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IMMEDIATE

TRANSCRIPT: MTA Chairman Foye Appears on MSNBC to Discuss Ongoing Response to COVID-19

MTA Chairman and CEO Patrick J. Foye appeared on MSNBC's "Kasie DC" with Kasie Hunt to discuss the MTA's ongoing response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

A transcript of the interview appears below.

Kasie Hunt: The subway and trains that run through New York are as iconic and essential as the city itself. 68 MTA employees have died from COVID-19 and the agency is now asking for an additional 3.9 billion in federal aid to quote 'stem the immediate financial hemorrhaging' in the MTA's 2020 operating budget. Ridership has declined 93% on subways, 95% on the Metro-North and 97% on the Long Island Rail Road, these of course all commuter railroads that bring people into New York City from outside states and localities. Joining me now is the Chairman and CEO of the MTA, Patrick Foye. Sir, thank you very much for being on the program tonight, we'd been talking a lot about the help that Congress is trying or working on sending to states and localities, and obviously the subway system and all of the railways that support the New York-Metro area are absolutely critical, not just to the city itself but to a hub of commerce that's very economically important to the entirety of the United States. Let's talk first about your employees: the people that work for you who drive the trains, who fix the trains, who are doing all the things that keep everything running every day, how at risk are they if you can't get more funding to stay afloat?

Patrick J. Foye: Well Kasie, first, 68 of our colleagues at the MTA have succumbed to the virus. Every one of those people had a family and a story and a future and that is tragic and we mourn their loss. The MTA employees are acting as heroes now: they are heroes moving heroes. You noted that subway ridership is down by 95%, that has very severe revenue and financial consequences, but the people that we're moving are doctors and nurses and utility workers and those working in grocery stores and pharmacies and fellow transit workers, and it's a question of heroes moving heroes. Our financial situation frankly, is dire. We get about half our revenue from fare and toll revenue and on the subways, down 95% as you noted, Metro-North and Long Island Rail Road consistent with that, we also get a package of dedicated subsidies and taxes from the state and the city and those are experiencing precipitous declines as well. We were lucky enough to get \$3.8 billion of funding on the first round, but ridership for instance when we asked for the first round of federal funding was about down by 60% on subways, it's now down by 95. We hired McKinsey, the internationally known consulting firm, and they came up with a total loss of revenue and subsidies between seven and eight and a half billion dollars, and we have, with McKinsey's advice and consultation, set on \$3.9 billion is the number that we need to make our books balanced this year in 2020 due to pandemic financial damage.

Hunt: And I'm glad that you underscored the toll that this has taken on your workers, our hearts and thoughts are with all of them. And my understanding, were you also personally diagnosed with COVID? Do I have that right?

Foye: Yeah you do, I tested positive. This isn't about me, I was very lucky to have a mild case and I'm fortunate and blessed.

Hunt: What are you doing day in and day out to try and protect workers? Do you feel as though you've figured out a way to try and protect those who are going to work every day by wiping down the trains, or do you still feel as though workers are really out there in a situation where they're risking getting sick every day?

Foye: No our first priority Kasie has been the safety of our customers and our employees. Since March 1, when the first case was reported—first COVID-19 case was reported, we've distributed 1 million pairs of masks and 2.9 million pairs of gloves. We've also used about 75,000 gallons at disinfecting stations, subway cars and buses. We've eliminated cash on subways, buses, Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North to minimize contact between passengers and our employees. We've implemented rear-door boarding on our buses, and that again has a significant revenue impact, but that also minimizes contact between bus operators and the public. We put a Temperature Brigade in place, which has checked the temperatures at

this point of well over 20,000 employees, we expanded it. We also announced a partnership with Northwell Health, which is the largest and the leading health care system in New York, which has been leading the way on the coronavirus pandemic to get our employees tested. We had sufficient inventories of gloves and masks when the first case occurred on March 1, we continue to have sufficient inventories, just took another a million mask delivery—mask and glove delivery last week and we're going to continue to be solely laser focused on customer and employee health.

Hunt: Well we are certainly are wishing you all of the best in that fight. To both you personally, your family, and also those who work for you, and I know all the rest of us here in the rest of the country are, we will all very much be looking forward to seeing the subways back to someday where they were when all of this was more normal. MTA CEO, Pat Foye, thank you so much.

Foye: Thank you Kasie.