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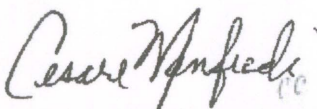
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Even more crucially, when gasoline becomes unaffordable, as it surely will, commuters will be forced to look for alternative ways to get to work. The New York Metropolitan Region produces the bulk of the tax revenue for the entire state of New York. If our rail system remains disconnected there will be an increased loss of economic activity to Northern New Jersey as mobility diminishes. The cost of a new TZB and connecting commuter rail is admittedly high, but the cost not to do it is substantially higher. Every year this region loses up to \$18 billion every year because of the loss of time due to vehicular congestion as well as the damage to persons, property and deaths caused by vehicular accidents.

The economic engine of the region is, of course, New York City, but it does not stand alone. It depends on the surrounding suburbs and cities for employees, as well as to provide jobs for NYC residents. The reverse commute to Westchester is steadily increasing while the inbound commuter traffic is now flat. The commuting patterns have changed from basically a radial pattern to now include steadily increasing suburb to suburb travel. Because the rails only go north/south commuters going between suburbs must depend on the car thus creating the gridlock conditions we see everywhere.

Growing car dependency is putting the entire region in a vulnerable position with regard to the cost of gas. As of this writing the cost of oil is now \$108 per barrel with the price of a gallon of gas to reach proportionally unimaginable heights in the near future. Our only hope for economic survival in the future is the accessibility of a first class rail system. We almost have it. It just needs to be completed. If the decision makers of today disagree with this letter regarding the immediate need for commuter rail, any new bridge must be built to accommodate the future need for a commuter rail that will undoubtedly happen in the next 100 years. When the George Washington Bridge was built, the design included a second level to accommodate the future. It is requested that today's decision makers exhibit a similar vision for the future.

Sincerely,



Cesare Manfredi, President