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Press Release

July 8, 2014

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IMMEDIATE

MTA Chairman to Meet With Congress About Looming LIRR Strike

Prendergast Asks House and Senate Leaders Whether Congress Intends to Intervene

Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast today sent a letter to the leaders of Congress asking whether they intend to intervene in the ongoing labor dispute at the MTA Long Island Rail Road (LIRR). Eight unions representing 5,400 LIRR employees have threatened to walk off the job as early as Sunday, July 20, and only Congress has the authority to prevent those unions from paralyzing the nation's largest regional economy.

Prendergast said the unions' leadership has been unwilling to work constructively with the MTA to resolve the dispute because they believe Congress will intervene. While the MTA has made three increasingly lucrative contract offers to the unions, the unions have insisted they will strike unless the MTA meets all of their demands.

Prendergast sent the letter to Congressional leadership as well as the New York delegation after another unsuccessful negotiation session with union representatives concluded this afternoon. Prendergast will travel to Washington, D.C., tomorrow to discuss the MTA's position with members of Congress and seek clarification of the role Congress intends to play.

The text of the letter is pasted below, and a copy of the letter as transmitted is attached.

July 8, 2014

The Honorable Harry Reid	The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader	Minority Leader
United States Senate	United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510	Washington, D.C. 20510
The Honorable John Boehner	The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House	Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives	U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515	Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Boehner, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

I am writing to you to seek clarification on what role Congress intends to play in the event that 5,400 employees of the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) walk off the job as early as Sunday, July 20th and paralyze the nation's largest regional economy. Tomorrow I will be traveling to Washington D.C. to meet with members of Congress on the MTA's position and request a clear answer on whether the United States Congress is prepared to take action if LIRR's unions decide to stage a strike.

Over the past several months the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) has made a number of attempts to settle a labor dispute with unions representing LIRR's employees. As Chairman of the MTA, I strongly believe that a resolution can be reached in a fiscally responsible manner; unfortunately, the union's leadership has taken the position that the MTA must meet its demands or it will strike, a threat they feel comfortable making because they assume Congress will stop their strike after a few days.

As you may know, the MTA's negotiations with the LIRR's unions are governed by the federal Railway Labor Act (RLA), which gives commuter railroad employees the right to strike, which is a right that no other public employee in the State of New York has. Once LIRR employees walk off the job, absent a settlement, it will require an act of Congress to bring these employees back to work. The MTA will continue to push for a resolution that does not overly burden our passengers; however, we believe that the union's leadership has made a tactical decision that Congress will intervene on their behalf in the event of a strike. As a result, the union's leadership has been unwilling to work constructively with the MTA to come to an agreement.

The leaders of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives have three options under the law as I understand it:

1. Pass a resolution calling for an extension of the cooling-off period and prevent a LIRR union strike

2. Allow a LIRR union strike to proceed then pass a resolution ending the strike after some period of time and implement a settlement, or require mediation, arbitration or another fact finding hearing.

3. Allow a LIRR union strike and take no action

The LIRR carries over 300,000 passengers every day, and the MTA is unable to provide enough alternate capacity to serve all of the people who ride the LIRR. For the hundreds of thousands of people who drive this region's \$1.4 trillion economy, it is critical to know which of these options Congress intends to take.

Thank you for assistance in addressing this critically important matter.

Sincerely,

Thomas F. Prendergast

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer

Metropolitan Transportation Authority