



**NYC-EJA Testimony to the
New York City
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Fare Hike Hearing**

December 10th, 2018

Good Afternoon. My name is Renae Reynolds, and I am here to testify on behalf of the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA). Founded in 1991, NYC-EJA is a non-profit citywide membership network linking grassroots organizations from low-income neighborhoods and communities of color in their struggle for environmental justice. NYC-EJA empowers its member organizations to advocate for improved environmental conditions and against inequitable environmental burdens.

Through our efforts, member organizations coalesce around specific common issues that threaten the ability of low-income communities and communities of color to thrive, and coordinate campaigns designed to affect City and State policies – including transportation policies that directly affect these communities. Our members reflect the 75% of low-income New Yorker's of color, who rely on MTA buses and 66%, who rely on subway service to get around the city. As such, access, reliability and affordability of public transportation are paramount in our organizations advocacy.

I am here today, to express our deep disapproval of MTA's proposed fare hike on New Yorkers who are already strapped for cash. Consistent fare hikes have yet to yield the improvements in service that commuters need, so we are here to ask, what is different this time around? The MTA's financial issues have much more to do with their management of the funds it already receives; 16 billion dollars annually through

fares, tolls, taxes and other revenue streams, which then go toward their labor costs, purchasing equipment and absorbent debt.

Since 2012, New Yorkers have paid three fare hikes, and yet service has grown more and more abhorrent, leaving commuters stranded on platforms, losing precious time and money, adding to their mounting stress and impacting their financial stability. Slower and unreliable public transportation leads to longer commutes, less room for error, lateness to work, job opportunities, critical appointments and less family time.

It is absurd to think that raising the fare on these New Yorkers is a viable solution to the MTA's problems. Nor is spewing negative rhetoric about so called "fare beaters".

The MTA should absolutely implement solutions to fix their beleaguered transit system, but it should not and cannot be on the backs of low-income New Yorkers.

Passing Congestion Pricing would provide an additional \$1.7 billion dollars annually towards funding the Fast Forward plan and upgrade the subways signal system. It is the most progressive and equitable way to generate new funds for the MTA and we need to see leadership from our State Government to enact congestion pricing rather than allowing MTA to dip into the pockets of subway and bus riders yet again.

Hiking fares on commuters has proven to be an ineffective solution and it is becoming increasingly intolerable for transit riders who are asking and rightfully so, "why in the world should we be asked to pay more for less?"