

STATE OF NEW YORK

7679

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

April 29, 2025

Introduced by Sen. GOUNARDES -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Transportation

AN ACT to amend the public authorities law, in relation to membership on the Long Island rail road commuter council, the Metro-North railroad commuter council, and the New York city transit riders council, and in relation to the powers and duties of the permanent citizens advisory committee

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "R.I.D.E.R.
2 'Rider Interests Deserve Empowering Representation' Act".
3 § 2. The section heading and subdivisions 1 and 2 of section 1204-e of
4 the public authorities law, the section heading as added by chapter 483
5 of the laws of 1981 and as renumbered by section 2 of part H of chapter
6 25 of the laws of 2009, subdivisions 1 and 2 as amended by chapter 125
7 of the laws of 2022, are amended to read as follows:
8 New York city transit [~~authority advisory~~] riders council. 1. There is
9 hereby created the New York city transit authority advisory riders coun-
10 cil, to study, investigate, monitor, and make recommendations with
11 respect to the maintenance and operation of the New York city transit
12 authority, its subsidiaries and the Staten Island rapid transit operat-
13 ing authority. Such council shall study and investigate all aspects of
14 the day to day operations of such authority, its subsidiaries and the
15 Staten Island rapid transit operating authority, monitor their perform-
16 ance and recommend changes to improve the efficiency of the operation
17 thereof. Such council shall study and make recommendations in regard to
18 improving bicycle and pedestrian access on trains and buses, and at
19 bridges, stations and other facilities operated by the authority, its
20 affiliates and subsidiaries and the Staten Island rapid transit operat-
21 ing authority and submit such recommendations to the metropolitan trans-

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 portation authority on or before June first, two thousand twenty-two and
2 every five years thereafter.

3 2. Such council shall consist of sixteen members who shall be commu-
4 ters who regularly use the transportation services of such authorities.
5 ~~[Six]~~ Of the sixteen members, at least one member shall be a resident of
6 Bronx county, at least one member shall be a resident of Kings county,
7 at least one member shall be a resident of New York county, at least one
8 member shall be a resident of Richmond county, and at least one member
9 shall be a resident of Queens county. Five of such ~~sixteen~~ members shall
10 be appointed by the governor upon the recommendation of the mayor of the
11 city of New York~~[, five upon the recommendation of the president of the~~
12 ~~city council of the city of New York, and five other members appointed~~
13 ~~upon the recommendation one by each of the borough presidents of the~~
14 ~~boroughs of the city of New York]~~. Eleven of such sixteen members shall
15 be appointed by the governor upon the recommendation of local elected
16 officials in consultation with the borough president of such borough
17 where the member resides. Provided, however, that one member recommended
18 by the mayor of New York shall have a demonstrated expertise or interest
19 in the promotion and development of improved bicycle and pedestrian
20 access at bridges, stations and other facilities operated by the metro-
21 politan transportation authority, as created by section twelve hundred
22 sixty-three of this article, and such authority's affiliates and subsid-
23 iaries. The ~~[chairman]~~ chairperson shall be a member selected by the
24 membership of the committee. Each of the members shall serve for a term
25 of two years, provided, however, that of the first appointments, two
26 appointed upon the recommendation of the mayor and two appointed upon
27 the recommendation of the president of the city council shall serve for
28 a term of one year. Vacancies occurring other than by expiration of term
29 shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments for the
30 balance of the unexpired term but shall be subject to the provisions of
31 subdivision four of section twelve hundred sixty-six-i of this article.

32 § 3. The section heading and subdivisions 1 and 2 of section 1266-d of
33 the public authorities law, the section heading as added by chapter 482
34 of the laws of 1981, subdivision 1 as amended by chapter 125 of the laws
35 of 2022, and subdivision 2 as amended by chapter 802 of the laws of
36 2021, are amended to read as follows:

37 Long Island rail road ~~[commuter's]~~ commuter council. 1. There is here-
38 by created the Long Island rail road ~~[commuter's]~~ commuter council, to
39 study, investigate, monitor and make recommendations with respect to the
40 maintenance and operation of the Long Island rail road. Such council
41 shall study and investigate all aspects of the day to day operations of
42 such railroad, monitor its performance and recommend changes to improve
43 the efficiency of the operation thereof. Such council shall study and
44 make recommendations in regard to improving bicycle and pedestrian
45 access at bridges, stations and other facilities operated by the Long
46 Island Railroad and submit such recommendations to the metropolitan
47 transportation authority on or before June first, two thousand twenty-
48 two and every five years thereafter.

49 2. Such council shall consist of thirteen members who shall be commu-
50 ters who regularly use the transportation services of such railroad, and
51 who shall be residents of Nassau, Suffolk, Queens or ~~[Brooklyn]~~ Kings
52 county. Members shall be appointed by the governor upon the recommenda-
53 tion of local elected officials in consultation with the county execu-
54 tive of ~~[each such]~~ Nassau or Suffolk county, provided, however, that
55 such members shall be chosen from a list of ten names submitted by each
56 such county executive and provided further however that no more than six

1 members of such council shall be residents of either such county.
2 Provided, however, that one member shall be appointed on the recommenda-
3 tion of a local elected official in consultation with the borough presi-
4 dent of Queens and one member shall be appointed on the recommendation
5 of a local elected official in consultation with the borough president
6 of Brooklyn. Provided, however, that one member [~~shall be~~], appointed
7 [~~who has a~~] upon the recommendation of a local elected official in
8 consultation with the county executive or borough president of such
9 county or borough where the member resides, shall have demonstrated
10 expertise or interest in the promotion and development of improved bicy-
11 cle and pedestrian access at bridges, stations and other facilities
12 operated by the authority and its affiliates and subsidiaries. Vacancies
13 occurring in the membership of the council shall be filled in the same
14 manner as original appointments, provided, however, that if the appoint-
15 ment prior to the vacancy was made by the Nassau or Suffolk county exec-
16 utive, such vacancy shall be filled from a list of three names submitted
17 by each such county executive, and provided, further, that such appoint-
18 ments shall be subject to the provisions of subdivision four of section
19 twelve hundred sixty-six-i of this title.

20 § 4. The section heading and subdivisions 1 and 2 of section 1266-e of
21 the public authorities law, the section heading as added by chapter 482
22 of the laws of 1981, subdivision 1 as amended by chapter 125 of the laws
23 of 2022, and subdivision 2 as amended by chapter 802 of the laws of
24 2021, are amended to read as follows:

25 Metro-North [~~rail~~] railroad commuter council. 1. There is hereby
26 created the Metro-North [~~rail~~] railroad commuter council to study,
27 investigate, monitor and make recommendations with respect to the main-
28 tenance and operation of those portions of, if any, the Hudson, Harlem,
29 New Haven, Penn Access, Pascack Valley and Port Jervis commuter railroad
30 lines remaining within the metropolitan commuter transportation
31 district. Such council shall study and investigate all aspects of the
32 day to day operation of such railroad lines, monitor their performance
33 and recommend changes to improve the efficiency of the operation there-
34 of. Such council shall study and make recommendations in regard to
35 improving bicycle and pedestrian access at bridges, stations and other
36 facilities operated by such railroad lines and submit such recommenda-
37 tions to the metropolitan transportation authority on or before June
38 first, two thousand twenty-two and every five years thereafter.

39 2. Such council shall consist of twelve members and shall be commuters
40 who regularly use the transportation services of such railroad lines. At
41 least five of such members shall be residents of the county of Westches-
42 ter. Of the other seven members, at least one of such members shall be a
43 resident of each of the counties of Rockland, Putnam, Dutchess, Orange
44 and Bronx, provided that such county has not withdrawn from the metro-
45 politan commuter transportation district pursuant to section twelve
46 hundred seventy-nine-b of this title; provided further, should only the
47 county of Putnam remain in the metropolitan commuter transportation
48 district then membership on such council shall consist of eight members,
49 six of whom reside in the county of Westchester and two of whom reside
50 in the county of Putnam. Members shall be appointed by the governor. In
51 making such appointments the governor shall consult with and solicit
52 recommendations from local officials and to the extent possible appoint
53 members who represent the ridership of the several commuter railroad
54 lines. Provided, however, that one member [~~shall be~~], appointed [~~who has~~
55 ~~a~~] upon the recommendation of a local elected official where the member
56 resides, shall have demonstrated expertise or interest in the promotion

1 and development of improved bicycle and pedestrian access at bridges,
2 stations and other facilities operated by the authority and its affil-
3 iates and subsidiaries. Vacancies occurring in the membership of the
4 council shall be filled in the same manner as original appointments but
5 shall be subject to the provisions of subdivision four of section twelve
6 hundred sixty-six-i of this title.

7 § 5. Section 1266-i of the public authorities law, as added by section
8 10 of part H of chapter 25 of the laws of 2009, is amended to read as
9 follows:

10 § 1266-i. The permanent citizens advisory committee. 1. There is here-
11 by established a permanent citizens advisory committee. The members of
12 the committee shall consist of the following members: the Long Island
13 Rail Road [~~commuter's~~] commuter council, the Metro-North railroad commu-
14 ter council, and the New York city transit [~~authority advisory~~] riders
15 council, as defined in section twelve hundred four-e of this [~~chapter~~]
16 article.

17 2. Such committee shall serve as a coordinating council of the Long
18 Island Rail Road commuter council, the Metro-North railroad commuter
19 council, and the New York city transit riders council, providing a
20 regional and balanced perspective to such councils' work. Such committee
21 shall be a source of advice to the authority and its subsidiaries and
22 affiliates regarding matters of finance, operations, management, plan-
23 ning, service issues, and the capital program plans established in
24 section twelve hundred sixty-nine-b of this title as well as any other
25 capital plans of such authority. Such committee shall have the same
26 access to information of the authority and its subsidiaries and affil-
27 iates as the Long Island Rail Road commuter council, the Metro-North
28 railroad commuter council, and the New York city transit riders council.

29 3. The members of the Long Island Rail Road commuter council, the
30 Metro-North railroad commuter council, and the New York city transit
31 riders council shall receive no compensation for their services but
32 shall be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the
33 performance of their duties.

34 4. Appointments to the Long Island Rail Road commuter council, the
35 Metro-North railroad commuter council, and the New York city transit
36 riders council shall be made as prescribed in section twelve hundred
37 sixty-six-d, twelve hundred sixty-six-e, or twelve hundred four-e of
38 this article, respectively, except that if recommendations for members
39 have not been made by an elected official endowed with the power to make
40 such recommendation in such respective sections within ninety days of a
41 vacancy on the Long Island Rail Road commuter council, the Metro-North
42 railroad commuter council, or the New York city transit riders council,
43 interim appointments may be made upon the recommendation of the execu-
44 tive committee and staff of the permanent citizens advisory committee
45 for the balance of the unexpired term. Notice of such interim appoint-
46 ments described herein shall be included in the official meeting minutes
47 of the permanent citizens advisory committee.

48 5. The committee shall also have employees who do not serve on the
49 commuters and riders councils described in this section, but who are
50 employed by the authority to serve the committee. The authority shall
51 provide appropriate funding for such employees who are selected by and
52 dedicated to the committee, and shall not withhold, withdraw, reduce, or
53 take any other action which threatens or appears to threaten funding for
54 such employees due to the committee and its employees taking editorial,
55 governance, and/or public policy positions which differ from those of
56 the authority.

1 6. The authority shall provide adequate resources and other assistance
2 to the permanent citizens advisory committee, including any assistance
3 and data as will enable it to properly carry out its activities under
4 any provision of this chapter.

5 7. The permanent citizens advisory committee and the authority may
6 enter into agreements with each other to facilitate the provisions of
7 this section.

8 § 6. This act shall take effect immediately.