

Why is the Third Track the Right Track?

Good evening. I am Judy Greiman, the Chief Deputy to the President and Vice President for Government and Community Relations at Stony Brook University. I am here to speak on behalf of the University in favor of the third track.

We believe that Long Island NEEDS this project and know that it will help our students and employees. The trains that currently stop on campus are often overcrowded because they run too infrequently. The station is used by westbound commuters to NYC and eastbound students/faculty/staff coming to campus.

The third track will help us with our student recruiting efforts. LI has a world-class research university right in its backyard, and the third track would mean increased opportunities for students looking for a Top Tier school at an affordable price.

It will also help us to recruit staff and faculty. As the largest single site employer in Suffolk County, residents of Nassau and the five boroughs might consider a career at Stony Brook University, University Hospital, the Vets Home or one of our Centers of Excellence if the commute were easier. Potential employees would have access to good jobs, SBU would have access to great talent, and pollution and traffic would be reduced by the reverse commute via train.

This proposal would also help to alleviate some of the housing and parking issues raised by our neighbors and our students and early career employees. Our student housing survey data shows that commuter students, including our graduate and professional students, are willing to live up to 40 minutes away from campus when traveling by train. The improvements supported by the third track could potentially open up other communities for students and young professionals to live if the ride is easy and within the appropriate distance/time. This would be a boost to some of the communities on the line.

It will be an improvement for the LI economy. The project will certainly create jobs and will help LI to capture the new businesses that are drawn to the intellectual capital at Stony Brook, Cold Spring Harbor and Brookhaven National Lab. Long Island needs to leverage its mass transit infrastructure to attract new investment, create additional jobs, strengthen real estate values, and grow its economy.

The improved service would also mean more opportunities for our students to spend time in NYC for cultural events and internships. It will allow LI to attract young talent, as they will have more options for housing and entertainment. It will also allow us to take advantage of the East Side Access project and to stay competitive with other regions.

I understand that the construction will impose a short term burden on some communities, but know that this is balanced both by the overall long term benefits of the track and by the elimination of the 7 grade crossings. I urge leaders not to make decisions based on short-term problems but, instead, to consider the significant benefits to the economy, environment, job creation and way of life that this project will bring. Thank you for your time.