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IMMEDIATE

TRANSCRIPT: MTA Chairman Foye Appears Live on WCBS 880

MTA Chairman and CEO Patrick J. Foye appeared on WCBS 880 with Michael Wallace to discuss the agency's request for business leaders to stagger work hours, and take other steps as New York City prepares to enter Phase 1 of reopening.

A transcript of the interview appears below.

Michael Wallace: When the city does begin Phase 1 of its reopening, an estimated 400,000 people will be heading back to work, so the MTA is getting ready for their return. MTA Chairman and CEO Pat Foye is on our Newsline, thanks for joining us again Pat, we appreciate it.

Pat Foye: Thanks for having me, Michael.

Wallace: So how is this going to work a week from Monday?

Foye: Well look, the first multi-step, multi-dimensional program, which begins with masks in mass, every one of our employees is wearing a mask, it's mandatory. Riding the Long Island Rail Road, subways, buses, it seems to me that compliance by our employees is 100%. Masks for all customers as well. The Governor has mandated that, that's incredibly important. The CDC agrees, so it's going to be mass masks. We're continuing to disinfect every subway car, every bus and every station nightly. We are pursuing some disinfecting innovations which we're piloting this very week, ultraviolet light. We're also working with providers of anti-microbials to make sure that we've got the highest and best technology in terms of continuing to disinfect subways, buses and stations. I sent a letter out to the business community recommending that all employers in the city of New York stagger their hours and stagger start and stop times. Not asking that be mandated, but recommending it and encouraging it. I'll note that a lot of large and mid-sized employers in the city of New York have already taken that step, and that's really important. Also to note that in 1918, the city and state required that in the pandemic of 1918-1919. With respect to social distance on subways as the Governor has said a number of times now, social distance is not going to be possible on the subways. Not today, not on June 8th when Phase 1 begins, but when significant volumes of passengers return. So passengers will be able to protect themselves and employees and their co-commuters by wearing masks, by if someone doesn't have a mask, go to a different car, walk down the platform, etc. We think those places will be rare, the NYPD and the MTA Police will be available as necessary, but we're seeing a high degree of compliance by our customers across the system.

Wallace: You mentioned the cleaning and disinfecting will continue. Will the nightly subway shutdowns continue for the cleaning?

Foye: The nightly shutdowns from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. will continue while the pandemic continues.

Wallace: Do you suspect now that hundreds of thousands of people are probably coming back to work, that a lot of them will need to hit the road before 5 a.m., and what would the accommodations be for them?

Foye: Well, look, we have an essential connector program in place, robust additional bus service and for-hire vehicles for those for whom the bus service doesn't work. We'll be monitoring that closely. I ought to note that we have the ability, as we did on the Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North when we announced the Long Island and Hudson Valley return as New York City returns. In Phase 1 of the Governor's New York un-PAUSE will be adding additional subway and bus service. That is possible in large part by the fact that over 9,000 MTA employees have returned from home quarantine. That's incredibly good news for each of those employees, but it's also a sign of their commitment and dedication to public service and it will make possible adding additional service on subways and buses.

Wallace: Alright, starting that road back to normal. MTA Chairman and CEO Pat Foye, always good to hear from you. Thanks.

Foye: Thanks Michael, take care.