

REMARKS OF JOSEPH J. GIULIETTI  
PRESIDENT OF METRO-NORTH RAILROAD  
CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

MARCH 9, 2016

- Good morning.
- Last May, I spoke about the many projects that the staff of Metro-North were undertaking to rebuild the railroad's infrastructure, and our reputation with our customers.
- Today, I am pleased to report that our hard work has begun to pay dividends, and we have made steady progress toward improving the safety and reliability of the railroad and the New Haven Line.
- The many accomplishments of the past two years have been hard won. There have been numerous challenges which have at times slowed, but not stopped our efforts.
- I will now give you an overview of our continuing progress in key areas.
- On the safety front, we are continuing to communicate a clear message to our employees that working safe is the primary focus of the railroad. That is because we feel that a safe railroad is a productive railroad.

This message is driven home daily and at quarterly safety stand down meetings attended by Metro-North employees, whether they work on the front lines or in an office.

- At the start of 2016, following the reorganization of the Safety & Security Department and creation of the Office of System Safety, I appointed Justin Vonashek as our Vice President of System Safety. Mr. Vonashek has over a decade of experience in the transportation industry and was previously Chief Safety, Security, Emergency Preparedness & Regulatory Compliance Officer for Keolis Commuter Services in Boston. Keolis operates the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) commuter rail system.
- Metro-North also continues its focus on several innovative safety initiatives. I am pleased to report that thanks to a partnership with NASA and the Federal Railroad Administration, we recently fully implemented the Confidential Close Call Reporting System initiative—known as C3RS—which will be instrumental in reestablishing a strong safety culture at Metro-North.
- C3RS is an industry-leading initiative that provides our employees with a confidential and anonymous process enabling them to voluntarily report—directly to NASA—unsafe conditions or actions with confidentiality and without fear of disciplinary action.

- With the help of the Association of Commuter Rail Employees (ACRE), C3RS was first rolled out last year to approximately 1,500 employees of the Transportation Department.
- In January, we announced that in working collaboratively with the unions representing the Maintenance of Way and Maintenance of Equipment departments, the 4,000 employees they represent now have access to the C3RS system.
- Metro-North management, labor organizations representing these employees, and FRA Deputy Regional Administrator Les Fiorenzo jointly signed a Memorandum of Understanding describing the core principles and values to successfully implement the program to its mechanical and engineering workers.
- Metro-North is the first commuter railroad to implement the system with all of its operations workforce throughout the entire network.
- This is a tool that all our employees can use, and one that has already received a substantial amount of positive feedback from the members of our Transportation Department and ACRE. And I know that the 5,500 employees participating now will feel the same way.
- We continue to implement National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recommendations, while working with both the NTSB and other MTA agencies to ensure the coordination of industry best and safe practices.

- We also continue to progress installation of Positive Train Control (PTC) and we will meet the new PTC implementation requirements of December 31, 2018. PTC is regarded as the most modern type of train protection with the initial pilot segments being implemented on the New Haven and Hudson Lines later this year.
- After creating a pilot program, for identifying safety-critical employees with sleep apnea, we successfully screened all locomotive engineers and referred those that met the criteria for further diagnosis and treatment.
- Last year, we hired a consultant to conduct a pilot risk assessment of several railroad crossings. Building off of that pilot program, the MTA will now seek a qualified third party safety expert to help us conduct a three-year system-wide grade crossing safety risk assessment of priority locations throughout the entire Metro-North system in New York and Connecticut, as well as on the Long Island Rail Road.
- Last June, we partnered with Operation Lifesaver to promote safety and reduce injuries and fatalities at railroad crossings. As part of this joint effort, we launched an advertising campaign at the movies, on television, in newspapers, online and on outdoor signs. This campaign was also incorporated into signage at stations and on trains. We also introduced a new safety-focused section of our website.
- And this year we will begin installing video and audio recording devices in railcars and installing a track-monitoring system mounted on our rail cars to provide continuous data on track conditions.

- In tandem with these safety efforts, our program of aggressive track improvements continued in 2015. The extraordinary system-wide reconstruction effort along our right-of-way is paying off, with miles of track being rebuilt over the last two and a half years. This not only provides the foundation for a safer and more reliable service, but also a smoother ride for our customers.
- Since 2013, when the program began, our forces have replaced 97,961 ties, laid 16.5 miles of continuous welded rails, rebuilt 88 switches, overhauled 32 railroad crossings, and performed 2,905 welds on rail joints that connect stretches of track with one another.
- This massive accomplishment is the result of a team effort requiring the coordination of dispatch operations and the dedication of our employees.
- In addition to visual track inspections, which are conducted by employees twice a week, Metro-North's track reconstruction and renewal efforts have been guided by cutting edge technology used to identify track conditions.
- When any of these inspections and tests identify defects along the tracks, crews assess the magnitude of the problem and make immediate repairs. In the case of minor defects, speed restrictions are instituted on that segment of track until the repairs are made.

- Track improvements are continuing into 2016 and include installing over 30,000 ties, 9 miles of continuous welded rail, and 11 switches on the New Haven Line; along with renewing nine grade crossings on the New Canaan and Danbury Lines and replacing five traction power substations.
- Necessary track work also brings the increased probability of train delays. To combat this, we adjust our train schedules to accommodate off-peak and weekend track outages. This allows us to perform critical maintenance and capital construction projects; while minimizing any impact on our customers' travel.
- Our upcoming April 3 schedule change will reflect necessary adjustments to provide customers with a schedule they can count on as we continue to rebuild track and infrastructure at critical locations.
- Two of these projects are the continuation of Devon Moveable Bridge repair work and the Overhead Catenary Replacement. Metro-North and the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) have coordinated the next stage of work on these important projects with the upcoming schedule change. After completing track 3 repairs on Devon bridge last year, Metro-North forces will now start steel repair work and the replacement of the bridge timbers and running rails on track 1. Simultaneously, ConnDOT's contractor will replace the catenary on track 1. This work will take place until the next schedule change this fall.

- The temporary Devon transfer station will reopen while this work is underway so Waterbury Branch trains can meet New Haven Line trains. The structure features a walkway connecting two four-car length platforms, lights and a public address system... And it was built by our forces.
- Metro-North and ConnDOT have worked together to ensure that this work would occur with the least customer impact possible.
- You've just heard a long laundry list of some of our major undertakings. And you would be right to ask: "So what has all this work resulted in?"
- As I alluded to earlier, it is beginning to pay off. 2015 saw marked improvements to Metro-North's service reliability.
- Our system-wide on-time performance reached 93.5%. This was half a percent better than our goal for 2015 and a solid improvement over 2014's 91.5%. The New Haven Line performed at 92.6% with service reliability improving during all travel periods compared to 2014.
- The railroad's fleet also attained a record mean distance between failure (MDBF)—the distance a train travels before experiencing a mechanical problem--of 199,838 miles. This improves upon 2014's MDBF by more than 50,000 miles, and beats the railroad's goal of 185,000 miles. Contributing factors included the performance of the new M8 fleet at 284,388 miles on the New Haven Line and our effective car and locomotive maintenance programs.

- This achievement also resulted in a high consist compliance rate—the percentage of cars in service every day, providing seats for the railroad’s customers—of 99.6%.
- Speaking of the M8s, the rollout of all 405 new rail cars was completed by the end of June thanks to the joint investment made through the MTA’s Capital Program and ConnDOT. These cars now operate during all service periods between New Haven, Stamford and Grand Central Terminal.
- The M8s exceeded their mileage goal for the year by 2.4%. Enhanced performance features of the M8 cars include sealed, alternating current motors that are less vulnerable to weather and simplified, more reliable single-leaf doors.
- Now that the M8 cars have gone through the initial ‘break-in’ period, we have a chance to evaluate their design and performance in real-world conditions. We are very pleased that the M8 cars are exceeding their performance expectations.
- This is a testament to the years of work that went into designing and building these cars. Perhaps even more importantly, it’s also a testament to the strong partnership between the States of New York and Connecticut that led to the crucial capital investment needed to get these cars into service.
- These service improvements come at a time when ridership numbers have reached the highest level in Metro-North’s history.

- Total rail ridership was at an all-time record high in 2015 at 86 million, 1.36 percent higher than the previous year and representing 1.38 million additional rides. All ridership categories showed growth contributing to this record setting year.
- The largest increase occurred on the New Haven Line, which jumped to 40.3 million rides--a 1.8 percent increase over 2014. This ridership increase further emphasizes the need for a continued commitment to invest in and improve our infrastructure.
- More and more people are relying on our service. And they are noticing our rebuilding efforts. This is reflected in Metro-North's Customer Complaint Index (CCI) which measures the number of complaints per million rides. For 2015, the New Haven Line index was 137.6 complaints per million rides compared to an all-time high of 235.6 complaints per million rides in 2014. We are off to a good start this year with a CCI for January of 96.2 and has been trending downward due to improving service reliability.
- To ensure our customers and stakeholders such as yourselves are kept well-informed, we continue to focus on improving communications.
- And the best means of communication is face-to-face, which is why we held another series of public forums last year. These included six informal outreach meetings at Grand Central and outlying stations between our customers and Metro-North management. We plan to continue these customer forums.

- Attending today's session is another way to improve communication. I hope we have proven that we are committed to an ongoing and open dialogue that will help us keep in touch with our customers' concerns, and keep them informed of our efforts.
- The majority of those efforts are geared toward improving the overall customer experience.
- Because most of our customers get their information on mobile devices, we released an enhanced version of Metro-North's "Train Time" app for smartphones in 2015. This included new editing and "favorites" features; improved trip searching; new line-map zooms; faster loading speeds; and more. Over 186,000 downloads were registered in 2015.
- Our customers don't just want train information *on the go*. And that is why we are working on developing a mobile ticketing app, which will allow customers to purchase tickets on their smart phones and will be available as a free download for both Apple and Android smartphones.
- The app will allow customers to purchase all ticket types – monthly, weekly, one-way and ten-trip and will interface with the existing Train Time app.
- As announced by New York Governor Cuomo earlier this year, we are planning to release a pilot to test the app later this spring and begin to roll out the app over the summer and continue through the end of the year.

- Some people would define their bicycle as a mobile device. And that is why we conducted an extended test of a prototype bike mount system with ConnDOT specifically designed and manufactured for the M-8 fleet. A total of 50 M8 cars have been fitted with a pair of bicycle racks in order to gain additional feedback from customers. The installation of additional bike racks on all odd-numbered M8 cars is now in progress with completion this summer.
- Finally, many of our customers will be happy to hear that Metro-North is getting even quieter this year.
- Starting on April 4, two Quiet Cars® will be available on every weekday train — peak and off-peak — thanks to the expansion of our popular “Quiet CALM-mute” program.
- On all weekday inbound trains, the last two cars are designated Quiet Cars®. And on all weekday outbound trains, the first two cars are designated Quiet Cars®.
- We are more than happy to expand this program in response to customer suggestions and, as requested, onboard signage will indicate the quiet cars.
- Many of the accomplishments I have outlined today—and our ongoing efforts—would not have been possible without the good working relationship we have established with Commissioner Redeker and his team.

- That relationship entails:
  - Conducting daily and weekly staff meetings and calls, and a monthly CEO meeting;
  - Producing financial and operational reports regarding the New Haven and Branch lines; and
  - Partnering on critical projects such as the repairs at Devon Bridge and the WALK Bridge replacement.
  
- We have always coordinated capital work with Connecticut DOT. We continue to collaborate with DOT and have developed a joint five-year capital program that is consistent with many of the rail elements of Governor Malloy's Five-Year Transportation Ramp-Up Plan.
  
- Metro-North has made good progress to date. And we intend to continue doing so in 2016.
  
- The railroad is getting better, but we are not complacent or resting on these achievements.
  
- We realize we still have a long way to go to provide our customers with the excellent service they deserve.
  
- Thank you and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.