

To the Transportation Committee:

I have been a commuter on the Metro North Waterbury line for the past five and a half years. My trip takes me from my home in Oxford, CT to my office in midtown Manhattan, starting at the Seymour station, ending at Grand Central. My daily travel to and from work nets out to over six hours per day when there are no problems. Add "Mechanical Difficulties" or "Late Connections" and the trip gets difficult.

We have, so we are told by MNR, 3 diesel locomotives to service our line. Given the service schedule, demands in other parts of the system, as well as weather-related issues, there is little time for the required proper maintenance of the trains. Waterbury and Danbury are special cases since the lines are not electrified, and therefore depend on diesel power. What we have is an availability issue that has resulted in a reliability problem with our branch. Constant delays and busing substitutions because the trains are being neglected to the breaking point.

When things are running well, my three-plus hour commute is not that bad. The cars are generally comfortable and I can get a lot of work done during my trip. However, over the past one to two years, reliability has suffered. I have witnessed people opt for their autos citing "you never know if the train is going to show up". If we want to keep more people – more autos – off of Routes 8, 34, & 95, we need to improve the reliability of our rail options.

Yes, we need long-term strategies, e.g. – Sidings, signalization, PTC, etc., however these projects will not improve the current situation. In discussing the reliability problems with Metro North, it is clear what we need now are additional locomotives. The magic number appears to be two. But one will take us a long way, providing the required down time for repairs by adding additional capacity to the rotation. When compared to large capital expenditures for major infrastructure projects, one to two million for a thirty-three percent capacity boost seems to be a pretty reasonable investment, and one that will garner excellent returns almost immediately.

Thank you for your time.

Corey Ferrell