

**Testimony of James Dermody**  
**President**  
**Long Island Rail Road**

Thank you, Chairman Quinn, for the opportunity to speak before the Subcommittee. The MTA Long Island Rail Road is the busiest commuter railroad in North America, carrying an average of 274,000 customers each weekday on 730 daily trains. The Long Island Rail Road is a subsidiary of New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority and recently marked its 170<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Throughout its history, the LIRR has been an essential component of the region's transportation infrastructure, leading to the development of the Long Island communities it serves and providing a gateway to the economic growth of the region.

The LIRR system is comprised of over 700 miles of track on 11 different branches, from Montauk on the eastern end of Long Island to Penn Station in midtown Manhattan, approximately 120 miles away. The LIRR serves 124 stations in Nassau, Suffolk, Queens, Brooklyn and Manhattan, providing service for some 81 million customers each year.

Third-rail electric service is offered on the lines to Port Washington, Ronkonkoma, Babylon, Hempstead, Huntington, West Hempstead, Long Beach and Far Rockaway. Diesel service is provided on the lines to Oyster Bay, Port Jefferson, Montauk and Greenport.

Nearly 500 of the railroad's daily trains originate or terminate at Penn Station in Manhattan. Most of the remainder originate or terminate at Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn, with a number of others originating or terminating at Hunterspoint Avenue and Long Island City in Queens. All of these terminals provide connections to MTA New York City Transit subway and bus service. All but one of the 11 branches pass through the Railroad's complex Jamaica hub, where customers can connect with trains for other branches and terminals.

87% of our AM Peak customers use Penn Station, 11% use Flatbush Avenue, and 2% use our Queens terminals at Hunterspoint Avenue and Long Island City.

Penn Station is shared by three railroads – the LIRR, Amtrak and New Jersey Transit. Serving over 1,000 trains per day between the three railroads, it is one of the busiest transportation facilities in the country. While Amtrak owns and operates the station, we share responsibility for dispatching and train movement at a joint facility known as Penn Station Central Control. Given the large volume of train and customer traffic through Penn Station, its operation requires the cooperation and careful coordination of all three railroads.

Leading to our two main terminals at Penn Station and Flatbush Avenue are a series of tunnels. Access to and from Penn Station is provided by the four East River Tunnels. Like Penn Station, the tunnels are owned by Amtrak, and used by the LIRR, Amtrak and NJ Transit. The LIRR has the exclusive use of Lines 3 and 4, and has shared usage of Lines 1 and 2 with Amtrak and NJ Transit. Flatbush Avenue Terminal access is provided by the Atlantic Avenue Tunnels under Atlantic Avenue through Brooklyn and Queens.

Freight service in LIRR territory was privatized in 1997 and is operated by the New York & Atlantic Railway, a subsidiary of the Anacostia & Pacific Company. The company carries about 15,000 carloads a year, and operates its freight trains over our tracks outside of the Peak commuter hours. Its employees are trained on our operating rules and physical characteristics. Freight trains do not operate through the tunnels into Penn Station or Flatbush Avenue.

With so many critical facilities around our system, Security and Safety have always been LIRR priorities. And that is true now more than ever. We have implemented a number of measures in order to carry out our strategy of detecting, deterring, delaying and, ultimately, preventing threats to our system.

In fact, the MTA Chief of Security and LIRR Vice President – System Safety just returned from Madrid where they met with law enforcement and transportation officials.

The LIRR and its sister Railroad, Metro-North, are policed by officers from the MTA Police Department. MTA Police works closely with NYPD, Nassau and Suffolk county police, and the New York State Police. In addition, the MTA Police work closely with each agency, and are specially trained in the specific law enforcement issues and concerns that relate to transportation. Officers are familiar with our operations, our territory and our customers.

In analyzing potential points of vulnerability, we have placed special emphasis on critically important locations ... “high value targets” where there is the most potential for loss of life, serious socio-economic impacts to the region, high costs for recovery or replacement, or a large degree of environmental damage possible.

Locations such as Penn Station, Jamaica, the East River and Atlantic Avenue tunnels fall into this category.

One key aspect of our efforts is “target hardening” ... making these locations less penetrable and less vulnerable.

Some of the actions we have taken include:

- Increasing training for employees
- Awareness programs for both employees and customers, which includes on-train advertising highlighting the MTA’s “If You See Something, Say Something” campaign
- Improved electronic access control and increased security guard services at our facilities
- Physical barriers to entry at Penn Station, Penn Station Central Control and Jamaica
- Fencing and barriers at tunnel entrances
- Additional use and upgrade of surveillance cameras and intrusion alarms
- Participation in emergency preparedness drills and evaluation of our emergency plans
- And, perhaps most visibly to our customers, an increased police presence through additional MTA Police patrols throughout our system including tunnel entrances and Jamaica, New York State Police patrolling our trains, and the National Guard at Penn Station

Our future plans include a series of further target-hardening, defensive strategies intended to continue to decrease the level of vulnerability and further prevent unauthorized access to LIRR facilities.

The East River Tunnel Life Safety Program is a separate, though related, effort, aimed at improving safety measures within these tunnels owned by Amtrak. Typically, the LIRR pays the full cost of Life Safety Upgrades in Lines 3 & 4, and shares in the cost of upgrades for Lines 1 & 2. Bear in mind, Penn Station, the tunnels and the tunnel approaches were placed into service in 1910.

A wayside telephone communications system for emergency responders and LIRR crews has been installed in the four East River Tunnels and along the platforms at Penn Station. These phones are clearly marked with a blue light and placed approximately every 400 feet. LIRR construction costs were \$11 million.

Ventilation Plants on both the Manhattan and Queens side of the River will provide tunnel ventilation to clear and direct smoke conditions and new staircases to allow both evacuation and emergency response to occur simultaneously. The Long Island City plant is underway, and expected to be completed in 2006, with LIRR construction costs budgeted at \$80 million. The contract for the Manhattan plant is currently out to bid, and its construction is expected to cost the LIRR \$60 million.

A new ventilation system to clear and direct smoke conditions at track level in Penn Station itself was completed in 2002, and cost \$17 in LIRR construction costs. A tunnel standpipe system, budgeted at \$20 million in LIRR construction costs, is in the works in all four tunnels, and large portions have been completed. Wall-mounted dry-chemical fire extinguishers are also in place every 100 feet throughout the tunnels and are inspected and replaced as necessary.

In addition, the installation of handrails, signage and ladders along the benchwalls has already been completed. Between 1982 and 2004, a total of \$220 million in MTA Long Island Rail Road Capital Program funding has been earmarked for the LIRR's share of East River Tunnel Life Safety improvements.

Lastly, regarding difficulties that we've encountered in current laws related to security funding, there is a liability concern. While technological indemnification is addressed by the Department of Homeland Security and its regulations, this indemnification does not, however, extend to professional liability. Consultants who may have practical and necessary knowledge that would be beneficial in security measures are not indemnified for any professional knowledge they impart, which could impact the information they are willing to share.

I would like to thank you, once again, for the opportunity to speak before the Subcommittee; and I ask, at this time, if there are any questions that I might address?