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September 9, 2025

The Honorable Kathy Hochul  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul:

We write regarding the Long Island Railroad/MTA and the recent release of the unions from mediation by the National Mediation Board (NMB). As you are aware, the parties are currently observing the mandatory cooling-off period, set to expire on September 18, 2025.

Unfortunately, the LIRR/MTA continues to misrepresent the status of negotiations in the press. It's clear that they have no interest in dealing in facts or bargaining in good faith. These tactics have defined this entire round of bargaining. However, what was truly surprising were recent remarks attributed to a spokesperson from your office, who suggested our release from mediation was the result of the Trump Administration. That assertion is simply false. The National Mediation Board carefully considered our dispute and rightfully determined that the parties were at impasse.

Equally troubling, your spokesperson called on the unions to "bargain in good faith." Governor Hochul, let us be clear: every union involved has already exhausted every reasonable effort to secure a fair contract with the LIRR/MTA. Our efforts have been met only with the following unacceptable responses:

1. The insistence that we must accept the same agreement reached with two other unions; or
2. A demand that basic wage increases be funded by concessions elsewhere in our contracts.

Neither approach constitutes genuine bargaining. Neither will result in a voluntary agreement. The unions have made significant reductions in our proposals in an effort to reach an agreement. The reality is our proposal simply seeks to keep pace with the rising cost of living in New York, nothing more. Moreover, the difference between the parties' proposals are less than one (1) percent per year over the life of the agreement.

As you know, under the Railway Labor Act, the Governor may request the President establish a Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) when disputes such as this arise. To date, the LIRR/MTA has indicated that your office does not intend to make such a request because you prefer a strike now versus risk the potential of a strike closer to your reelection. The LIRR/MTA continues to push a false narrative that a so-called “pattern” exists and that certain “me too” provisions could be triggered. This is categorically untrue.

Long Islanders deserve the truth, not political expediency. They also deserve reliable, uninterrupted rail service that allows them to get to work, school, medical appointments, and other daily commitments without fear of disruption. Our unions have been steadfast in working toward an agreement precisely because we understand how essential the LIRR is to the region’s economy and quality of life. It is the MTA/LIRR’s refusal to bargain in good faith that jeopardizes this stability.

We call on you to direct the LIRR/MTA to return to the bargaining table empowered to negotiate a truly fair agreement that reflects the unique needs of our members.

If you are unwilling to commit to this, your constituency deserves - at minimum - that you direct LIRR/MTA to meet with us as soon as possible to determine a definite and orderly shutdown of operations.

Sincerely,

Long Island Rail Road Bargaining Coalition

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Gilman J. Lang, General Chairman  
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen  
(BLET - IBT)

Jeff Klein, General Chairman  
International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers (IBEW)

Michael Sullivan, General Chairman  
Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS)

Nick Peluso, National Vice President  
Transportation Communications Union  
(TCU/IAM)

Shaun O’Connor, General Chairman  
International Association of Machinists  
& Aerospace Workers (IAM)