

**Committee on Homeland Security
Subcommittee on Transportation and Protective Security**

U.S. House of Representatives

Securing Public Areas of Transportation Systems: Stakeholder Perspectives

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Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, I welcome this opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the challenges of securing passengers utilizing surface transportation in New Jersey, New York and the region.

Before joining New Jersey Transit in July of 2010 as the Chief of Police for the New Jersey Transit Police Department, I served for five years as the Chief of Department for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department. During my 23 year career with the Port Authority I served as the Commanding Officer of Internal Affairs and Special Investigations, the Commanding Officer of the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Midtown Manhattan, as well as the Commanding Officer of Newark Liberty International Airport.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for inviting me to testify at this Hearing, "Securing Public Areas of Transportation Systems: Stakeholder Perspectives." We appreciate the important role of this Committee in matters relating to transportation security, and we look forward to working with you on these issues.

ABOUT NJ TRANSIT

NJ TRANSIT is the third largest transit system in the country and also the nation's largest statewide public transportation system serving an area encompassing 5,325 square miles. We provide more than 915,000 weekday trips on 257 bus routes, three light rail lines, 12 commuter rail lines and through Access Link, our paratransit service. We serve 166 rail stations, 62 light rail stations and more than 19,000 bus stops linking major points in New Jersey, New York and Philadelphia.

Mr. Chairman, the transportation services provided by NJ TRANSIT are vital to the economic wellbeing of our state and the region. We provide an essential service to the nearly 10 percent of all New Jersey commuters who use and depend on the NJ TRANSIT system. It's important to note that these services reduce traffic congestion by providing commuters with alternatives to our crowded highways and trans-Hudson crossings.

OVERVIEW

Mr. Chairman, as you know, public transit agencies have unique security challenges due to the large numbers of people we serve in publicly accessible facilities, traveling on advertised predictable schedules.

Over and over, we have seen carnage inflicted by radicalized extremists on innocent people using the most publicly accessible of spaces, just recently on a public bike path in nearby Manhattan. And unfortunately, mass transit systems worldwide continue to be preferred targets of terrorists.

Our most important priority is keeping our customers and employees safe as we continue to provide our essential transportation services. Safety and security are the top priority for all of NJ TRANSIT and within the New Jersey Transit Police Department - counterterrorism is our primary mission, and we take that mission very seriously.

NJ TRANSIT utilizes a risk based approach to maximizing our security efforts to protect our trains, buses, light rail vehicles, and stations from all hazards and threats. The Police Department's Intelligence Section provides the agency with strategic level risk management tools in support of our counterterrorism efforts and coordinates intelligence collection, analysis, and production efforts, including the reporting and monitoring of suspicious activity and individuals, with the FBI's Newark, New York City, and Philadelphia Joint Terrorism Task Forces, the US Department of Homeland Security and the TSA, the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, the NYPD, the New Jersey state fusion center and other partners.

Almost all of our 11,000 employees have received security awareness training. From conductors to bus operators to office staff, our employees are “force multipliers”—extra eyes and ears for our police. We also work in cooperation with the thousands of businesses located near train stations to report suspicious activity.

In addition, we continue to work closely with first responding agencies at the municipal, county and state levels. To give you just an example, several times per year members of New Jersey Transit's police, operations and administrative staff partner with local police, fire and EMS agencies in Incident Command Training at Texas A&M University. To date, more than **600** transit employees and **over 500** of our partners have participated in these joint exercises.

And to ensure that we are prepared for and are able to respond adequately to a terrorism incident, the NJTPD Office of Emergency Management conducts regular drills and exercises that ensures that our response to terrorism incidents is both effective and well-coordinated with our local, state, regional, and federal partners.

Our ability to respond quickly and capably has been further enhanced with the opening earlier this year of a new, state-of-the-art Emergency Operations Center, which is a critical tool that allows effective, efficient and economical management of any event in one central location that could (or does) impact transit operations. The EOC provides information and support to incident management and response/recovery coordination activities.

NJ TRANSIT also promotes a campaign urging customers who see suspicious activity or unattended packages at stations, aboard trains or buses, or near transit facilities to call the NJ TRANSIT security hotline at 1-888-TIPS-NJT, text us at NJTPD or notify a New Jersey Transit Police officer.

The NJ TRANSIT mobile app for smartphones includes convenient one-touch access to call or text the New Jersey Transit Police Department directly. So, not only can customers purchase digital tickets by using the app, they can also easily say something if they see something. All calls are investigated, and all information is confidential.

Mr. Chairman, while we do not release details about police deployments or specific countermeasures, our uniformed police patrol officers remain vigilant in monitoring our system. I am pleased to say we recently graduated 25 new officers (who happened to attend the nearby Mercer County Police Academy, which I'm sure Representative Coleman is familiar with), and we have another class of 16 recruits which will graduate from the Essex County Police Academy on December 14th of this year. Our uniformed officers are supported by plain clothes detectives and anti-crime officers throughout the NJ TRANSIT system.

Our Special Operations Division provides enhanced capabilities to protect and respond to terrorism on our system. Random baggage screening performed by our Emergency Services Units provides us with the capability to detect and respond to incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological, and explosive materials. ESU along with our Train Patrol Units and Conditions Tactical Unit also provide a specialized tactical response capability with unique training and capabilities specific to the mass transit environment.

Our canine unit officers along with their explosive detection dogs perform perhaps some of our most important functions. These officers along with their canine partners do not just detect explosives throughout the NJ TRANSIT system but their presence provides an effective visible deterrent against our adversaries.

Every member of the department is equipped with radiation pagers and we have tripled the number of officers trained in the use of long guns. We continue to work closely with the TSA's Office of Science and Technology to test the next generation of technology that will be utilized to secure surface transit.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, every one of these efforts that I have spoken of requires resources. We simply could not carry out our mission without the help and support of Congress and the Department of Homeland Security.

Mr. Chairman, in light of our nation's heightened security needs; we believe that increased federal investment in public transportation security by Congress and DHS is critical. NJ TRANSIT has made great strides in transit security improvements in recent years, but much more needs to be done. So we are very grateful for the interest and focus of the Committee and the Subcommittee, and very grateful to Representative Coleman for her efforts. They are not only welcome – they are essential.

We look forward to building on our cooperative working relationship with the Department of Homeland Security and Congress to further address these needs. On behalf of NJ TRANSIT and the New Jersey Transit Police Department, I again thank you and the Committee for allowing us to submit testimony on these critical issues, and look forward to working with you on safety and security issues.