

APPENDIX

Testimony of Steven Santoro
Executive Director, NJ TRANSIT
Senate Legislative Oversight and Assembly Judiciary committees
January 8, 2018

- Chairmen and members of the joint committee, good morning.
- Over the course of the last 15 months, we have covered a great deal of ground with the Committees concerning NJ TRANSIT, including its budget, the way it hires, trains and retains personnel, and our successful efforts to mitigate for our customers the effects of Amtrak's recent repair work at Penn Station New York.
- But the Committees emphasized a focus on safety more than a year ago when these hearings began.
- Today, I'd like to focus most of my opening remarks on safety and the progress we've made over the last year to improve the operational safety environment and the safety culture at NJ TRANSIT.
- Some of this progress continues and more must be done, so I will also suggest what further work lies ahead in 2018.
- Let me start with Rail Operations and one of my first decisions as Executive Director when I started in October 2016.
- At my direction, in 2016 NJ TRANSIT began to immediately remove from service any locomotive engineer who met screening criteria for symptoms of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) during the annual, federally-mandated physical exam, pending a doctor's diagnosis.
- This was not a popular decision among the Engineers, and it affected the number of Engineers available for service. But I believe it was

necessary and a demonstration that the safety of our customers and employees is absolutely paramount.

- One year later, we completed OSA screening on all of our locomotive engineers – 373 of them.
- Of those, 57 were initially removed from service pending a sleep study.
- Ultimately, 44 of them required treatment and physician approval before they could return to work.
- We believe this procedure we implemented in 2016 distinguishes NJ TRANSIT as a national leader in this area.
- Also, early in my tenure, we retained a consultant to conduct a detailed inspection of all of the bumper blocks in Hoboken Terminal.
- Based on the consultant's evaluation, we will be replacing all of the bumper blocks at Hoboken Terminal, and those at the Atlantic City Rail Terminal and the Meadowlands Rail Station – all stub-end stations – with sliding friction bumper blocks that more effectively absorb energy.
- The bumper block for Track 5 in Hoboken is being manufactured as we speak and will be installed this year.
- We anticipate the remaining bumper blocks (approximately 15 of them) will be replaced in the coming months.
- In addition, NJ TRANSIT is developing a speed enforcement system for trains approaching the platforms at Hoboken Terminal and other stub-end terminals.

- The civil speed enforcement technology ensures that the engineer is alerted to each change in the displayed cab signal that requires a reduction in speed. The engineer must acknowledge the change and reduce speed. Failure to do so will automatically cause the brakes to be applied, stopping the train.
- To prevent engineers from operating trains at excessive speeds on curves and bridges, NJ TRANSIT has implemented Civil Speed Enforcement that restricts the train speed on curves and bridges.
- In the meantime, we have instituted new safety measures and now require the conductor to ride in the head-end of trains, along with the engineer, when entering these stub-end terminals, and we reduced the speed limit to 5 miles per hour in those terminals.
- Over the past year, NJ TRANSIT Rail Operations has installed “Switch-Rite” advanced track switches at key yard sites to reduce accidental damage to these crucial pieces of infrastructure.
- Our entire system is inspected by our Track Geometry crew every 30 days. The FRA requires only quarterly inspections.
- Technological upgrades and enhancements have been made to the Rail Operations Center or ROC, providing dispatchers with greater ability to identify trains and other track-borne vehicles within the territory they are responsible for.
- And we created a special track group to ensure that the stone ballast – the rock under the rails and ties – is maintained at the proper height and thickness. This group’s work will cut down on the need for speed restrictions in areas where the ground is subject to settling due to underground conditions.
- We’ve added 10 additional Senior Trainmasters to oversee our train crew employees and ensure that all FRA, State and Company safety

rules and guidelines are met. The Senior Trainmasters also regularly ride trains to ensure compliance with on-board rules and proper ticket collection.

- A recent development important to NJ TRANSIT and me personally:
- I am pleased to inform the committees that the Federal Transit Administration completed its audit of NJ TRANSIT and found us in compliance with the federally mandated Drug and Alcohol Testing Program.
- We have discussed Positive Train Control, or PTC, a number of times during these hearings. I'd like to give you an update.
- By way of background, PTC is a radio-based communications system that can locate trains in operation and brake or stop them to prevent train-to-train collisions, over-speed derailments, work-zone incursions or running signals.
- We are pleased to tell you that a 6-mile section of PTC demonstration track on the Morris and Essex Line will be activated in the coming weeks. Moving forward, the demonstration area will inform NJ TRANSIT how best to structure PTC implementation, while maintaining regular revenue service.
- Although NJ TRANSIT has made considerable progress over the last few months, we are not satisfied with the current progress of the contractor's work.
- In recent weeks, the contractor, Parsons Transportation Group, and more specifically, Parsons' subcontractor, Alstom USA, has experienced reliability issues with respect to on-board equipment while retrofitting vehicles, which is affecting its ability to timely deliver vehicles with PTC functionality that can be returned to revenue service.

- These issues caused NJ TRANSIT to recently submit a revised PTC implementation plan to the Federal Railroad Administration that adjusted the targets for the end of 2017.
- NJ TRANSIT is aggressively pushing Parsons to address these issues and its overall progress on the Project. This Project remains the highest priority at NJ TRANSIT.
- NJ TRANSIT's management, as well as NJ TRANSIT's PTC Project team, continues to meet weekly with Parsons and hold it accountable for meeting progress milestones and deliverables under the contract.
- While NJ TRANSIT is concerned with Parsons' performance, if these technical issues are resolved expeditiously we remain optimistic that Parsons will be able to get vehicle production on track and that NJ TRANSIT will meet the current PTC implementation deadline at the end of 2018.
- Parsons has committed to us that it will do all that is necessary to comply with its contract and meet the deadline and its contractual obligations, and NJ TRANSIT is doing all it can to support Parsons.
- In the meantime, we continue to prepare and train for the delivery of a fully activated and functional PTC system.
- Three locomotive simulators were purchased and delivered in 2017 to familiarize and train crews on the PTC system. This will prepare locomotive engineers to operate the complex PTC system.
- As an added safety measure, NJ TRANSIT has advanced and completed the installation of forward and inward facing cameras on all rail revenue locomotive and cab control cars. The outward facing cameras provide a view of what the engineer sees, including rail conditions, and the inward facing cameras provide a view of activity in the cab.

- Similarly, as part of a \$29.1 million project – NJ TRANSIT Bus Operations has begun equipping approximately 2,500 buses with cameras to provide operators with a 360-degree field of vision around the bus that will help eliminate blind spots and enhance pedestrian safety.
- Each new bus that is delivered as part of ongoing fleet replacement will be equipped with this technology, while existing buses will be retrofitted. NJ TRANSIT has already begun taking delivery of new cruiser buses equipped with the 360-degree cameras, beginning with ten buses that went into service at Washington Township Garage in late November.
- Separately, NJ TRANSIT is equipping its fleet of cruiser buses with inward-facing cameras positioned at key locations throughout the interior of the bus that have the ability to constantly record. This system will enhance safety and security for both operators and customers and will provide assistance in apprehending and prosecuting individuals who assault operators and customers.
- NJ TRANSIT Bus Operations has launched a number of other safety initiatives over the last year.
- We have purchased new bus training simulator equipment, at a cost of \$1.36 million, to upgrade training equipment at the Newark and Camden training facilities, which is used for both new hire and refresher training for bus operators.
- The simulators will assess operators' reaction time to road conditions, pedestrians and various hazards.
- Let me talk for a moment about the most important part of our Bus Operations – our bus operators.

- As you would expect, experienced bus operators have fewer accidents than newer operators. Retaining those experienced men and women is a prime goal.
- But the turnover rate for “provisional” bus operators reached 32.4 percent.
- These provisional operators worked a full week, but received no benefits. Provisionals were recruited and fully trained to augment staffing and expected to fill regular full-time positions – with benefits – as openings in the regular force occurred.
- This arrangement, however, proved to be challenging, as we could not retain provisional bus operators long enough for them to transition to regular status.
- So, when I became aware of this, I directed a change and, effective September 30, 2017, NJ TRANSIT Bus Operations converted all full-time provisional bus operators to regular full-time operator status.
- By offering full-time benefits to current and newly hired bus operators, Bus Operations is able to better attract quality candidates. The retention rate for bus operators is also expected to improve.
- We continue to put resources to work in the Light Rail Division to improve both pedestrian and traffic safety at our stations, grade crossings and parking areas.
- For example, customers on the Newark Light Rail will continue to notice and benefit from a relighting of our stations and parking areas with brighter, energy efficient LED lighting. We are in the middle of that program to improve safety and security for our customers in Newark.

- On the Hudson Bergen Light Rail Line, we've upgraded and replaced our call-for-aid boxes, and improved pedestrian safety by replacing tactile platform pavers and prefabricated crosswalk panels.
- Our paratransit Access Link system has benefited from the installation of 'deceleration lights' on the minibus fleet to prevent rear-end collisions. That project is about 40-percent completed and will continue to be expanded with the transition of new vehicles until 100 percent of Access Link minibuses have this feature.
- Switching gears for a moment, allow me to talk about staffing overall.
- Healthy staffing levels ensure continuity of service and safe operations, with the benefit of better institutional knowledge and experience.
- We continue to hire at a brisk rate, reflecting my promise to fill safety related positions in the Office of System Safety, Rail Operations, the Police Department, and in other areas that help deliver safe, reliable service every day.
- I'd like to highlight some of the hiring, including in-house promotions, accomplished in the last 15 months:
 - 20 Safety Positions
 - 76 Capital Planning and Programs Positions
 - 86 Police Positions
 - 406 Rail positions
 - 770 Bus positions

- For Fiscal Year '19, we expect to propose additional safety-related positions for Rail, including trainers for locomotive engineers and conductors, so that we can hold additional classes for those crafts.
- Human Resources is continuing to streamline the process for selecting the best qualified candidates for the locomotive engineer training program. We are working with an industry leading organization, the Occupational Psychology Center or OPC that specializes in assessment tests for the transportation industry. The tests we are piloting assess the applicant's safety awareness, concentration and focus – all critical skills for our industry and vital for successful trainees.
- In the Office of System Safety – where, as you know, we had safety inspection vacancies – 18 positions have been filled, including Deputy Chief of System Safety, Director of Safety for Rail, and Manager of Safety Compliance. Since its establishment in 2014, the Office of System Safety has grown by 46% to a staff of 43 – with most of that hiring in the last 15 months.
- In May 2017, NJ TRANSIT initiated targeted salary increases, which adjusted the majority of non-agreement salaries relative to their appropriate agreement employee salaries. The intention is to make NJ TRANSIT more competitive, especially among our peer transit agencies.
- Also in May 2017, NJ TRANSIT instituted a 1.9% salary increase across the board for non-agreement staff, retroactive to January 2017.
- The FY18 budget also accommodates an additional 1.9% across the board increase for non-agreement staff, which will take effect later this month.

- Salary adjustments helped rail and bus operations to become more competitive with our peers.
- Safety today is about more than just daily operations. It also is about protecting our passengers and crews from outside threats.
- That is the mission of the New Jersey Transit Police Department, and they have not been idle.
- Enhancing the Department's ability to respond quickly and capably, earlier this year we opened a new, state-of-the-art Emergency Operations Center –a critical tool that allows effective, management of any event that could impact transit operations. The EOC provides information and support to incident management and response/recovery coordination activities.
- NJ TRANSIT police worked with a number of federal, state and local law enforcement and emergency response agencies, providing emergency response training for 750 first responders, and rail safety training for an additional 550 first responders.
- We recently graduated 41 new officers. Our uniformed officers are supported by plain clothes detectives and anti-crime officers throughout the NJ TRANSIT system.
- I appreciate this opportunity to summarize the progress NJ TRANSIT has made to improve the safety of our passengers and crew. Thank you.