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ATU Local 1056 Slams Response to Snow Storm

Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Transportation
by I. Daneek Miller, President/ Business Agent, ATU Local 1056

On behalf of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1056, thank you Chairman Vacca, members of the committee and other concerned Council Members present. I am ATU 1056 President and Business Agent I. Daneek Miller. ATU 1056 represents drivers and mechanics who work for MTA New York City Transit's Queens bus division. Many of my members were on the front line during the storm and on their behalf and that of our riding public, I want to make clear what we all know: that the lack of adequate response to so-called holiday storm in the borough of Queens represented an abomination.

Just look at what happened Sunday, December 26 and the days that followed: citizens abandoned, waiting on buses that have been stuck for hours – or, in most cases, never left the depot.

No one bothered to inform the riders that their wait was in vain.

What did happen: well, the mayor, his sanitation commissioner and the MTA chief went on television and before the media to fabricate the truth about their failures of leadership and management to the public touting what a great job they had done; we all know the truth about that! Decisions about preparation, response, budget and deployment fall first on City Hall and at the MTA.

Queens is not Manhattan. Queens primarily depends on more on buses than subway and rail to move about. Queens is not level and many main roads, including bus routes have declines and inclines that require appropriate attention to maintain bus operations. The response to that storm failed to take into account the terrain. Bus routes in Queens traverse across several community districts with many serving as feeder lines to subway lines. This requires a snow plan that clears bus routes that often involves otherwise secondary and tertiary streets. Some inclines require special attention in extreme snow conditions or buses will not be able to complete their runs.

Interestingly, MTA opted to follow a reduced bus service schedule the week of the storm leaving most of the riding public unaware and over the objection of our Local. As a cost saving measure, the MTA provided a reduced schedule – in effect for the subject week – of the almost one third less service.



Hundreds of ATU members stuck on their buses for hours; some for more than 24 hours. Riders waiting for buses much longer than reasonable – even in these difficult weather conditions. We want and demand answers. We look to these series of hearings to help get at the truth. We also call on City Hall to publicly release its (community/sanitation) district by district snow response plans and the actual implementation. The public ought to know! Thank you.

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