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Res No. 520

Resolution urging the Metropolitan Transportation Authority not to cut bus service between Co-op City and Manhattan.

By Council Members Seabrook, Liu, Boyland, Katz, Monserrate, Rivera and Foster

Whereas, Mayor Bloomberg negotiated a proposal for a takeover by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (“MTA”) of the private bus lines providing services to commuters and reached an agreement with the MTA that was supposed to take effect on July 1, 2004; and

Whereas, Under the agreement, the MTA would be responsible for all aspects of service delivery, while the City of New York would pay the MTA the difference between the actual cost of operation and revenues from all sources, including subsidies, fares and advertising so that the City would continue to subsidize the operation of these bus services; and

Whereas, The City would lease all its bus-related assets to the MTA, including approximately 440 new buses currently on order by the City, as well as two bus depots owned by the City; and

Whereas, The MTA would amend its 2000-2004 Capital Plan to set aside a \$322.5 million reserve for costs associated with fleet replacement, facilities and other necessary capital improvements related to the MTA's assumption of service; and

Whereas, The City would provide any additional assets necessary for the successful assumption of service by the MTA, which potentially makes the City responsible for paying hundreds of millions of dollars in costs arising from necessary purchases of infrastructure, such as additional depots, garages, buses and fueling stations; and

Whereas, The MTA would retain all union employees and would honor existing collective bargaining agreements and obligations until new agreements are negotiated, but said nothing in the transfer agreement about the job status of the many non-union employees of the private lines, and

Whereas, The MTA would not assume any preexisting liabilities, such as worker's compensation, tort, environmental remediation and pension obligations, leaving the responsibility for those items with the operators of the seven bus line operators; and

Whereas, In June, the Council and the Mayor authorized extending the franchise of the bus lines to give the MTA more time to undertake the transfer, but since then, the MTA announced plans to balance its 2005 budget deficit of \$539 million, including service cuts; and

Whereas, The MTA proposed a 2005-2009 capital plan, released in July 2004, does not include the \$322.5 million for capital improvements and assumption of services that was stipulated in the term agreements; and

Whereas, Despite the City's continued, significant role in financing the costs of the bus service, MTA budget revisions and service cuts may adversely impact the bus lines; and

Whereas, Co-op City residents are serviced by one of the private bus lines to Manhattan and are concerned about potential cutbacks in service given their reliance on this service to go to Manhattan for work, recreation, and shopping, now therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Council of the City of New York urges the Metropolitan Transportation Authority not to cut bus service between Co-op City and Manhattan.

RR, 7/30/04, LS1483