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December 14, 2016

Mr. Patrick Nowakowski  
President  
Long Island Railroad  
Jamaica Station  
Jamaica, NY 11435

USCAR: 7-22DEC2016RDU

Dear Mr. Nowakowski:

I am writing to you today with regard to the LIRR Expansion Project (Floral Park to Hicksville), about which we have corresponded many times before.

In addition to my comments on the 'Scoping Document,' (a copy of which is attached), I am here by writing to formally express my opposition to the incredibly short time frame for which you will be accepting public comment (the process closes on January 31, 2017, at 5:00 pm). For a project of this magnitude (9.8 miles and affecting several villages and hamlets along the way), there is simply not enough time for all affected parties to fully prepare and respond to the tremendous amount of data. With hearing dates scheduled for January 17, 18 and 19 of 2017, to close off public comment after only two weeks does not seem to allow for any thorough review of any new issues brought forth at the public meetings. A third track on the main line is something that has been discussed for years and years – surely the LIRR can extend the public comment period in the interests of providing additional time for all parties to address issues which may come about at the public hearings.

I am therefore respectfully requesting you extend the public comment period at least an additional two weeks, or even longer, from January 31.

Sincerely,

KEMP HANNON  
Sixth Senatorial District

KH:hph

cc: Joseph Brown, NYSDOT

Hon. Andrew Cuomo, Governor

Hon. Nicholas Episcopia, Mayor, Village of Garden City

To: Metropolitan Transit Authority and Long Island Railroad

From: Senator Kemp Hannon

Date: June 13, 2016

Subject: 'Scoping Document' of May 5, 2016 for the LIRR Expansion Project (Floral Park to Hicksville) (hereinafter "Project")

At the outset, I note the process of scoping is entirely premature and incomplete due to the lack of any formal legal proposal to construct, bid, finance and/or design the project.

There is no provision for the project in any MTA adopted Capital Plan nor is there any provision in an adopted State Budget.

Absent the project being contained in either, it is premature to treat the scoping sessions or the scoping document as legally sufficient to meet applicable planning and environmental laws.

The avalanche of press releases and press conferences does not constitute or substitute for the adoption of an actual project in the MTA Capital Plan or for any appropriation in the New York State Budget.

I submit this memo concerning the Draft SEQRA Scoping Document dated May 5, 2016 ("Scoping Report"), which was the subject of the scoping meetings on May 24, 2016 and May 25, 2016. Please include this letter in the official record for SEQRA purposes.

The Scoping Report addresses the MTA LIRR's proposed expansion project (the "Project") of adding a third track along the Main Line approximately 9.8 miles from Floral Park to Hicksville. In addition, the Project purposes (i) eliminating seven grade crossings along the Main Line corridor, (ii) retaining walls along portions of the project, (iii) modifying rail stations and parking, (iv) modifying railroad infrastructure, and (v) relocating utility lines.

The Scoping Report asserts justifications for the Project. The principal purpose of the Project, stated on page 1 of the Scoping Report, is to fulfill a "key element of Governor Andrew Cuomo's transportation infrastructure initiatives and is a strategic component of a comprehensive plan to transfer and expand New York's vital regional transportation infrastructure and to enhance Long Island's economy, environment and future". The Scoping Report later details specifics, alleging that the existing two tracks on the Main Line are problematic due to: (i) congestion; (ii) frequent delays; (iii) insufficient track capacity; (iv) safety concerns related to railroad traffic; and (v) traffic delays due to grade crossings. The Report further asserts that an additional purpose of the project is to "reduce noise (sic) and improve neighborhood quality of life."

## Congestion and Delays

Delays due to congestion are cited as a rationale for the third track. No proof whatsoever is offered to show actual delays due to this portion of the LIRR.

In fact, the most frequent source of delays are the tunnels under the East River (between Jamaica and Penn Station).

Noticeably absent from the Scoping Report is any mention of the existing limitations of Jamaica Station and signal problem issues which plague the LIRR system. Without the commitment of capital to replace existing infrastructure, which contribute to the majority of delays and congestion, it is speculation to allege that a third track will alleviate these systemic problems. A realistic and objective study is required to address these fundamental problems.

## Insufficient Track Capacity

The Scoping Report alleges “insufficient track capacity to operate both eastbound and westbound service during peak periods.” Also, the Scoping Report says it is a “goal and objective” of the Report to “add operational flexibility eastbound and westbound” and “provide additional track capacity to accommodate projected system wide service growth.” The Scoping Report provides no support, failing to reference any objective data demonstrating Census. The population on Long Island is not growing. Indeed, the population in Nassau County grew by only 21,000 from 2010 to 2015, and Suffolk County grew by only 7,000 during the same period. If additional freight traffic is a concern, the Scoping Report contradicts any such argument, stating that “freight demand on Long Island will not increase.” In communities affected by the Project, including Garden City, it is difficult to understand how the LIRR has insufficient track capacity.

## Safety Concerns

Adding a third track provides no safety benefits to the communities along the Main Line from New Hyde Park to Mineola. If safety is a priority, the LIRR can eliminate the existing grade crossing without the need to install a third track. The Scoping Report fails to demonstrate a logical link between greater safety and the need for a third track.

The Scoping Report identifies seven grade-crossings, considers a number of potential options for each grade crossing and provides project design diagrams for each of the seven grade-crossings. Some of the proposals include two, four and five lane underpasses along with permanent road crossing closures. The Scoping Project, however, does not provide nor consider the impact the underpasses and road crossing closures will have on traffic patterns and how these new traffic patterns will affect the communities along the Main Line. The Scoping Report indicates that installation of the third track will be constructed on the south side of the existing tracks between New Hyde Park and Mineola. However, the Report fails to

provide any specifics. There is no pictorial diagram in the Report showing the newly configured third track will look from street level along Main Avenue or Merillon Avenue in Garden City.

### Final Points

For the reasons stated above, there is neither purpose nor need for the new third track. The intended Project will adversely affect the environment, will destroy the existing character of Garden City, and the Project will provide no benefit to the communities of Floral Park, New Hyde Park, Garden City, Mineola, Carle Place and Westbury, who will be detrimentally affected during the construction of the project and later by the increased use of the LIRR by commuter rail and freight trains.

In addition to the failure to provide the foundation for the project in either the MTA Capital Plan or the State Budget, the rationale offered for the project is deficient in detail, lacking needed explanation and alternatives and omitting required statistical studies.

Contrast the project with the Tappan Zee Bridge project or the NY-NJ Hudson River Tunnel projects. Both of these latter two projects have and had self evident safety needs. They also are key transportation modalities for the New York City region.