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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Workers' Party Statement on Public Transport Fare Review Exercise

THE Workers' Party (WP) welcomes the new and enhanced concession schemes to make public transport more affordable for people with disabilities, senior citizens, low-wage workers, students and full-time national servicemen. These groups will finally enjoy some overdue relief for their travel needs, for which the public and the WP have lobbied for years.

The concessions, however, should not be used as a sweetener to make the latest fare increases palatable.

With an initial increase of 3.2% in 2014 and an increase of 3.4% rolled over to the fare review exercise next year, this could mean a heftier increase in 2015. We are concerned that the majority of the commuters may still experience a very large overall fare increase of up to 6.6% in the next two years.

This latest round of fare hikes comes on the back of a substantial \$1.1 billion government subsidy in our public transportation system through the Bus Services Enhancement Fund (BSEF) last year.

The fare hike has also come despite train breakdowns having become a regular affair, further compounding the frustrations of commuters, who are frequently affected by such service quality and reliability lapses.

We are disappointed that the fare hike will take place three months before the concession schemes for low-wage workers and people with disabilities are to be implemented. We call for the fare hike to be delayed until the new concession schemes are implemented.

The WP believes that public transport should be provided as a public good and not for profit. Service quality, reliability and fare affordability should come before the need to ensure the profitability of PTOs.

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