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Press Release

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NYC Transit

IMMEDIATE

TRANSCRIPT: NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT PRESIDENT ANDY BYFORD ISSUES UPDATE ON R179 SUBWAY CARS

A transcript of the press conference is below:

ANDY BYFORD: Good afternoon. I'm Andy Byford, President of New York City Transit. I have a number of my colleagues here today and I'll ask them to introduce themselves individually.

PAT WARREN: My name is Pat Warren and I'm the Chief Safety Officer of the MTA.

MARIO PELOQUIN: Good afternoon, my name is Mario Peloquin, I'm the Chief Operating Officer of the MTA.

SALLY LIBRERA: I'm Sally Librera, Senior Vice President for Subways at New York City Transit.

ANDY BYFORD: We are here today to update you on the matter regarding Bombardier's R179 train cars, the 298 that we withdrew from service Tuesday evening.

The first point I'd like to make as always, is that safety is New York City Transit's absolute top priority. I want to be clear that we acted here out of an abundance of caution. We do not believe in these incidents that I will describe momentarily, that any passenger was ever in danger or harm's way, and we will always act to ensure that is the case.

Secondly, I would like to make very clear from the outset that the MTA finds Bombardier's latest and repeated failures with these cars to be wholly unacceptable. We intend to hold Bombardier fully accountable for this issue, and for the other issues we have experienced over the course of this contract.

Third, I also want to set expectations here for all of you on this matter – we are briefing you now because in addition to safety, we believe in transparency, because we want to share information, and provide an update for the public – but I should say straight up, at this time we don't have every answer to every question. We will go to questions and do our best to answer them, but some matters are still under investigation because work and inspection of cars is ongoing.

The reality is that one of the things complicating our work here is that Bombardier has not yet fully answered all of our questions. And while we are impatient to get to the bottom of all of these issues, we also know that it is critically important that we get accurate answers from Bombardier.

So, let me move on to describe to you the two incidents that brought this process to where we are today – the implications of which came to our attention by Bombardier in the normal course of them monitoring the indications and sensors that are present on the R179 cars.

Both incidents presented themselves initially as routine operational incidents – incidents that deserve a closer look, but initially appeared to be frankly nothing out of the ordinary.

The first incident occurred on December 24, in which a train operating southbound on the C line south of High Street was reported to have door trouble. The train immediately lost propulsion, as it is designed to do if you lose door indication, and the operator brought the train to a safe stop in accordance with their training. The incident came across as a standard indication. The issue was resolved by the crew, by isolating and shutting down the door and removing the train from service.

The Rail Control Center, Maintenance of Way and Car Equipment teams were notified of the incident as is standard procedure via our internal Transit communication system.

On January 2, the MTA was notified for the first time by Bombardier that their internal reviews had found that the locking mechanism on the door from this first incident, the incident on December 24, had found that the locking mechanism on that door was not secure and the door had in fact become a few inches ajar en route.

Bombardier informed the MTA this was a "one off" incident that had already been addressed and replaced. Despite assurances that this was a "one off," the MTA immediately asked for a more wholesome, thorough briefing and explanation.

The second incident occurred on January 3 southbound on the C line. This incident occurred at Jay Street-MetroTech Station when door trouble was again reported. In accordance with standard protocol, the train crew locked one door panel, the train continued to operate and the train was later removed from service and sent to the repair shop.

Again, the Rail Control Center, Maintenance of Way and Car Equipment teams was notified of the incident. And as a routine matter, Bombardier then looked more deeply into the two incidents that had occurred.

On Tuesday, January 7, we were notified by Bombardier for the first time of the potential for these two incidents to be more representative of a more systemic problem.

Specifically, Bombardier informed us that while trying to get to the bottom of the incidents on December 24 and January 3, which I just described to you, they had discovered that they might have a broader issue with the doors on the cars. Upon learning this we took immediate careful, but immediate, action to ground the fleet. And as I said earlier, that action was consistent our overriding priority and philosophy, namely that our customers' safety is the number one priority and always will be.

Overnight on the 7th of January, our team proceeded to pull all of the R179 fleet, all 298 cars, out of service and replaced them with spare cars, specifically R46s on the A, R32s on the C, and R143s, R160s, and R42s on the J. That's for a total of 298 cars, representing around 5 percent of our total fleet. So I want to commend first up the team, our operations team, our subways team, our car equipment teams, our Rail Control teams, our wonderful, professional unionized operators who rose to the challenge and who in very short order spent the whole night removing the 179s from service and replacing them with the older trains. It was a fantastic effort, a herculean effort. The team was focused on ensuring that the morning rush of the next morning was impacted as little as possible, and they executed it beautifully.

Because of that team's great work, under Sally's leadership, there were very few issues with yesterday morning's rush, and no impact to yesterday evening or this morning's rush. In fact, this morning we ran full service with no shortages on any of the affected lines.

So let's now turn to what has happened once the cars were pulled out. First up, inspections. Every R-179 car must be inspected and deemed to be working properly and safely and to our complete satisfaction.

There is a team of inspectors who are undertaking this task:

- Bombardier, the manufacturer of the cars;
- A company called Kangni, which is a subcontractor to Bombardier;
- LTK, who is an expert firm we have hired as third party. We are not just taking Bombardier's assurances. We're having an independent third party give us assurance the fix is the right one and has been properly applied.
- And of course, our own personnel, our own team here at New York City Transit.

Bombardier originally informed us that they believed the complete full inspections of every 179 car, all 298 of them, could be completed within a matter of days.

At this point, LTK, Bombardier and Kangni have been inspecting the cars since Tuesday evening and they have performed initial inspections on 3 trains for a total of 24 cars. So 3x8, 24 cars. So clearly this is taking longer, much longer in fact than Bombardier initially expected and to be frank, that NYC Transit would like.

We have directed Bombardier to dedicate all possible resources to these inspections and we still want to see more from them. But, and this is a key point, we will not rush any cars back into service until we are wholly satisfied that it is safe to do so. So it will take as long as it safely takes because we want to ensure this process is completed as quickly and safely as possible.

But we are also looking at the systemic and procedural issues revealed in this process and Bombardier has agreed on our direction, Sally and mine, to a software upgrade to provide an additional level of assurance to the door condition on all R-179s. So that's additional work, and that explains why the process is taking longer than we initially thought it would.

Now since the grounding of fleet, New York City Transit has taken a number of additional actions:

Firstly, as I mentioned, we brought on the expert independent engineering team LTK to conduct their own independent, third-party review of inspections of the cars and assist in determining when the cars may safely return to service. That decision will fall to me and Sally and our team, but we want independent advice to ensure that we have exercised due diligence.

Secondly, we are evaluating all legal options against Bombardier, including the best way to recover costs incurred as a

result of this matter.

And thirdly, NYCT is working with our third-party engineering consultant LTK and Bombardier to identify any necessary changes to ongoing inspection protocols.

As I said at the top, this is all preliminary information at this time and our internal investigation continues.

But in the meantime, we are pleased to report that all our lines are operating at normal service levels. And again, the PM peak yesterday and AM peak this morning were at full service and we're expecting the same for the PM rush this evening. And again, a big shout out to our colleagues in frontline positions, the unionized workforce for the herculean work that they've done to ensure that we can offer customers full service.

We have said many times that safety is our top priority, and that is the principle that has guided throughout this entire process.

We will continue to keep you updated on this situation as it unfolds. And with that, we'll take your questions.