

## Long Island Rail Road

### Staff Summary

<b>Subject</b> Amtrak's East River Tunnel Shutdown							
<b>Department</b> Law	<b>Internal Approval</b>			<b>Board Approval</b>			
<b>Department Head</b> <b>Name</b> Haley Stein	<b>Order</b>	<b>Approver</b>	<b>Approval</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Approval</b>	<b>Info</b>
<b>Department Head</b> <b>Signature</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>President</b>		<b>Board</b>	<b>4/30/25</b>	<b>X</b>	

#### **Purpose:**

To obtain Board approval of the annexed Resolution which outlines Board concerns regarding the means, methods, and overall readiness of Amtrak to complete East River Tunnel repairs within the three-year shutdown period while limiting impacts to service.

#### **Discussion:**

In recent discussions Long Island Rail Road has expressed deep misgivings to Amtrak regarding Amtrak's readiness to successfully execute a planned full shutdown of East River Tunnels without impacting either its own Empire Line service to Albany or Long Island Rail Road service. Since the opening of Grand Central Madison, LIRR has scheduled service anticipating Amtrak's East River Tunnel shutdown. Although the date of the planned shutdown is now approaching after multiple delays, concerns have grown given the lack of specificity regarding the means, methods, schedules, resource availability, and overall readiness of Amtrak combined with Amtrak's long track record of insufficiently resourcing the projects they undertake, and projects undertaken on their behalf, and projects completed by others but requiring support of their forces, leading to cascading project delays and service disruptions.

#### **Impact on Funding:**

Long Island Rail Road farebox revenue totaled \$649.6M in 2024 and covered 32.4% of all operating expenses. Continuing to grow ridership depends on providing frequent and reliable service to Manhattan terminals to the over five million residents of Queens and Long Island.

#### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Board adopt and approve the annexed Resolution.

## **RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, the two East River tunnel tubes predominantly used by Amtrak trains suffered damage from the 2012 Superstorm Sandy; and

**WHEREAS**, Amtrak is belatedly planning to commence a large-scale rehabilitation project utilizing a full shutdown to accommodate work; and

**WHEREAS**, the MTA urged Amtrak to consider adopting the night and weekend shutdown approach that cut six months off the schedule and \$100 million off the budget in the L Train Tunnel Project and similarly impressive results on the Rutgers Tube project; and

**WHEREAS**, Amtrak declined to follow the strategy favored by the MTA, instead insisting upon a full shutdown of the two tunnels over a three-year period; and

**WHEREAS**, the Long Island Rail Road has expressed deep misgivings in recent discussion with Amtrak about its readiness to successfully execute the full shutdown plan without impacting not only its own Empire Line service to Albany but also Long Island Rail Road service; and

**WHEREAS**, Governor Kathy Hochul had publicly stated her own concerns about the impact of the aforementioned reductions in Amtrak service to Albany and risks to Long Island Rail Road service; and

**WHEREAS**, Amtrak is facing significant personnel cuts which further endanger its ability to deliver on the project, and

**WHEREAS**, the Board has considered all of the above.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, upon motion duly made and seconded, the following resolution is adopted by the Board:

**RESOLVED**, that the MTA Board calls on Amtrak to reconsider its plan to adopt a full shutdown as its strategy for the rehabilitation of two East River tunnels; and be it further,

**RESOLVED**, that Amtrak reopen discussions with its design professionals and its contractor about the possibility of adjusting scope in such a way as to facilitate the proven overnight and weekend shutdown approach that would limit the risk of impacts to Amtrak service and Long Island Rail Road commuter service.

April 30, 2025  
New York, New York