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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

TRANSCRIPT: MTA Chairman and CEO Patrick J. Foye Appears on WCBS 880 with Michael Wallace to Discuss MTA's Ongoing Response to COVID-19

A transcript of the interview appears below.

Michael Wallace: The MTA is asking Congress for nearly 4 billion more dollars in emergency funding, its ridership has plummeted 95%. MTA Chairman Pat Foye is joining us on our Newline here on WCBS. Chairman Foye, how much federal aid have you received so far at the MTA and when do you anticipate you'll run out?

Pat Foye: Michael, thanks for having me. We have been allocated about \$3.8 billion. We expect to receive that next month, it is desperately needed. As you just noted, ridership is down dramatically on the subways 93%, Long Island Rail Road, Metro-North 96,97 and bridges and tunnels about two thirds. That's about half our revenue. We also expect that some dedicated taxes and subsidies that the state legislature has put in place when they begin to report will be down precipitously as well. So this really is an immediate revenue crisis for the MTA.

Wallace: So if I heard you, right, you haven't even gotten the first batch of federal funding yet?

Foye: No, it has been obviously approved by the Congress, signed into law by the President. It's been allocated by the FTA, which is part of US DOT. They did that rapidly and we expect the money in a couple of weeks.

Wallace: What happens if Washington doesn't come through with this second request for aid that you're asking for?

Foye: To be honest, it's really not an option. The MTA does not have the ability to tax nor are we looking for that. But the revenue declines have been so precipitous that a second round of federal funding of \$3.9 billion is literally essential to keeping the MTA going, and putting the MTA in a position to help with the restoration of New York City and the region's economy when the governor begins to lift New York PAUSE.

Wallace: Governor Cuomo has ordered all riders to wear masks beginning tomorrow. Is that something the MTA is going to be enforcing?

Foye: Yeah, so look, the NYPD and the MTA Police are on the platforms patrolling the subways. They and NYC Transit employees who see passengers without a face covering, we'll ask them to put it on starting tomorrow. Look, the rules for travel on the subways right now are don't travel unless you're an essential employee or a first responder. Second, if you're sick, stay home. Three - maintain social distance between other passengers and obviously with subway ridership down 93% that's easier than it would be in a traditional subway setting. And last, as the Governor has directed, put on a mask, a scarf, a bandana, some kind of face covering that covers your nose and mouth, really fundamental to helping stop the spread of the virus.

Wallace: Your ridership is down so much, you have to keep running for essential workers. I just picture you banging your head against the wall trying to find a better way to make this all work.

Foye: Well look, I think we're making it work and that's because of the heroic actions of transit workers and transportation workers, subways, buses, Long Island Rail Road, Metro-North, Bridges and Tunnels. They're really doing an extraordinary job under the most difficult, challenging circumstances. We're running 75% of the service that we used to, and you're right, our passengers now are first responders and essential employees and we're taking them to their jobs and home again. And the transit workers are in that category of essential and first responders, they're doing an extraordinary job.

Wallace: Well we again thank you for joining us, MTA Chairman Pat Foye. Always good to talk to you.

Foye: Thank you Michael. Take care.