



TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION

OF GREATER NEW YORK • AFL-CIO • LOCAL 100

John Samuelson
President

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Brothers & Sisters,

I am sure that you have all been following the building drama at the Long Island Railroad, as I have, with great interest. And so you should. The outcome of the LIRR unions' dispute will have a direct impact on our own contract with the MTA. It is everyone's hope that the LIRR Union Coalition will be able to settle a fair contract with the MTA, but that is looking more and more doubtful.

Earlier this week the MTA told the National Mediation Board, which oversees collective bargaining on the nation's freight and commuter railroads, that it is rejecting the settlement proposed by a panel of neutral arbitrators appointed by President Obama to resolve the dispute. The unions agreed to accept the panel's recommendations but the MTA, in typical fashion, refused. In other words, it is the MTA that has pushed the dispute another big step toward a strike.

The press has reported that any strike action would be in the summer or fall of 2014. However, there are now strong indicators that LIRR Union Coalition maybe released by the federal government to commence strike action against the MTA as early as this coming spring. Once again, the MTA is provoking this action by not requesting a second panel of neutral arbitrators (which would invoke another cooling off period.) The only reason for not making such a request (and avoid the potential of a crippling regional strike) is that the MTA does not want the "bad" news delivered a second time: they can pay for raises for the LIRR employees and by extension, Local 100 members as well.

TWU Local 100 will support any strike action taken by the LIRR unions against the MTA in every way possible. This will not only include the establishment and manning of picket lines, but every other lawful means at our disposal. If and when strike action at the LIRR occurs, we must view supporting those workers as the defense of our own livelihoods: because that is exactly what it is.

Immediately, I will be establishing a committee of staff and officers to develop a plan of action to maximize TWU Local 100's support for the LIRR Union Coalition in gaining a fair contract from the MTA, including supporting them in a strike. Under the Taylor Law, there is nothing the MTA can do to us for organizing actions to help the LIRR unions and that is precisely what I intend to do.

In some way or another, you will all be called upon to participate. I know I can expect your best efforts at protecting our families and our livelihoods by supporting our fellow MTA workers at the LIRR.

In solidarity,

John Samuelson
President, TWU Local 100