May 4, 2010

Mr. David J. Rosen
Legislative Budget and Finance Officer
State House Annex
PO Box 068
Trenton, NJ 08625-0068

Dear Mr. Rosen:

In response to the letter dated April 27, 2010 from Senate Budget and Appropriations Chairman Sarlo, below are our responses to questions raised by Committee members during our hearing on April 22, 2010.

Senator Sarlo:

Q: Please provide the committee the number of bus customers affected by New Jersey Transit's planned reduction in bus service.

A: From among the more than half million daily bus passengers served by NJ TRANSIT, approximately 700 bus riders will be affected by the elimination of bus routes beginning in May. Of these customers, about 600 are served by contracted private carrier routes that will be eliminated due to unsustainably low ridership. The remaining 100 customers use the NJ TRANSIT operated #134, which is also being eliminated due to low use. However, #134 riders will have access to alternative bus service provided by a private carrier in the area.

Senator Bucco:

Q: Please provide the committee with an update on the status of the Lackawanna Cutoff project, and specifically, what help New Jersey Transit is receiving from the State of Pennsylvania on this project.

A: Subsequent to the budget hearing, Executive Director Weinstein met with PennDOT Secretary Biehler to discuss funding from Pennsylvania, which is necessary to further advance the Lackawanna Cutoff project.

To date, NJ TRANSIT has received a “Record of Decision” from FTA under the federal "New Starts" program for construction and operation of commuter rail service between Scranton and Hoboken/New York Penn Station. The Record of Decision identifies two distinct phases: Phase I is from Port Morris, NJ to Andover, NJ and Phase II is from Andover to Scranton, PA.
Senator Bucco (continued):

Phase I is a 7.3 miles segment that is entirely in NJ and estimated to cost $36 million. Funding sources for Phase I include $18 million from federal "New Starts" funds and $18 million from the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF). The first of several construction contracts for Phase I was awarded in January 2010. The scope of work includes tree clearing, grading and track bed preparation. However, this contract is currently on hold until November due to restrictions on disturbing wildlife (NJDEP requirement). NJ TRANSIT projects that the annual operating costs for this Phase will be between $1.5 million to $2.0 million, when service begins.

Phase II design has not yet commenced, nor is there any NJ TRANSIT plan to initiate design. The total length of this segment is 67 miles with an estimated cost of over $500 million.

The Pennsylvania congressional delegation provided assistance to Congressman Frelinghuysen in securing the current $18 million in federal funds for Phase I and held several discussions with the FTA to secure a Record of Decision.

Senator Doherty:

Q: Please provide the committee the number of New Jersey Transit bus passengers that travel into New York on a daily basis.

A: During the third quarter of fiscal year 2010 (January-March), NJ TRANSIT ridership to the Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City totaled 76,065 weekday passengers.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to these questions. If you have any further questions or need any additional information, please contact John Leon, Senior Director - Government & Community Relations, at 973-491-8098, or jleon@njtransit.com. Thank you.

Sincerely,

James Weinstein
Jim Weinstein
Executive Director

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