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Ongoing Mess at Metro-North: Bad and Getting Worse: Cameron on Transportation

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It's not just the summer heat that's causing an operational meltdown at the MTA, parent agency of Metro-North and the NYC subways. It's the years of neglect, under-funding and misplaced priorities that are taking a toll on our vital transit infrastructure.

And it's only going to get worse, as the president of Metro-North has chosen to retire, long before his work is done.

Hardly a day goes by without delays on Metro-North caused by "wires down," signal problems, stuck bridges, poor track conditions or even the occasional "minor derailment." The work crews just can't keep up

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with the aging equipment and commuters are justifiably angry about paying high fares for worsening service.

The New York city subway system is in such crisis that Gov. Andrew Cuomo recently declared a state of emergency, finding \$1 billion in investment and even offering a \$1 million “[genius prize](#)” to anyone who can come up with a solution to improve service.

Dozens of lawsuits drag on from Metro-North derailments and train crashes going back to 2013, costing the agency (and taxpayers/riders) tens of millions of dollars.

We still don't have PTC (positive train control) to prevent such tragedies, despite a deadline extension and infusion of millions of dollars. How many more lives will be lost before PTC is a reality?

Meanwhile, back here in Connecticut, the Department of Transportation is planning to [cut transit funding](#) over the next few years because of reduced federal spending. Instead, they'll invest in highway mega-projects like the Waterbury mixmaster.

Through all of this, our dysfunctional legislature can't even write a budget, let alone figure out how to replenish the Special Transportation Fund that pays for our roads and rails and is expected to run out of money by 2019. Rational funding plans like tolls and a vehicle-mile tax have no political traction.

And the icing on the cake? Metro-North President Joseph Giulietti has [announced he is retiring](#) after three years on the job, but long before his mission is complete. Why is he leaving? He says it's because he's put in his 40 years in the railroad biz and wants to enjoy his life.

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Mr. Giulietti may deserve a break after three years of his 24 x 7 labors. He has done much to improve the railroad and deserves our thanks. But I can't imagine a man as smart and well intentioned as him isn't feeling some guilt at deserting his troops in their hour of need.

Was it the immensity of the job that exhausted Giulietti, or the appointment of his new boss, [MTA Chairman Joseph Lhota](#), whose primary focus is on fixing New York City subways?

The folks at Metro-North aren't stupid, despite what you might think when stuck on a sweltering, delayed

train. They are smart, well-intentioned professionals trying to do the best with a bad situation — keeping their aging, under-funded railroad running.

While the MTA [spends billions](#) on years-overdue projects like East Side Access (bringing Long Island Rail Road into Grand Central station), the legacy transit system can barely keep running.

Some of MNRR's best and brightest came out of retirement to work for Giulietti and must be feeling abandoned. Finding his replacement won't be easy and will take many months.

Hang on, fellow commuters. We are in for a bumpy ride.

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