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IMMEDIATE

TRANSCRIPT: MTA Chairman Foye Appears Live on PIX 11 Morning News

MTA Chairman and CEO Patrick J. Foye appeared on *PIX 11 Morning News* with Dan Mannarino to discuss ongoing service restoration and the clean-up from Tropical Storm Isaias.

A transcript of the interview appears below.

Foye: Dan, good morning, thanks for having me.

Mannarino: Of course, thank you. So, let's go step by step here, area by area. Let's begin with subway service temporarily suspended on all above-ground lines. Where does that stand this morning?

Foye: Complete restoration of service on the subways, thanks to Sarah Feinberg and her team, and the workforces of the MTA over 10,000 people, as you mentioned. Subway services have fully restored, Staten Island Railway running on 30-minute headways, no express service this morning. Buses are back to normal. Buses were least obstructed by the storm. MTA Bridges and Tunnels are full service, HOV lanes are in effect. Traffic moving well.

Mannarino: Let's go to the LIRR, then, if the MTA is going okay, subways are doing okay. LIRR service suspended on all branches - Long Beach and Far Rockaway have been restored as of this morning. How close is the rest of the service to being restored what's the update there?

Foye: We're getting there. Right now, the Port Washington, West Hempstead, Long Beach, Hempstead, Babylon, Far Rockaway -- and this is news -- the Ronkonkoma Branch are operating weekend service. We're working on the Oyster Bay, Greenport and Montauk Branches, but this is really terrific news. On Metro-North, on Long Island Rail Road there were probably a total of 300 trees that came down on tracks, plus utility poles, etc. We didn't have Metro-North or Long Island Rail Road service. Long Island Rail Road has really-- Long Island Rail Road forces and Metro-North forces have done an extraordinary job. On Metro-North, on the Hudson Line we're running regular weekend service. That's really good news. On the Harlem Line we're running from Grand Central to North White Plains. We expect to be able to extend that service northwards at Mount Kisco in the in the hours ahead. We'll be reporting to our customers and the media. And on the New Haven Line, which was the line that was most affected, we're running service from Grand Central to Stanford as of 8 a.m. and we'll be extending that further northward.

Mannarino: So, you are moving fast and furious. I think people who don't have power wish they could-- that you would be in charge of restoring their power because you're moving so quickly here. But, let me ask you a question here for the commuters on the LIRR, Metro-North -- there were reports they were stranded for hours on platforms once service was suspended. Why wasn't bus service made available to them?

Foye: Bus service was made available. Obviously, this was a fast-moving storm. We communicated with our customers. I want to make a point about all of our folks subways, buses, bridge and tunnels, Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North - a lot of them were out last night, working and they themselves had lost power at home. Trees had come down, or power had been disrupted. And obviously they were working during the storm in really challenging weather conditions, and I think-- I applaud their work, and all of our customers should as well.

Mannarino: I appreciate their hard work as well. You had described this damage as almost post-Sandy like, how much is the recovery and the cleanup-- Go ahead.

Foye: From a wind point of view, this is equivalent to Sandy. Actually the Long Island Rail Road folks think that it is greater from a wind point of view. Obviously, Superstorm Sandy had extraordinary amounts of rainfall and flooding. We didn't have that thankfully, this time around. This is going to be a costly endeavor and since you asked the question, Dan, we expect we'll seek federal reimbursement. And obviously, in addition to that we're seeking federal funding as a result of pandemic-caused financial losses, reductions in toll and fare revenue and reductions in taxes and subsidies that the legislature has put in place over a period of years. That amount is \$12 billion dollars, which would cover the rest of 2020, and our losses into 2021 caused by the pandemic.

Mannarino: And do you have dollar amount for the cost of cleanup or not yet because it's just still ongoing?

Foye: I don't. We'll get through the incident first, which is our first priority. Obviously this is going to be a costly undertaking, but I don't have an estimate at this point. Obviously, given the 300 trees that are down on Metro-North and Long Island Rail Road and the damage to the subways, especially the elevated lines, this will be a costly undertaking.

Mannarino: Yeah, I understand there are more than just trees, there were pieces of debris and fences that fell as well that had to be cleared out of the way, as well I want to ask you because every time there's a storm or a problem - there is a lesson learned here. So, was there a weak point in the system that you kind of learned about from this storm that maybe you can fix moving forward?

Foye: Well, you know, the weak point is, it is Mother Nature and trees. We all love our trees at home, in parks and on railroad right of ways. And for the most part, you know, trees stay where they're planted. In an extraordinary weather event like this, we know that trees will come down. As I said, from a wind point of view, according to the Long Island Rail Road folks, this was equivalent to or worse than Superstorm Sandy from a wind point of view, not true, not the case with respect to flooding.

Mannarino: All right, and lastly overall is, I was going to ask you one quick question here and that is about a fare increase. Is there a possibility of a fare increase moving forward? I ask you every time.

Foye: Dan, you do. You're consistent and tenacious on it. Look, here is the answer: we're seeking \$12 billion in federal funding to deal with pandemic-related financial losses. We are all in, in getting that funding. Senator Schumer and the New York congressional delegation support it. If we don't get that funding, everything has to be on the table. We do not want to institute a pandemic-related fare increase or toll increase, but everything has to be on the table. We hope to avoid those unnecessary choices, those unpleasant choices, by getting federal funding. But we'll keep you posted as we go forward.

Mannarino: I appreciate your honesty and your answers each time. I know I could ask a repetitive question, so I appreciate it.

Foye: No problem, Dan.

Mannarino: And thank you for all the workers that are out there clearing the tracks and getting everybody back up and running.

Foye: Amen to that.

Mannarino: All right, take care, stay safe.