

Statement by Assemblywoman Ann-Margaret Carrozza on Proposed MTA Fare Hikes and Service Cuts

February 18, 2003

Ladies and gentlemen of the board:

The strength of New York City has been tested considerably in the wake of the despicable September 11th terrorist attacks. From the physical to the economic devastation, this city has endured a lot the last year-and-a-half, and is making strides toward salvaging what it lost. However, your proposed fare hikes and service cuts will hinder any progress that New York City is making.

The bottom line is that many of New York's working families depend on public transportation to get to their jobs and cannot afford what amounts to a \$1.5 billion tax increase. Your proposal would also slash weekend bus and subway service by 10 percent; reduce weekday service by 2 percent; and reduce cleaning services by 15 percent — forcing commuters to pay more for less and forcing people out of work. In an already challenging economic climate, these are extra burdens that New Yorkers cannot handle right now.

Making things harder for our working families is not the way to solve the state's budgetary problems. New Yorkers are already confronted with the possibility of devastating cuts to education and health care totaling over \$3 billion, and a proposed CUNY/SUNY tuition increase of \$1,200. Now they are being asked to pay more for transportation — a final straw that will break the budgets of many families already struggling to make ends meet.

It's not a secret that we all have tough decisions to make this year. But we still owe it to New Yorkers to make the right decisions. Raising fares and cutting services is not a tough decision, *it's the wrong decision*. I ask that you reconsider your proposal and make the right decision for our working families.

Thank you for your time.

Ann-Margaret Carrozza