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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**January 25, 2010**

**ROMAINE AND EAST END LEADERS CALL ON MTA TO CONTINUE  
TRAIN SERVICE FROM RONKONKOMA TO GREENPORT**



Legislator Romaine (center) explains the MTA's taxes and fees while (L-R) Councilwoman Jodi Giglio; United Transportation Union General Chairman Anthony Simon; Frank Beyrodt from the Long Island Farm Bureau; and Councilmen Jim Wooten and John Dunleavy look on.

Despite high winds and heavy rains, Suffolk County Legislator Ed Romaine joined with East End government, business, labor, and civic leaders at the historic Riverhead train station – now slated for closure – to call on the MTA to continue providing train service from Ronkonkoma to Greenport.

“The LIRR was conceived to provide rail service to Greenport,” said Romaine. Now the MTA is proposing eliminating the very line that was the genesis of its existence. It’s a disgrace.”

According to the website [LIRRhistory.com](http://LIRRhistory.com), “The original purpose of the LIRR was to create a rail/ferry/rail connection from New York to Boston. The route was to be via rail to LI's North Fork then by boat to Stonington, Connecticut where it would continue by rail through Providence and Boston.”

However, the MTA has proposed eliminating train service from Ronkonkoma to Greenport, except on summer weekends. Such a cut would effectively discontinue MTA services on the North Fork and in most areas of eastern Brookhaven.

Although just two trains a day now run east of Ronkonkoma, East End residents have continually clamored for additional service. In 2009, Legislator Romaine joined with Riverhead officials and Commissioner of Jurors Michael O’Donohue to call on the LIRR to adjust the train schedule to increase ridership. North Fork restaurants and wineries have also asked for additional service to provide a “wine train” to bolster tourism. Like others, these requests fell on deaf ears.

“The MTA must reconsider shutting down train service on the North Fork,” said Romaine. “What we need out here is more service, not less.”

Suffolk County residents provide over \$520 million, or \$347 per person, to the MTA; \$28 million is directly paid from the county budget for station maintenance, local operating assistance, and the newly imposed payroll tax. \$28 million accounts for more than half the county’s general fund property tax levy.

Eliminating train service from Ronkonkoma to Greenport removes direct access to MTA services for over 310,000 residents. Yet, the MTA would still collect more than \$107 million from the very same people.

“You’ve heard of taxation without representation? This is ‘taxation without anything,’ or, as Supervisor Scott Russell called it, ‘taxation without transportation,’” said Romaine. “How can the MTA justify taxing residents of the East End, but not provide a single service? It’s outrageous.”

“Before the MTA cuts off East End residents, maybe the administration should look inward,” added Romaine. “The MTA is a top-heavy and bloated organization. Cuts should be made at MTA headquarters before hurting those who rely upon its services.”

Romaine continued: “The East End can no longer serve as a cash cow to fund a system that mainly benefits New York City. If the MTA refuses to provide service, the Peconic region should immediately secede from the MTA and establish its own transportation authority.”

In addition, the MTA has scheduled a public hearing in Carle Place in March on the proposed cuts. Legislator Romaine is writing to the MTA to request that a second hearing be held in Riverhead.

# **MTA: CURRENT TAXES & FEES**

• SALES TAX:	<b>\$97.5 MILLION</b>
• MORTGAGE TAX:	<b>\$125 MILLION</b>
• STATION MAINTENANCE:	<b>\$16.1 MILLION</b>
• PETROLEUM BUSINESS TAX:	<b>\$92 MILLION*</b>
• LOCAL OPERATING ASSISTANCE:	<b>\$7.5 MILLION</b>
• 17% BUSINESS SURCHARGE:	<b>\$47 MILLION*</b>
• TELECOM SURCHARGE:	<b>\$8 MILLION*</b>
<b>TOTAL CURRENT FEES:</b>	<b>\$393.1 MILLION</b>

**\*CALCULATION BASED ON LIMITED DATA THAT MAY OR MAY NOT BE ACCURATE**

# **MTA: NEW TAXES & FEES**

• PAYROLL TAX:	<b>\$98.5 MILLION</b>
• REGISTRATION FEE:	<b>\$26.5 MILLION</b>
• DRIVERS LICENSE FEE:	<b>\$2.1 MILLION</b>
• CAR RENTAL FEE (5%):	<b>UNDETERMINED</b>
<b>TOTAL NEW FEES:</b>	<b>\$127.2 MILLION+</b>

**GRAND TOTAL: \$520.3 MILLION or  
\$347 FOR EVERY RESIDENT OF SUFFOLK COUNTY**