



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 16, 2010

Mr. Jay Walder  
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
347 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10017-3739

Dear Mr. Walder:

We understand the Metropolitan Transportation Authority intends to lay-off 25 Long Island Rail Road Assistant Signalmen this September due to budgetary reasons. It is also our understanding that MTA may recall these employees in the Spring. As a matter of public safety, we ask that the MTA does not lay off or furlough these essential LIRR Signalmen.

We have been informed by the organization that represents these employees, the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen, that there are serious and dangerous infrastructure issues within the LIRR signal system. If it is your intention to lay off or furlough these positions, how will a state of good repair for the riding public be achieved? We feel that terminating these signalmen now is shortsighted, and we are especially concerned about the impact of laying off these dedicated signalmen will have on LIRR rail-safety.

Recently, there was an "Activation Failure or Clear Failure" incident at Bayport Avenue grade crossing on the Montauk Branch of the LIRR in the Town of Bayport. This failure was dangerous to the public, commuters and employees. That particular grade crossing failure was due to a relay that had been in service since 1957. This is but one example of many signal problems on the LIRR, and is indicative of overall systemic deterioration.

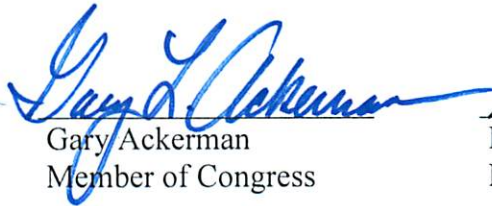
Safety of the public and commuters is everybody's first priority, but there are hundreds of miles of old faulty cables, antiquated relays, seriously distressed grade crossing mechanisms, and dilapidated track switch mechanisms. While Capital Projects have made significant improvements, there is still much work to do. Thankfully, the currently available signal employees are on hand to address these issues that if they were not on the job, could result in tragedy on the rails that would be devastating to our citizens and their communities. Laying off signal employees at such a critical time could represent a significant step backwards in ensuring the safety of the LIRR.

These 25 LIRR Signalmen represent a significant investment by taxpayers--it can take upwards of four years to train a qualified Signalmen. These employees are also responsible for the most safety-sensitive positions in the industry. It is vital that the MTA consider the investment in these Signalmen and their role in LIRR safety and not lay them off. Thank for your consideration.

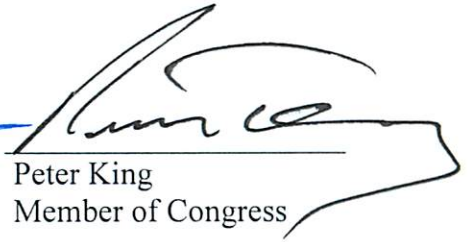
Sincerely,



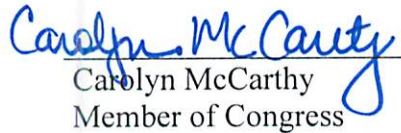
Steve Israel  
Member of Congress



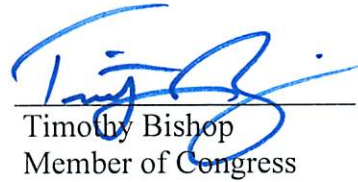
Gary Ackerman  
Member of Congress



Peter King  
Member of Congress



Carolyn McCarthy  
Member of Congress



Timothy Bishop  
Member of Congress