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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 15, 2015

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***Mayor Fulop, Amalgamated Transit Union ATU (ATU) and NJ
for Transit Join Together to ‘Fight the Hike’ Against NJ Transit’s
Fare Hike and Tax Increase on Working Families***

***9% Fare increase and service cuts will affect 1 in 10 New Jersey Workers in What is Already the
Most Expensive Mass Transit in the Country***

JERSEY CITY- **Mayor Steven M. Fulop** along with the **Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)** and **New Jersey for Transit** today fiercely condemned New Jersey Transit’s decision to raise fares by nine percent and eliminate six bus lines and two train lines, which was approved despite viable immediate and long-term solutions presented by the ‘Fight the Hike Campaign.’

NJ Transit’s fare increase represents an added tax on working families in New Jersey, who are already paying the highest transit fares in the nation.

“While I am disappointed in today’s decision by the NJ Transit Board members, I am not surprised as this has been the pattern of leadership at the agency,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “NJ Transit should be exploring the expansion of transit and building the strong transit system commuters deserve to create long-term sustainability as we outlined. Working families in Jersey City don’t need an added tax and there are alternative measures to fixing NJ Transit’s budget issues.”

Today’s fare hike by New Jersey Transit’s is the fifth since 2002 and will affect the 47.3 percent of Jersey City residents who rely on mass transit to get to and from work. Increasing fares will result in costly and challenging commutes for almost half a million riders across the state and one in 10 New Jersey workers.

Mayor Fulop in partnership with ATU launched in May an aggressive campaign called “Fight the Hike,” a non-profit entity, to raise awareness around NJ Transit’s fare hike and service cut proposal. Since the commencement of the campaign, “Fight the Hike” has mobilized thousands of New Jerseyans to oppose the transit fare increase and service cuts.

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“NJ Transit simply got it wrong today” said **Ray Greaves, Chairman of the New Jersey ATU Statewide Council**. “I’d like to thank Mayor Fulop for standing with us and the ATU and together we will continue the fight to bring accessibility and affordability to the working families of New Jersey.”

The Fight the Hike Campaign, recognizing the need to act now and not push the issue further down the line, presented a three-pronged approach to eliminate the \$60 million NJ Transit budget shortfall, however this proposal was ignored by the NJ Transit Board members and leadership. The measures outlined included requiring NJ Transit to sell all vacant parcels of land owned by the agency statewide, establishing Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in urban areas as well as suburbs, and expanding bus and train capacity as ridership increases.

“These fare increases are another unfair burden on working New Jerseyans, who are being forced to bear the brunt of Gov. Christie’s fiscal mismanagement,” said **Charles Wowkanech, president of the New Jersey State AFL-CIO, which represents one million working men and women and their families**. “This governor has failed to develop a responsible plan to fund mass transit and instead relies on a patchwork of fare hikes, one-shot gimmicks and budget diversions. If we want our state’s economy to grow like our neighbors, we need a long-term plan that won’t balance our transportation needs on the backs of the people who can least afford it.”

“These fare hikes and service cuts are a direct result of Governor Christie’s refusal to acknowledge and the legislature’s inaction in solving New Jersey’s transportation funding crisis,” said **Janna Chernetz, Esq., of New Jersey for Transit**. “As a result, New Jersey commuters alone are footing the bill for the fifth time since 2000 to support a broken funding structure for which they receive nothing in return. New Jersey commuters should not be on the hook because the Governor and legislature are unwilling to resolve a long term transportation funding crisis.”

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Steven M. Fulop at 201-547-4836 or 201-376-0699. ////