

Anthony R. Coscia
Chairman of the Board
National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak)
1 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001

October 4, 2018

Dear Chairman Coscia:

We write with great concern that actions by Amtrak are holding up the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA) ability to move forward with Penn Station Access—the critical Metro-North rail connection tying four new East Bronx stations to both Penn Station in Manhattan and to job centers to the north in Westchester and Stamford, CT.

The East Bronx is in desperate need of more transit options. The wildly popular Penn Access project introduces convenient, direct rail service to communities chronically underserved by mass transit. For the first time, commuters from the East Bronx will benefit from a one-seat ride directly into Penn Station and Manhattan's West Side, as well as to Westchester and Connecticut. In addition, those who live in Westchester and Connecticut will have access to new and growing job centers in The Bronx.

For the past few decades, we have watched our borough undergo a vibrant transformation. Between 2010 and 2017 the population of The Bronx grew by over six percent, making it the fastest growing county in the state. Economic development and job creation are on the rise, yet there are still major transit deserts in the East Bronx that undermine our future. When Bronx residents cannot readily reach jobs in Manhattan or in Stamford, CT, we deny them economic opportunity.

Universal support exists for this critical project among Bronx communities and elected leadership. Despite this reality, Amtrak stands in the way by refusing to negotiate a reasonable MOU with the MTA that would allow work to commence. MTA Capital Construction was prepared to bring the contract for preliminary design to its Board in May but did not take this crucial step because they have been unable to come to an agreement with Amtrak. It is our understanding the MOU is an agreement that provides a commitment to the project, including reasonable access to Amtrak-owned track so MTA can plan and execute necessary work toward building new track for Penn Station Access.

It is long overdue for Amtrak to get on board.

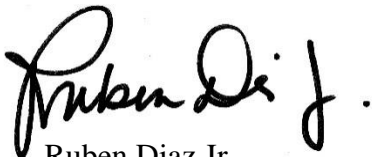
In addition to the needs of those who call Bronx home, the city and region stand to benefit from this project. During Superstorm Sandy, Metro-North service was compromised between Manhattan and the northern suburbs, causing harm to both the local and national economy. Penn Station Access will provide for resiliency and redundancy within the system. And the project makes a lot of sense for taxpayers at large, who get a new major project by using Amtrak's existing underutilized rail line through The Bronx, rather than trying to build a new line from scratch. That will speed construction and hold down costs – assuming everyone works together.

It is worth noting that Amtrak has much to gain from this project, including track improvements and operational flexibility, bridge improvements, and power, signal and communications upgrades. The Pelham Bay Bridge also needs to be replaced by Amtrak and MTA is willing to share in the incremental costs to optimize the Co-op City Station location and connection to the bridge replacement. However, Amtrak cannot use the MTA as a piggybank to help you out of your fiscal challenges.

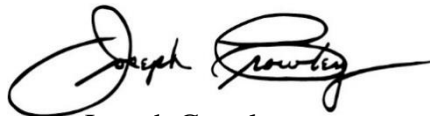
Penn Station Access is ultimately about making the region's transportation more accessible to those who need it most and creating resiliency for the whole transit network in the northeast – that's good for Amtrak and it's good for commuters across the tri-state region. We urge Amtrak to come to an agreement on the MOU so this important work is not further delayed.

Our offices stand ready to assist in any way possible to ensure MTA and Amtrak are able to quickly reach a mutually beneficial agreement. We look forward to helping to bring a resolution to this critical issue.

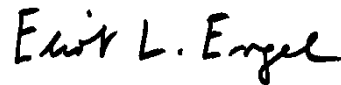
Sincerely,



Ruben Diaz Jr.
Bronx Borough President



Joseph Crowley
Congress Member



Eliot L. Engel
Congress Member



Adriano Espaillat
Congress Member



José E. Serrano
Congress Member



Diana Ayala
NYC Council Member



Fernando Cabrera
NYC Council Member



Andrew Cohen
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Rev. Ruben Diaz
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