

**Reinvent Albany**  
**BetaNYC • Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled (BCID)**  
**Citizens Budget Commission • Common Cause NY**  
**Disabled In Action of Metropolitan NY • Downstate New York ADAPT**  
**League of Women Voters of New York State**  
**National Freedom of Information Coalition**  
**New York Lawyers for the Public Interest • New York News Publishers Association**  
**NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign**  
**Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC) • Riders Alliance**  
**Rise and Resist Elevator Action Group • Regional Plan Association**  
**StreetsPAC • Tri-State Transportation Campaign**

October 14, 2021

Kathy Hochul  
Governor, State of New York

**VIA EMAIL**

**Re: Please Sign A1442B (Carroll)/S4625A (Comrie), the MTA Open Data Act, to Increase Transparency and Efficiency**

Dear Governor Hochul,

Our groups ask that you sign A1442B (Carroll)/S4625A (Comrie), the MTA Open Data Act, into law. The legislation codifies Executive Order (EO) 95 of 2013 for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), and is a common-sense step to increase transparency and improve efficiency at the largest state public authority.

The MTA is a massive agency that serves millions of riders every day, and has an \$18 billion operating budget. However, the MTA has only published 76 datasets on the state's open data portal.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, the NYS Department of Health currently has 563 datasets on the portal.<sup>2</sup> While the MTA has made strides in releasing real-time service data to third parties like Google, open data related to contracts and finances has lagged and financial information is largely provided in inaccessible PDFs.

The bill defines publishable data and requires the MTA to designate a data coordinator to oversee compliance, as required by EO 95. Within 180 days, the MTA must create a schedule for release of open data in the next three years, which is provided to the Legislature and the public, increasing public accountability of EO 95's requirements. Receipt of this schedule will allow the Legislature to conduct better oversight of MTA data disclosure and more closely monitor the authority's compliance with the law. In turn, this will provide greater public transparency of the MTA's operations.

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<sup>1</sup> See full list at [https://data.ny.gov/browse?Dataset-Information\\_Agency=Metropolitan+Transportation+Authority&utf8=%E2%9C%93](https://data.ny.gov/browse?Dataset-Information_Agency=Metropolitan+Transportation+Authority&utf8=%E2%9C%93)

<sup>2</sup> See full list at <https://health.data.ny.gov/>  
[www.reinventalbany.org](http://www.reinventalbany.org)  
OPEN, ACCOUNTABLE, EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT  
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New York City has been a pioneer in open data, and a key contributor to its success has been the legislative mandate and robust oversight undertaken by the City Council, which regularly holds hearings on implementation. Additionally, the City Council has updated the law several times to strengthen it.<sup>3</sup> With the MTA newly required to report to the State Legislature and public, it will be easier to hold the authority accountable for publishing open data, as seen in New York City.

We look forward to the MTA embracing the requirements of the MTA Open Data Act and reinvigorating its efforts to publish open data, and again ask that you sign A1442/S4625A to strengthen public accountability of the MTA's open data implementation.

Sincerely,

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<sup>3</sup> For more information see <https://opendata.cityofnewyork.us/open-data-law/>

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