

April 7, 2022

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Executive Director Rick Cotton
The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
4 World Trade Center
150 Greenwich Street
New York City, NY 10007

Dear Governor Hochul and Executive Director Cotton:

As elected officials representing Queens, we respectfully ask that the noise pollution concerns of this area—specifically Maspeth, Ridgewood, Middle Village, and Glendale—be fully and fairly considered during the planning and implementation of the Interborough Express and the Cross Harbor Freight Program. We understand the significance of these projects as well as the potential benefits they may provide to our city, including decongesting our streets, expanding public transit, and reducing carbon emissions. But without prioritizing noise mitigation, these projects may prove detrimental to the health and quality of life of the surrounding communities.

These communities are familiar with the effects of noise pollution and earth-shaking vibrations caused by freight rail. For years, our constituents have raised concerns regarding the effects of freight trains. In addition to the noise trains make as they pass, they also cause vibrations that can shake a home's foundation throughout the night. This acute exposure to freight rail exceeds being an annoyance—it is unhealthy. Multiple studies have shown that exposure to train noise and vibration can have a negative impact on health; leading to mood, sleep, cardiovascular disorders, and more.^{1 2} As these plans are developed, the public health concerns as outlined must be taken into account.

¹ Sahu, Preeti et al. "A study of self-reported health problems of the people living near railway tracks in Raipur city." *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care* vol. 9,2 740-744. 28 Feb. 2020.

² Croy I, Smith MG, Waye KP "Effects of train noise and vibration on human heart rate during sleep: an experimental study." *BMJ Open* 2013.

The Cross Harbor Freight Program and Interborough Express would drastically increase the train traffic through those already affected neighborhoods. According to the Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Statement that was released in 2016, the Cross Harbor Freight Program would likely cause moderate or severe noise impacts on these communities.³ The review also assesses that some area's buildings would be at risk of damage caused by the vibrations from the trains. These impacts, while not new to these communities, could drastically increase under the Cross Harbor Freight Program and the Interborough Express.

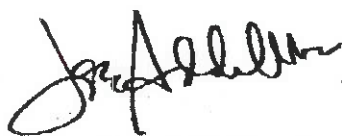
In addition to the noise brought about by the freight trains, the subsequent truck traffic is concerning as well. While the Cross Harbor Freight Program would reduce the overall number of trucks on New York City's streets, according to the Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Statement, it would drastically increase truck traffic in the communities we represent. These additional trucks have the potential to cause noise pollution, worsen traffic, and lower the local air quality. Unless measures are taken to ensure that the harmful effects of these trucks are mitigated, it is unacceptable for these neighborhoods to bear these burdens. We look forward to learning about the potential impacts of these trucks in the ongoing Tier II Environmental Impact Statement, made possible by federal funds from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

We applaud the ambition that the Cross Harbor Freight Program and Interborough Express would bring to New York, but we must make sure they are built in a way that does not overburden and hurt the communities closest to these projects. That is why we respectfully ask that the concerns of Maspeth, Ridgewood, Middle Village, and Glendale be given full and fair consideration during the planning and execution of these new projects. We look forward to partnering as these projects move forward.

Sincerely,



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.
NY State Senator




Andrew Hevesi
NY State Assemblymember

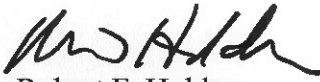
³ "Cross Harbor Freight Program: Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Statement." Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.



Brian Barnwell
NY State Assemblymember



Catherine Nolan
NY State Assemblymember



Robert F. Holden
NYC Councilmember