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**Statement by Roger Snoble  
Chief Executive Officer, MTA  
October 27, 2003**

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Over this past weekend our negotiating team met with both the mechanics' union and the bus operators' union. No progress was made toward arriving at a settlement of either contract. As a result, the MTA Board has concluded we have reached an impasse with the mechanics' union, and the Board has instructed me to prepare a last, best and final offer to the ATU.

The Board does not take this decision lightly, but at this time, it has come to the conclusion that further talks will yield no progress.

Our best estimate is that we are currently \$37 million apart on health and welfare issues, and overall, approximately \$98 million apart. Time's a wasting; people are being hurt; the end of Daylight Savings Time creates additional reasons for us to hurry up, as it now becomes more of a safety issue.

The MTA mechanics' strike is the fifth longest strike by MTA workers of the ten strikes that have been called here since 1960. The last strike called by the bus drivers three years ago lasted 32 days. During the last strike, the average worker lost about \$5,000. So far this strike has cost the average worker about \$2,000 and still counting.

It continues to be very disappointing to be in this position. MTA, like other governmental agencies and businesses, is facing very difficult financial challenges triggered by the State budget crisis and very uncertain federal funding. In addition to rising health care costs, workers compensation and fuel prices are spiraling out of control. We have had to move hundreds of transportation capital improvement projects to the back burner and are having to borrow money just to keep projects already underway moving.

On the operations side, we have had to face the stark reality of living within our means and doing more with less. This year's budget has a net 104 fewer regular employees and 100 fewer as-needed contract employees, even with starting the new Metro Gold Line and adding more Metro Rapid Bus routes. Our non-union employees have not and will not receive pay increases in this fiscal year. On January 1, 2004, MTA Transit Pass prices will be increased by 23% to a monthly cost of \$52.00. In addition, we have had to reduce some services on lower performing bus routes to improve service on overcrowded routes.

In spite of these challenges, we are able to put on the bargaining table reasonable proposals to continue to provide our employees with good health care benefits and wage increases next year, and the year after, to go along with the already generous retirement plan that allows our hourly employees to work only 23 years and retire with full pension rights and paid health insurance until they reach the age of 65.

This strike was ill-advised to begin with, but certainly has continued for far too long already. After 17 months of essentially no progress at the bargaining table, even after the unions decided to bring the MTA to a standstill that, at best disrupts the entire region, the MTA is saying enough is enough. We urge the mechanics' union leadership to take this offer to our employees and recommend its passage. Additional delay in accepting this offer will simply lead to more suffering by our customers.

The Board of Directors has also directed me to express in the strongest possible terms to the labor unions, our employees, and the public, that there is no more money that can be or will be added to this offer.

Again we would like to thank the municipal operators, Metrolink and all of those who are helping to get people moving while this terrible situation is underway.

We are terribly sorry for any hardship that the mechanics' union strike has caused to our valued customers and hope that this latest effort will be successful.

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