



NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign

A project of the New York Public Interest Research Group

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Statement of NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign on Appointment of Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg to MTA Board of Directors

Friday, June 20, 2014, 4 p.m.

The Straphangers Campaign congratulates NYC Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg on her appointment to the MTA Board of Directors as a voting member.

“Polly will make a great MTA board member and we look forward to working with her,” said Gene Russianoff, lawyer for the Straphangers Campaign, a transit riders group.

The Campaign strongly suggested that de Blasio Administration give its four City representatives to MTA Board a specific agenda with clear goals to accomplish. Over the years, the Campaign said, many city reps to the MTA Board have been at sea without specific goals, not to mention out numbered on the 21-member Board.

Possible goals could include:

- improving local bus service around the city, such as running more buses and adapting Select Bus Service features to the local bus system. Improvements could include three-door, low-floor buses; off board fare collection; short stretches of exclusive bus lane for “bottleneck relief” and signal preemption where warranted.
- making NYC Transit more of a numbers driven operation. (Right now the agency makes little effective use of its own performance metrics.)
- promoting progressive fare policies, such as:
 - keeping fares affordable. (The fare is scheduled to go up on March 2015. There have been four fare increases in the last six years. Under public pressure from this drumbeat of increases, the MTA has promised to hold fare hikes at 4% in 2015. The agency had planned a 8.4% hike, but has seemingly retreated to the lower 4% increase. Close monitoring is called for here.)
- encouraging enrollment in the federal pre-tax benefit that would lower fares hundreds of dollars for tens of thousands of New Yorkers (Intro 295-2014)
- encourage affordable housing by improving public transportation. If the City is going to make new dense communities of affordable housing, make them more attractive by including transit improvements in the plan, such as more frequent service.