infrastructure and planning. For the past five years he has served as Executive Director of the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project, which is building a 23-mile rail line to connect with the Washington, D.C. Metro system. He previously served more than 27 years with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), including seven years as Assistant General Manager of Operations.

"Pat Nowakowski is a railroad expert with a rare mix of skills and a long career of accomplishments, and I am pleased to welcome him to the Long Island Rail Road," Prendergast said. "Our customers have high expectations for safe and reliable service, and events last year throughout the MTA family have shown why we must always stay focused on the basics of how best to provide that service."

Nowakowski began his career in 1975 at the freight railroad that would become Conrail, designing track layouts as a civil engineer. He joined SEPTA in 1981 as a senior civil engineer, where he developed a five-year capital plan for its rails and roadbed, and advanced through a series of positions with increasing responsibilities for delivering service, maintaining equipment and managing infrastructure. Nowakowski earned a bachelor's degree in engineering from the University of Delaware and a master's in business administration from Drexel University. He still holds a professional engineer license from Pennsylvania.

"As a former president of the LIRR, I know firsthand the railroad's proud history and vital role in ensuring's Long Island economic growth and quality of life," Prendergast said. "In the coming years, the LIRR must successfully complete the Double Track project along the Ronkonkoma Branch, harden its infrastructure against the threat of future storms, and prepare for East Side Access to revolutionize service. Pat's strong background in railroad operations will serve the LIRR well, and I trust Pat to enhance the railroad's operational excellence and emphasize safety and reliability as it confronts new challenges in the coming years."

"The Long Island Rail Road is a public transportation resource like no other, and I am deeply honored that Tom Prendergast has entrusted me to lead it," Nowakowski said. "Long Island relies on the LIRR, and Tom has made clear that my job is to make sure the railroad lives up to high expectations every single day, while also planning its future growth to improve the service we provide to Long Islanders. It's a tall order, and I look forward to working with the LIRR's customers, employees and other stakeholders to ensure the railroad achieves its goals."

Nowakowski replaces Helena Williams, who served as LIRR president for almost seven years, making her the railroad's longest-serving president in decades. A lawyer with deep experience in government and transportation, Williams had previously served 13 years in other MTA positions, including five years as president of MTA Long Island Bus. At the LIRR, Williams improved the railroad's customer communications, oversaw major capital improvements along branches and at terminals, and planned for new service growth while shrinking costs. She was the first woman to serve as the president of an MTA agency, the first woman to run the LIRR, and the first woman to run the MTA when she served as the agency's Interim Executive Director and CEO in 2009.

"It's been a privilege to have served as LIRR President," Williams said. "My focus always has been on providing safe, secure and reliable train service to our customers and I believe we achieved those goals while improving customer communications and strengthening our relationships with the many communities we serve throughout Long Island. I am deeply grateful to the men and women of the LIRR and to my leadership team who have worked tirelessly to meet the needs of our customers and help modernize the LIRR's operations."

"I want to thank Helena for her long and successful service to the MTA, to Long Island and to everyone in the New York metropolitan region," Prendergast said. "Helena's tireless work to improve the LIRR's operations, communications and community relations has not just made the railroad better for LIRR customers, but has improved the economy and the quality of life for everyone on Long Island."

The LIRR carried 83.4 million riders last year. The oldest American railroad still operating under its original name, the LIRR has more than 700 miles of track and 124 stations on 11 different branches stretching from Penn Station to Montauk, approximately 120 miles away.