



THE GENERAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK, INC.
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**Remarks of Robert G. Wessels
Executive Director
General Contractors Association of New York
before the
Senate Standing Committee on Corporations, Authorities & Commissions
Senate Standing Committee on Finance
Senate Standing Committee on Cities
June 24, 2022**

Good morning Senators Comrie, Krueger and Sepulveda.

I am Robert Wessels, Executive Director of the General Contractors Association of New York (GCA), and I am here today representing the GCA's 300 member firms who employ over 25,000 represented trades workers and professionals who have built the metropolitan region's heavy civil infrastructure – its roads, bridges, tunnels, water & sewer, and rail and transit systems – since 1909.

We thank you for inviting us to comment on plans for Penn Station since we have been supportive for many years of the improvements that the MTA, New York State and Amtrak have made to the complex, many elements of which have been constructed by our member firms.

The GCA, as you may also know, is also Co-Chair of both the Gateway NOW Coalition and the Coalition for the Northeast Corridor (CNEC).

As part of those efforts, we have actively advocated for federal funding and administrative approvals for not only the new Gateway Hudson River tunnels, which will increase train capacity and provide redundancy and reliability, but for much needed Penn Station rehabilitation, expansion, and concourse improvements.

In addition, we have actively advocated for support for those initiatives from the states of New York and New Jersey.

With the \$66 billion provided by Congress and championed by Senator Schumer in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) for intercity passenger and freight rail, we are more optimistic than ever that Gateway and other Penn Station improvements are on track to advance quickly.

That \$66 billion includes \$6 billion for Amtrak's Northeast Corridor (NEC), \$36 billion for new Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail (IPR) grants, and \$8 billion for passenger, freight, and safety investments.

That will require the integration of the existing Moynihan Train Hall, the on-going Penn Station renovations, the new Gateway Tunnel, and new “Penn South” track capacity into a comprehensive and seamless world class transit hub.

Those efforts will increase pedestrian circulation, improve wayfinding, increase natural light, and triple accessibility and will help regain Penn Station’s history as not only a critical transportation hub, but as a regional economic driver.

Certainly, GCA members have both professional and personal interest in seeing these projects advance expeditiously. We anticipate that they will create many tens of thousands of good paying middle class union construction jobs as well as many billions of dollars in peripheral economic activity.

But as residents of the region, we also look forward to the broader mobility benefits they will generate for our families.

We will therefore continue to work with you, New York State, the MTA, Congress, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), and the U.S. Department of Transportation to secure the funding that should help build these critically important projects.

At the end of the day, there is absolutely no question that all the Penn improvements are critically important to millions in New York and New Jersey, but also for anyone who uses the Northeast Corridor.

We thank you, for the work you have done and continue to do to advance these projects and look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you and other stakeholders in order to build them better, faster, smarter, and more cost-effectively.

Thank you.

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