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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

ICYMI: MTA Chairman and CEO Pat Foye Appears on CBS This Morning

Key Excerpt:

Jeff Glor – “Why should people from Nebraska and Iowa fund the New York City subway system?”

MTA Chairman Pat Foye – “A company called Kawasaki builds lots of the subway cars in this barn. Kawasaki’s equipment and subway cars are built in Japan and in [Lincoln], Nebraska. We have production of products in Georgia, Iowa, Florida, Texas, obviously New York State. But the MTA, our capital plan is \$51 billion, it’s now on pause. It touches literally every state in the nation, including Nebraska.”

[View the Interview Here](#)

MTA Chairman and CEO Patrick J. Foye today appeared on CBS This Morning with Jeff Glor to discuss the worst financial crisis in MTA history and transit agencies’ response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. [View the interview here.](#)

A transcript of the interview appears below.

Jeff Glor: Since COVID-19 hit, U.S. public transportation has been on a rough ride. Nationwide budget shortfalls are expected to be as high as \$38 billion. And while the industry employs more than 400,000 people, many transit systems are now bracing for potential layoffs and drastic service cuts. We sat down with the head of the nation’s largest transit system to get a look at the enormous challenges ahead. New York’s Metropolitan Transportation Authority has been knocked down before: the Great Depression, 9/11, Superstorm Sandy. But its current leader says nothing matches the current pandemic by orders of magnitude.

Patrick J. Foye: In the Great Depression, subway ridership at the worst was down 13% after the stock market crash in 1933, was that stat. In the worst days of the pandemic in March and April, subway ridership down 95%. Right now, it’s 30% of pre-pandemic levels.

Glor: We met MTA Chairman Patrick Foye, inside the Authority’s vast Corona maintenance facility.

Glor: 500 cars in this?

Foye: 500 cars, 200 employees.

Glor: It’s a lot.

Foye: It’s a lot.

Glor: This place is not titled after the virus. That’s always been the name because it’s in Corona, Queens. Another bizarre part of 2020. But not as cruel Foye says as what’s happening to millions of people dependent on public transportation across the country. New York sits at the top of that food chain, and Foye says unless his organization receives \$12 billion in federal help over the next several years, massive cuts in jobs and service will take place. Why should people from Nebraska and Iowa fund the New York City subway system?

Foye: One answer to that question is you mentioned Nebraska so let’s start there. A company called Kawasaki builds lots of the subway cars in this barn. Kawasaki’s equipment and subway cars are built in Japan and in [Lincoln], Nebraska. We have production of products in Georgia, Iowa, Florida, Texas, obviously New York State. But the MTA, our capital plan is \$51 billion, it’s now on pause. It touches literally every state in the nation, including Nebraska.

Glor: In just the New York area, one study estimated 450,000 non-transit jobs are dependent on public transportation services. Foye, a first generation American born to Irish immigrants, who grew up just six subway stops from this building was appointed by fellow Queens native Democratic Governor Andrew Cuomo to lead the MTA in April 2019. Should people feel safe riding public transport right now?

Foye: And the answer is absolutely. The research around the world, in the United States and abroad is that public transit, as ridership has increased, has not been a vector of the virus.

Glor: To get more people on board, the MTA is pioneering new ways to keep people safe, both now and post-pandemic. That includes ultraviolet lights, electrostatic sprayers, antimicrobial biostats that create a protective layer on surfaces and new kinds of air filters. When this is all over with, how do you convince people to get on public transport again, who have not been on in months?

Foye: Well look, New York, after the 1918 flu pandemic, New York recovered, the United States experienced the Roaring '20s. I think there's going to be pent-up demand; offices will open, Broadway will come back, the New York Mets which are right across the road are going to have a terrific season, people are going to want to go see them.

Glor: Some people might disagree with that last projection.

Foye: I understand.

Glor: But we do wish you luck.

Foye: Absolutely.