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IMMEDIATE

TRANSCRIPT: NYC Transit Interim President Feinberg Appears on WCBS 880

NYC Transit Interim President Sarah Feinberg appeared on WCBS 880 with Wayne Cabot to discuss NYC Transit's plan for subways and buses to return to full service Monday as the city enters Phase 1 reopening.

A transcript of the interview appears below.

Wayne Cabot: We have on the Newline right now the New York City Transit Interim President, Sarah Feinberg. Sarah Feinberg, good morning, Monday is a big day, isn't it?

Sarah Feinberg: It is. Good morning, thanks for having me. It's a big day, it's day one of Phase 1. So, the first day of the first phase of the reopening of New York.

Cabot: And here we have a big, big question is will people feel comfortable taking public transportation? And obviously you've been thinking about that, studying that, and what's your conclusion?

Feinberg: I've been thinking about little else than that, so you're right. Look, I think people are going to feel comfortable. The first thing for people to remember is that Phase 1 is not a signal to all of New York to get on the subway system and to go shopping. Phase 1 is about those essential workers who have been out in the system and keeping us going this whole time, plus the Phase 1 workers--so the construction crews, the folks who are going to be doing the curbside retail. The folks who need to travel during Phase 1 are the folks who should be traveling during Phase 1 and we're excited to welcome them back to the system, and I do think people will feel comfortable. We've spent the last many weeks cleaning, disinfecting, making sure that the system is ready for folks to return, testing innovative solutions to try to keep people safe, making sure that we've got hand sanitizer, masks, signs, everything that we can put into stations to make sure that we're helping to make it as easy as possible for our riders.

Cabot: I'm seeing that San Francisco is going to make their trains longer to limit passengers to 30 per car. Is that even possible in New York City?

Feinberg: Yeah, San Francisco has a very different system. I think BART has 48 stations, we have ten times that number, so that gives you a sense of it. So look, that's not possible for us at this time. What we've been looking at, whatever else we can do to make sure people can get some space between themselves and the next passenger. But look, I want to be really clear on expectations: anyone who's spent time in our system, anyone who's used public transportation in New York City knows, it's the way to get around and millions and millions of people use our system every day. So, as the city reopens, as the economy reopens, people have to go to work and so the system is going to be busy, there's going to be a lot of folks there, there's going to be some crowding conditions just like there always are even, even in the height of the pandemic when we really only removing essential workers. People tend to travel around the same time every day and so you can end up with a lot of people in the car, people just need to make sure that they are being very vigilant about their mask usage and putting as much space between them and the next person as they can.

Cabot: So as we do seek to use public transportation in New York City, my thinking is, I'm sensing that you'd like to see more people take the bus?

Feinberg: Oh, look, I, you know, people make different decisions based on their own commute and what makes sense for them. We have a lot of bus service out there, buses are really good options for some people, subways are really good option for some people. Look, if you have a short commute or if you tend to take the subway or the bus for a short amount of time and then you take a longer trip, consider walking, consider getting a little bit of exercise and a little bit of fresh air before you enter the system, before you board your bus. I think people are going to think a little bit differently about their commute now and we want to try to make sure that we're making it as easy as possible for people to use the system in a way that it makes sense for them.

Cabot: And will we still be boarding the buses from the back on Monday?

Feinberg: Still be boarding the bus from the back on Monday, yep, that's exactly right.

Cabot: Sarah Feinberg, the New York City Transit Interim President. We wish you luck, enjoy your weekend as much as you can.

Feinberg: Thanks so much. Good to talk to you.

