

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

August 26, 2016

Mr. Joseph Giuliatti
President
MTA-Metro-North Railroad
420 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10017-3739

Dear Mr. Giuliatti,

Working with local advocates and stakeholders, including the MTA, we have seen firsthand what improvements to the Waterbury Branch Line would mean for the Naugatuck River Valley. We are thrilled that progress is being made on the signalization project, which will include passing sidings to allow two-way traffic on the line for the first time. The increase in ridership over the last several months demonstrates the increasing utility of the line as well as the excitement surrounding its long-overdue improvements. We've also been proud to bring back federal investments to help fund these rail improvements. All of these signs are encouraging, but it is crucial that these improvements be met with reliable commutes rather than poor service, which undermines the important improvements the line has made over the past two years.

With that in mind, we write today to express concern regarding the recent increase in service lapses on the Waterbury Branch Line. As you know, the Waterbury Branch Line is a lifeline for thousands of my constituents who rely on it to get between their jobs and their families. While riders will be the first to note that service on the line has improved, their experience with the line this August has been lacking. Below is a list of some of the service lapses that have been reported during this past month:

- Between August 2, 2016, and August 16, 2016, there were 19 incidents that caused delays on the line;
- As of August 23, 2016, the on-time performance was only 85 percent for the month, dropping from a 95 percent on-time performance rate in the six preceding months;
- Earlier in the month, riders were not told of a wiring problem on a train, and as a result, they waited for over two hours in Bridgeport for a connecting train to Devon;
- On Monday, August 22, 2016, riders waiting for a 6:04am train were told the train was delayed late through a cell phone alert that was sent at 6:20am.

Some delays are understandable—especially ones that occurred during the period of very high temperatures the state experienced in August. However, when on-time performance slips and is accompanied by poor communication with riders, riders have a right to be angry and to seek explanations. Further, we worry that our ability to continue to win funding for improvements will be hampered by the lack of reliability on the line. Simply put, riders deserve better. Therefore, we respectfully ask you to provide us and Waterbury Branch Line riders with an explanation of Metro-North's recent service lapses as well as an accounting of what steps Metro-North will take to improve on-time performance and communication with riders in the future.

We look forward to your prompt response and to partnering with you to improve commutes for the customers you serve.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY
United States Senate



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate



JAMES A. HIMES
Member of Congress



ELIZABETH H. ESTY
Member of Congress