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IMMEDIATE

TRANSCRIPT: MTA Chairman and CEO Patrick J. Foye Appears on 1010 WINS with Susan Richard to Discuss MTA's Ongoing Response to COVID-19

Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Chairman and CEO Patrick J. Foye appeared live today by phone on 1010 WINS with Susan Richard to discuss the MTA's ongoing response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

A transcript of the interview appears below.

Susan Richard: Also, up and running, the subways and the buses. And we are joined live on 1010 WINS by MTA Chairman and CEO Pat Foye to talk about all of this. Thank you for being with us.

Patrick J. Foye: Morning Susan.

Susan Richard: So firstly, we're at the point where like we're saying only essential workers are allowed to go to work. So, let's talk about mass transit running. Any plans to change that or reduce or change service?

Foye: Well this morning we're running a normal weekday service, subways, buses, Metro-North, and Long Island Rail Road. We're assessing obviously ridership and actions that may be taken as if and when we make a change Susan, we'll tell our customers, we'll tell the public and of course the media.

Susan Richard: So, is that something you're anticipating?

Foye: Look we are, we're constantly planning, and evaluating the level of service. We are performing an extraordinarily important service right now. Which is taking first responders, doctors, nurses, utility workers, firefighters, police officers, transit workers, people working in grocery stores and pharmacies, and lots of other. The people who move and care and treat for New York. Including transit workers. That's an awesome responsibility, we take it seriously. We're looking at, we're looking at the level of service and we can continue to do that. As I said as if and when we have a change, we will report it to our customers, the public and the media.

Susan Richard: So, with ridership down are you still doing the same stepped up level of disinfecting?

Foye: We have, yes, the short answer is yes. We have increased substantially the frequency and intensity of disinfecting. That's the case with respect to subway cars, Long Island Rail and Metro-North cars, stations, buses, paratransit vehicles etc. That intensive effort which on an annual basis will cost the MTA about \$300 million dollars has been maintained. We will maintain that as long as the situation continues.

Susan Richard: So, MTA workers are considered essential workers. What precautions are being taken within the workforce to prevent folks from getting sick on the job?

Foye: So, one, we are disinfecting workplace stations. Two, we announced an initiative that's gone into effect this morning on our local bus fleet which is about forty-two hundred buses of the fifty-six hundred buses in the fleet. We've implemented rear door boarding, which will minimize contact between passengers and bus operators and therefore minimize the risk to

bus operators. Passengers will be asked to enter through the rear. The area around the bus driver will be cordoned off and we think that will significantly address the risk to bus operators. That was an agreement that was negotiated with the leadership of the TWU and the ATU, the two unions that represent our bus drivers. We're also working with the unions and with Governor Cuomo's office and Dr. Zucker the State Department of Health to take additional steps to protect our transit workers who are indeed first responders and critical parts of the process as we go forward in the days and weeks and months ahead of the pandemic.

Susan Richard: Do you have any numbers on how many MTA workers are sick or are in self-quarantine?

Foye: Thirty MTA workers have tested positive. They are being treated by physicians, or are under home quarantine depending on the advice of medical doctors.

Susan Richard: So, everybody's talking about how this is affecting everybody economically. Of course, the MTA as well. I know that you're looking for a multimillion dollar, billion-dollar bailout. Tell us a little bit about that. Any movement on that?

Foye: We've been working with the congressional delegation. We think the federal government given the circumstances that, look the MTA is the circulatory system of the New York City and regional economy. That economy can't prosper and those jobs that have been destroyed will be delayed if the MTA system doesn't work as it should. We think that we made a four billion dollar ask on an urgent basis because of the precipitous decline in ridership, and the resulting precipitous decline in farebox revenue. And we believe that the federal government has the fundamental moral and legal responsibility to respond to the request. The four billion dollars will make the MTA whole and allow us to continue to operate service at a critical time, and continuing in the period after the pandemic ends. It's really a matter of fundamental fairness and it's an urgent matter. Time is of the essence in terms of addressing the four-billion-dollar request that we seen. In terms of the local congressional delegation there is bipartisan support for it. As there was after 9/11 and there was after Superstorm Sandy, and we need the federal government in Washington to step up and do the right thing.

Susan Richard: Alright, MTA Chairman and CEO Pat Foye thanks so much for your time.

Foye: Thank you Susan.

Susan Richard: Stay well.

Susan Richard: Alright MTA Chairman Pat Foye live on 1010 WINS.