

Testimony of Joseph J. Giulietti
President of Metro-North Railroad
Connecticut Transportation Committee Hearing
February 27, 2014, 1 p.m.

Thank you, Tom, and thank you all for inviting me to testify today.

As Tom just mentioned, I spent much of my career with Metro-North Railroad. I was born and raised in Connecticut, and began my career with Penn Central in 1971, 43 years ago, while attending Southern Connecticut State University. I went on to work for Conrail and ultimately Metro-North when it formed in 1983, as superintendent of the New Haven and Harlem lines. Over the next 15 years, I went on to become:

- engineer of track for the Harlem and Hudson lines;
- assistant director of transportation and schedule coordination; and
- director of a project to reduce operational inefficiencies and increase productivity.

In 1998, I took a job as deputy executive director of the agency now known as the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority, and was named executive director two years later.

Today, I'm honored to return to lead the railroad where I first developed my skills in railroading and management. And now that I've returned, I'm hearing the same question over and over: "What went wrong?" It's a good question, and while I don't have all the answers yet, I can tell you a few things for sure.

First, we will get to the bottom of it, and today I commit to returning to this committee with those answers, sometime after the FRA and the Blue Ribbon Panel on Safety have completed their extensive investigations.

Second, we must and we will get back to the basics of good railroading—providing safe and reliable service every single day. Restoring safety as our top priority won't be easy and it won't happen overnight—just diagnosing all the issues will take some time. But our 100-Day Plan is an important first step.

The Plan will focus on safety first and foremost, and it will include key elements on organizational culture, reliability, and communications. By March 3rd, we'll issue a general summary of the plan, as we await the findings and recommendations from the FRA's "deep dive".

In addition to completing the objectives laid out in the Plan, we'll focus intensely on a number of safety-related initiatives, including:

- following through on the National Transportation Safety Board's recommendation that we install inward and outward facing cameras in train cabs, to more closely monitor both train speeds and engineers;

- implementing the NTSB's recommendations, when their investigations conclude;
- implementing the FRA's "deep dive" recommendations;
- implementing recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Panel on Safety that Tom put together, even before the December 1st derailment;
- installing Positive Train Control system-wide, as soon as possible; and
- working with state and federal representatives, to increase the investment necessary to keep Metro-North's aging infrastructure—in many cases more than a 100 years old—in a state of good repair.
- Also, Tom talked briefly about the new system we developed to protect employees working on the tracks. This new system—the Enhanced Employee Protection System, or EEPS—issues a random, computer-generated code that a dispatcher must receive directly from a worker on the tracks before allowing trains through.

EEPS significantly reduces the possibility of human error, and we rolled it out across all our lines this month. In the coming months, we'll incorporate all EEPS procedures into our operating rules.

- And of course, we will continue to make improvements as we identify them.

I've also already got plenty of questions. For example, I want to know if there are common elements to all the failures we saw last year. I want to know if there are improvements to be made in the way we recruit, hire, develop, and train our employees. I want to know if our employees are retaining everything they learn in training. And I want to know if we have the most talented employees in the most important positions.

Besides safety, reliability is the most important factor in our customers' commute. Trains need to arrive and depart when we say they'll arrive and depart. That's why right now, we're analyzing every single Metro-North train and its running time, by section. And in May, we'll publish new schedules for every Metro-North train, on every Metro-North line and branch.

These new schedules will more accurately reflect real-world travel times, and give customers reliable train information they can count on. As Tom mentioned, running times will remain longer than they were a year ago. But I want to be clear: We're not adding to running times so we can be on-time more often. We're adding to running times to reflect the reality of our service today. Because far more important than running times, we're working to make Metro-North safer, and customers will once again be able to depend on the service we provide.

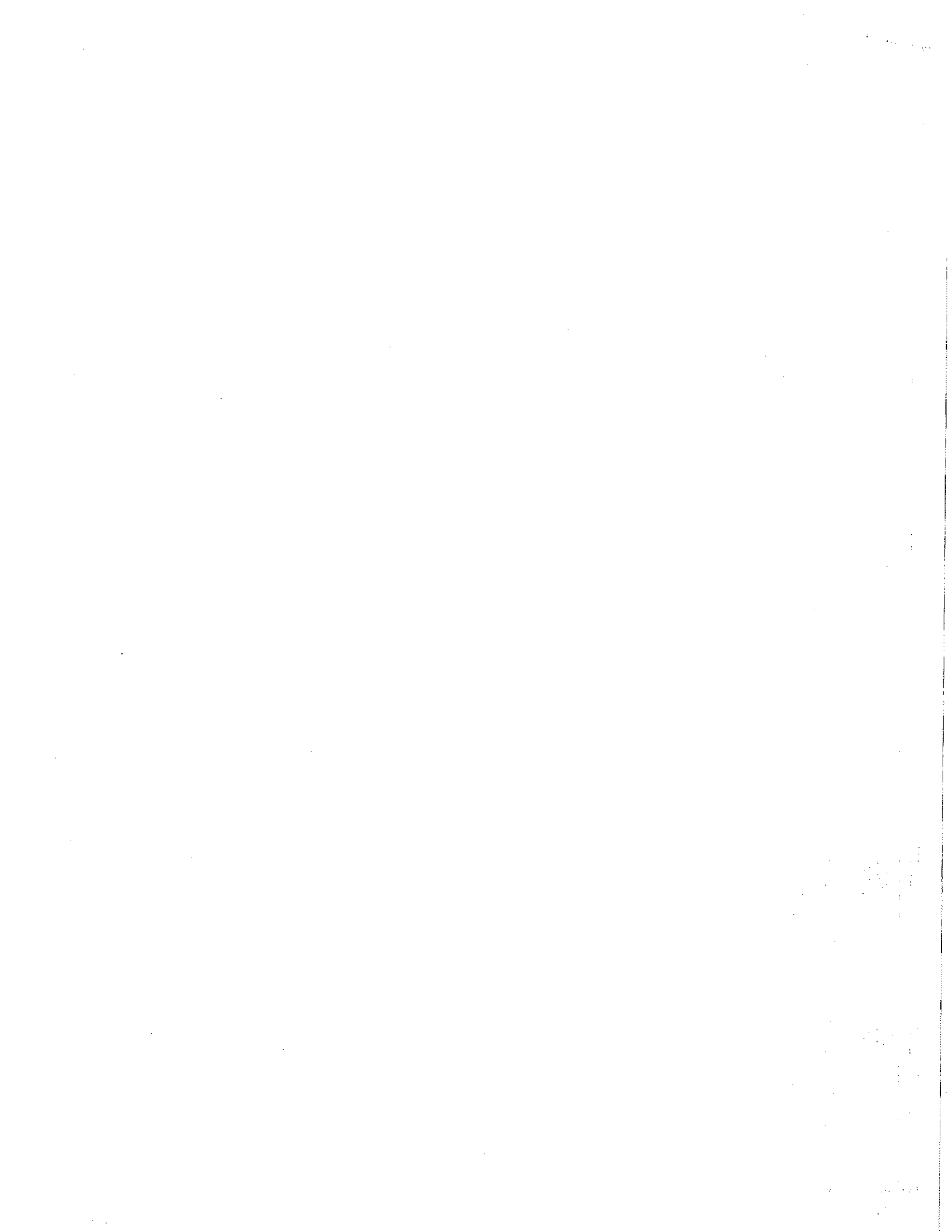
We'll also improve the way we communicate with our customers. Right now, in terms of customer communications, we're still operating like a railroad that's on-time 98 percent of the time, not 86 percent of the time, like we saw on the New Haven Line in January. That must and will change—even after we improve our on-time performance.

We need to start listening to our customers—really listening. And I have two important announcements to make in that regard. First, we just improved our website to make it much easier for customers to reach us with comments or complaints.

Also, in the coming months, I commit to scheduling many more meetings in Connecticut to listen to customer concerns and suggestions. Incidentally, in one of those meetings last week, a customer got up and said something I completely agree with. He said, "Stop apologizing and just fix it." Well, that's exactly what we're going to do.

In general, we have some tough "to-dos" on our list. We need to start communicating better. We need to bring back Metro-North's legendary on-time performance. Even more important, we need to find out exactly what went wrong last year, and continue to fix it. But while I'll certainly be taking a close look at all of last year's incidents, I'm not here just for that. I'm here to run the best railroad in the United States, because that's what Metro-North was until very recently. And I won't be satisfied until we are again.

Once again, thank you for inviting me today. Now, Tom and I are happy to answer any questions you may have.



**Testimony of Thomas F. Prendergast
Chairman and CEO of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Connecticut Transportation Committee Hearing
February 27, 2014, 1 p.m.**

Good afternoon, chairmen Maynard and Guerrero, ranking members Boucher and Scribner, and members of the Connecticut General Assembly's Transportation Committee. Thank you for holding this hearing and for inviting me to testify today. I'm joined by the new president of Metro-North Railroad, Joe Giulietti.

The State of Connecticut and the MTA have spent the past 30 years building Metro-North into the busiest and best railroad in entire nation. That's a fact. But there's another important fact we need to acknowledge today, and it's simply this: Metro-North had a terrible 2013—with derailments, a major power outage, a drop in on-time performance, and other problems. And as a public transportation professional for over 35 years now, I know—as well as anyone—that you're only as good as your last rush hour.

Immediately after the first incident in May—a derailment at Bridgeport—Metro-North began taking corrective actions. And today, I'd like to explain some of them, in more-or-less chronological order.

- To begin, Metro-North retained TTCI—the internationally-renowned research affiliate of the American Association of Railroads—to assess and improve track maintenance and inspection programs.
- It increased track inspections using high-tech, specialized equipment on loan, and it will soon obtain geometry measuring equipment to improve its ability to identify defects and plan and prioritize repairs.
- It developed an integrated system that provides significantly more protection for employees working on the tracks.
- And I organized a Blue Ribbon Panel on Safety, with six of the most distinguished railroad and transportation experts in the nation.

After the derailment on December 1st, Metro-North took the following actions:

- It implemented signal system modifications at the Spuyten Duyvil curve to enable the on-board system to enforce speed limits automatically. It implemented similar modifications at four other critical curves—in Yonkers, White Plains, Bridgeport, and Port Chester—and at Peck Bridge in Bridgeport.
- It's working to make these modifications at four remaining movable bridges in Connecticut. We originally expected this work to be done in September, but thanks to an aggressive effort to see it finished, it will now be done by May.
- Metro-North posted speed limit signs at the four critical curves I just mentioned—an added measure to an engineer's basic requirement to know operating speeds along his or her route.

- It reduced speed limits at 33 locations in services both East and West of the Hudson River, where the speed limit dropped by more than 20 miles-per-hour.
- Metro-North and the Long Island Rail Road recently committed more than \$425 million dollars for a contract to begin the installation of a Positive Train Control system. We've been asked to accelerate this installation, and getting that done isn't just a top priority for Metro-North. It's a top priority for the entire MTA.
- Two-thirds of Metro-North's operating fleet is equipped with "alerter" devices, to ensure that engineers remain responsive. The remaining one-third is equipped with a feature requiring an engineer to apply constant pressure to a hand- or foot-activated switch. By the end of this year, all older equipment without alerters will be either retrofitted to include them, or replaced with new equipment that includes alerters.
- Metro-North expanded its efforts to enforce speed limits. For example, in the past seven weeks, it audited the speed of 3,800 trains, either by radar or event recorder.
- It's working with the FRA to set up a Confidential Close Call Reporting System, a measure that allows employees to anonymously report safety concerns without fear of reprisal.
- And the FRA announced its own "deep dive" review of Metro-North's safety procedures and operations.

Over the past few weeks, we've taken a number of top-level steps to ensure that safe operations are at the very foundation of every MTA agency. We created the position of corporate chief safety officer, a new senior management post overseeing safety at all MTA agencies, and reporting directly to me. Each MTA agency will ensure that its top safety official reports directly to the agency's president. At Metro-North, we're separating the "safety" function from the "security-management" function. MNR's new chief safety officer, Anne Kirsch, will now manage only safety. We're creating a new Safety Committee on our Board of Directors. And we hired this man, Joe Giulietti, who spent much of his early career at Metro-North.

As I'm sure you've noticed, I've focused on safety today, because it's unequivocally the MTA's highest priority. But before I wrap up, I want to be clear about one thing. Many of the safety measures I just mentioned necessarily add to the running time of every Metro North train, every day. That's not the only reason service is slower today than it was a year ago, but it's a big factor.

And that leads me to the other major issue Metro-North must address: reliability and on-time performance. Improved safety measures may slow down trains, but that can be no excuse for putting out an unreliable schedule. We've got to fix that, and Joe will talk more in a moment about our plans to do so. But make no mistake: We've got to get safety right first.

One final note. Now that Joe's on board, we're developing a plan for what he'll tackle and accomplish in his first 100 days. We'll make that plan available to you, to Governors Malloy and Cuomo, and to the public. With that, I'd like to turn the floor over to Joe to introduce himself and talk about his goals for Metro-North at this critically important time. Joe?