

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3215

March 15, 2025

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

I am writing to call upon you to authorize a Public Private Partnership (P3) for the redevelopment of Penn Station—which would be the single greatest catalyst for the revitalization of New York City in a post-COVID world. Penn Station is the largest and busiest rail complex in the Western Hemisphere. It is the transit hub where the largest commuter rails—Amtrak, LIRR, NJ Transit, (and hopefully Metro North)—all converge. Penn Station has over 1,000 daily train movements and a 100 train movements during its peak hour. It has an average of one train every 36 seconds. Since 1968, the number of passengers has grown by threefold—from 200,000 to 600,000. Yet the capacity of Penn Station has been stagnant and the structure itself has become a symbol of urban decay.

Even though Penn Station is only a block away from Moynihan Station, these two structures are worlds apart. One is a dream; the other, a nightmare.

The visual contrast between the grandeur of Moynihan Station and the squalor of Penn Station is the difference between a government that works and a government that fails. It is the difference between Governor Cuomo's model of building and Governor Hochul's model of bureaucratic bungling.

Former Governor Andrew Cuomo excelled at deploying Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) to redevelop Moynihan Station, LaGuardia Airport, Javitz Center, Mario Cuomo bridge, and Kosciuszko bridge. A wise man once said: nothing succeeds like success.

Instead of emulating the success of Governor Cuomo and harnessing the power of public-private partnerships, you have chosen to put the MTA, rather than a P3, in charge of redeveloping Penn Station, which will likely doom Penn's transformation to a tragic fate of high costs and long delays.

Even though you have promised to “tolerate no more delays,” the history of the MTA is largely a story of delay. The MTA-led East Side Access had a cost overrun of nearly \$7 billion (158%) and a delay of 14 years. The MTA-led Second Avenue Subway Phase 1 had a cost overrun of nearly \$700 million (17%) and a delay of four years. By contrast, the P3-led Moynihan Train Hall was completed on-budget and on-scheduled. Instead of doubling down on what works, the State of New is reverting back to what fails. Instead of paying less for more, the State of New York is perversely choosing to pay more for less.

Penn Station is not only architecturally and aesthetically atrocious but also structurally dangerous. Eight years ago, on April 14th, 2017, the popping sound of a taser was widely mistaken for gunfire, causing pandemonium among passengers panicking about a possible active shooter. The stampede in the cramped and crowded spaces of Penn Station left 16 people injured. NYC is one false report of gunfire away from triggering mass hysteria. Penn Station is so crowded, cramped, chaotic, and confusing that it is singularly susceptible to deadly stampedes. Given the centrality of Penn Station to the Northeast Corridor, redeveloping Penn is matter of public safety and homeland security.

No infrastructure project matters more to the Bronx than Penn Station Access, which would connect the Bronx to Penn Station via four new Metro North Stations on the Hell Gate Line. If the Metro North stations are completed without a redeveloped Penn Station, the commuters of the Bronx will be given a second-class transit experience of a dark and dilapidated train maze. The Bronx—indeed all of New York—deserves better than the hellhole of a Penn Station that is left to languish indefinitely in a state of decay.

A P3-led redevelopment of Penn Station is the best path forward for the revitalization of New York in a post-COVID world. I urge you to be on the right side of history.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ritchie Torres", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress