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Press Release

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[Metro-North](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA Metro-North Railroad to Receive Up to 94 Additional M8 Cars for the New Haven Line

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Board today approved an order for at least 60, and up to a total of 94 additional new M8 rail cars that provide train service on Metro-North Railroad's New Haven Line. The cars, the first of which are expected to enter service in three years, will allow the railroad to lengthen rush hour trains, retire its last 36 older M2 cars, increase safety, and have flexibility to increase train service in the years ahead to meet ridership increases. The cars will supplement the 405 M8 cars already in use on the New Haven Line and New Canaan Branch.

The order approved today consists of a base order of 60 cars and an option for an additional 34 cars. The base order is expected to include the retrofit of 10 existing M8 cars into café cars.

The M8 cars have improved customer satisfaction levels and have achieved very high mechanical reliability, far in excess of expectations. Additionally, the new M8 are designed to be enabled with Positive Train Control from the time they enter service. Through September, the cars are averaging 460,277 miles between mechanical breakdowns, the best rate for New Haven Line cars in decades and 53% above the railroad's goal for the cars.

"The approval of these additional railcars will improve service for commuters throughout the region on the nation's busiest commuter rail line," said Governor Dannel P. Malloy. "For decades, we as a state and nation have failed to make investments in transportation a top priority – and we have witnessed the results with failing roadways and aging public transportation systems. But today we are taking a new approach. Through actions like today's, we are showing the public that investments in infrastructure must be made to continue the level of service the public, and our economy, have come to depend on. If we want to remain competitive, giving our residents and businesses the best chance to prosper, we must continue to make desperately needed investments across our entire transportation infrastructure."

The M8 cars are the most technologically sophisticated in Metro-North's fleet. They have third rail shoes that can receive 700- to 750-volt direct current to power the trains between Pelham and Grand Central Terminal, and the capability to run under two types of alternating current from overhead wire, known as catenary. The New Haven Line and its New Canaan Branch use 60 cycle, 12.5 kilovolt power. The cars can also operate at the higher, 60 cycle, 25 kilovolt power, which is used on the Shore Line East route east of New Haven.

Three hundred eighty of the current cars are in permanently coupled pairs; each pair's "A" car has 110 seats and each "B" car has 101 seats plus a handicapped-accessible, airline-style vacuum toilet and space for wheelchair seating or bicycles to be stored on wall-mounted hooks.

Each row of seats is outfitted with electrical outlets, grab bars, coat hooks and overhead luggage racks. The color scheme is a vibrant red, the historical color of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad, a predecessor to Metro-North. Outside, customers see prominent electronic destination signs and hear public address announcements from external speakers. Single leaf doors provide high reliability and less susceptibility to snow intrusion.

The existing M8 cars, like the rest of Metro-North's fleet, are being upgraded to enable them to operate with enhanced Positive Train Control, a safety system designed to reduce the risk of human error contributing to derailments or collisions caused when a train travels too fast into a curve, onto tracks already occupied by another train, or through a misaligned switch. The existing cars are also being retrofitted to include security cameras in engineers' cabs and in the customer areas of the trains. The new M8 cars will not need to be retrofitted, they will come enabled with cameras and Positive Train Control equipment when they are delivered to the railroad.

The M8 coach cars for use on the New Haven Line are funded 65% by the State of Connecticut and 35% by the MTA Capital Program. M8 café cars are funded entirely by the State of Connecticut.

Work to build the M8 cars was initiated in August 2006, when the MTA and Connecticut placed an initial base order for 300 cars with Kawasaki Rail Car, Inc. The first eight M8 cars entered service on March 1, 2011.

Since the initial order for the cars, New Haven Line ridership growth has been at or above the high end of expectations, and the railroad has responded with significant service increases every year since 2012. The M8 car fleet size has grown to meet increasing ridership and service levels. The initial contract contained two options for additional cars. The first option, for 42 cars, and the second, for 38, were both exercised early in 2011. Then in July of that year, the MTA and Connecticut Department of Transportation agreed to amend their contract with Kawasaki to order an additional 25 M8 cars configured not as permanently coupled pairs, but as unpowered single cars, bringing the railroad to today's total of 405 cars. Today's announcement reflects a second amendment to the contract, and will bring the total number of M8 cars in existence to 465, or up to 499 if the option is exercised.

The M8 cars are manufactured in Lincoln, Nebraska; final testing takes place in New York and Connecticut.

