

# The Bulletin



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## ***The Bulletin***

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## **This Month's Cover Photo:**

Chicago, North Shore &  
Milwaukee 775 (Standard  
Car, 1930) leads a two-car  
train southbound at Racine  
WI in 8/1961, photographer  
unknown.

## **In This Issue: Let's Take a Ride on the 25 Line!**

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## **NYCT's R-179 PROBLEMS? (From *Railway Age*, December 10, 2019)**

According to news reports from local media, an audit by New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer takes issue with Bombardier Transportation's long-delayed contract with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority for 300 new R-179 subway cars.

The R-179s, now running on the **A** and **C** lines, are replacing the R-32 cars, built by the Budd Company in 1964-5. The R-32s are the oldest rolling stock in the NYCT fleet and, apparently, they are also the oldest rolling stock running on any subway or metro system in the world!

Stringer's audit, which he touted during a December 9 press conference, notes that the MTA signed a \$599 million contract with Bombardier in 2012 for the R-179s, but that the agency had received only 18 of those cars by the original 2017 delivery deadline. He stressed that the contract is 35 months behind schedule, and that the MTA still has not received the entire order.

An additional 18 R-179 cars worth \$36 million are being built as part of a liquidated damages agreement originally forged in December, 2017, and updated in January, 2019. New York City Transit President Andy Byford — no stranger to vehicle delivery problems involving Bombardier from his tenure with the Toronto Transit Commission — said the \$36 million offsets the expense of keeping the R-32s in a state of good repair.

As of December 9, 2019, 305 of the now-318 R179 cars had been delivered. MTA spokesman Tim Minton said 278 have been qualified and placed in service, and that the remaining 13 cars will be delivered by the end of December.

Stringer said some of the first R-179s had what he called "dangerous defects." His audit points out that Bombardier began building

the R-179s without a contractually required sign-off from MTA officials on its welding procedures. In December, 2013, Bombardier discovered a "hot cracking" issue with the welds on some of the cars, a problem that took 18 months to resolve. That delay, along with a longer-than-expected testing period, forced the R-32 cars, which are costly and time-consuming to maintain because of their age, to remain in service, the audit states.

"New Yorkers have lived and commuted for three extra years with delays and breakdowns," Stringer said. "We found that the MTA repeatedly looked the other way. They ignored clear warning signs. They failed to enforce deadlines. They delayed in enacting penalties. We need Bombardier and the MTA to clean up their act and step up. The MTA gave Bombardier a pass. And what does it mean for straphangers? More delays. More breakdowns of outdated cars."

Andy Byford took issue with Stringer's report. He said it only confirmed what he and his staff already know. "We have held Bombardier's feet to fire throughout this project," said Byford. "We have embedded resources to make sure the trains are being built properly. And critically, we leveraged the liquidated damages...to get us new trains, additional new trains that will benefit New Yorkers."

Bombardier spokeswoman Maryanne Roberts said in a statement that the company is "focused on completing delivery of the remaining cars by the end of this month."

The MTA plans to spend \$6 billion on 1,900 additional subway cars in its next, \$51 billion five-year capital plan, part of Byford's \$37.3 billion "Fast Forward" plan to overhaul New York City's transit system. Byford said a new

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