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MTA Launches Appeal, But Will Continue to Implement Consent Decree

- **Board Chair, Mayor Meet with Media**

(Jan. 10, 2002) The MTA will continue its efforts to implement the federal Consent Decree, Board Chairman John Fasana told the media, Thursday, while appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court for a clarification of compliance measurements and the federal court's role in solving transportation problems.

Fasana and Mayor James Hahn met with the media following a special Board meeting during which an eight-member majority approved the appeal. Hahn and three others voted against the appeal.

Fasana said the Board directed the MTA staff to work with Special Master Donald Bliss to continue complying with the Consent Decree "based on steps the MTA already has taken." He referred to the new buses the agency has purchased and improvements in service over the past several years.

In a statement released following the meeting, the Board said the Consent Decree "threatens our ability to provide meaningful solutions to traffic problems...and transportation improvements...." Efforts to settle the dispute with the Bus Riders Union have failed.

"We fully anticipate remaining in partnership with the Decree to implement improvements in service," Fasana told the media. "At the same time, we entered into the Decree under certain assumptions. (We think) the way the courts have taken what we thought were industry definitions and applied them...goes against the law...."

Mayor Hahn, who said he was disappointed with the appeal, was pleased that the Board approved his motion directing the MTA staff to prepare an action plan to demonstrate the agency's Consent Decree actions.

"One of the things I want this action plan to do," said Hahn, "is to allow us to go back before Special Master Bliss and Judge Terry Hatter and present to the court what the MTA has been doing and the progress we're making and how we intend to comply with the Consent Decree in the future. I think we've made significant progress in the past few years and the court needs to hear about it."

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