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C. SCOTT VANDERHOEF
County Executive

**County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef
Statement - MTA Proposed Service Cuts in Rockland County
March 4, 2010 Public Hearing**

Members of the Board:

Over the past two months, I have been listening with dismay to the reports that MTA was planning service cuts to close its budget gap. It was disturbing to learn that even after the discussion I had with Chairman Walder during our October meeting, MTA is proposing service cuts and changes to the Pascack Valley and Port Jervis Lines in Rockland County.

Given the \$60 million annual value gap between the money Rockland taxpayers contribute to the MTA and the level of transit service and funding the County receives in return, along with the already limited amount of service Rockland receives, any action that would negatively affect service here in Rockland County is absolutely unconscionable.

Rockland County fought for years for the service improvements we now have. Our residents and businesses pay exorbitant taxes and fees to the MTA and get little in return. Our commuters have endured outrageous fare increases over the past several years and will be faced with them again in 2011. In 2009 Rockland residents and businesses were again unfairly burdened with the new MTA payroll tax – a tax from which Rockland should clearly have been exempt.

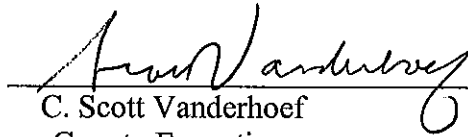
The cost savings associated with the proposed service reductions to the Pascack Valley and Port Jervis lines are embarrassingly small, especially given the \$60 million value gap. The savings is equivalent, in fact, to just a few MTA staff members' salaries (even with the proposed 10% pay cut). Further to this point, there are other revenue-generating alternatives, such as tolling at the East River and Harlem River crossings, which should be put into place before Rockland County service is impacted. The projected revenue from those tolls could have generated \$600 million a year. That amount would go a long way toward MTA's \$800 million budget shortfall.

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Tonight you will hear these points reiterated again and again. I wrote to Chairman Walder in January and said that I looked to him to do the right thing by directing that the proposed Pascack Valley and Port Jervis service cuts and changes be eliminated from the MTA's plans. I also wrote to Richard Sarles, NJ Transit's Executive Director, and asked him to reject MTA's proposed service cuts.

Tonight I ask you to see this situation for what it is. Rockland County is one of only two counties (with Orange) in the MTA region that have a value gap. In fact, all of the other MTA counties and boroughs benefit from value surpluses – they get more service than they pay for. It is, therefore, simple common sense that dictates that Rockland County be exempt from these service cuts.

Thank you.


C. Scott Vanderhoef
County Executive
Rockland County