



TESTIMONY

Testimony on New Jersey Transit's Fare Hike Proposal Belmar Municipal Building, Belmar, NJ

March 6, 2024

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Good evening; my name is Zeke Weston; I am a Belmar resident and a NJ transit rider; however, today, I am here on behalf of New Jersey Future. New Jersey Future is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that promotes sensible and equitable growth, redevelopment, and infrastructure investments in order to foster healthy, strong, and resilient communities.

NJ Transit needs to be fully funded, but that should not be at the expense of riders. We should prioritize the passage of the Corporate Transit Fee before raising costs on everyday riders.

Public transportation sits at the heart of New Jersey's walkable downtowns and neighborhoods. With more than 630,000 people using NJ Transit daily to get to work and school, visit doctors, and run errands, ensuring public transit remains affordable is critical to the well-being of New Jersey.

A double-digit fare hike at the last minute is neither a sustainable nor equitable solution. This will disproportionately harm working-class families and individuals who rely on transit.

Public transit is an engine of economic opportunity, particularly for people who don't own a car. Black and Latinx New Jerseyans are far less likely to own a car than their white counterparts; therefore, they're more likely to rely on mass transit. This means that the fare increases will hit riders of color especially hard.

New Jersey riders already over-subsidize NJ Transit. Fares should be going down, not up.

We should explore flat fares and strategic fare holidays that grow revenues by increasing ridership – without burdening cash-strapped riders.

With the Governor's proposal for a dedicated funding stream to NJ Transit through the Corporate Transit Fee, a fare hike at this time is irresponsible when our state budget is still under consideration.

Fare hikes should be a last resort, not the first solution.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.

Zeke Weston

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