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March 20, 2014

Honorable Bill de Blasio
Mayor of the City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

I am writing you in regards to the planned renovation of the New York Public Library's Central Library in the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building on Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street. In order to help finance the renovation of the Schwarzman building, the New York Public Library is considering the sale of two major public library branches, the Science, Industry and Business Library (SIBL) on 188 Madison Avenue and the Mid-Manhattan Library on 455 5th Avenue. Although these two libraries are not part of my district, they are of great importance to many of my constituents and residents across New York City who utilize their resources. As such, I am writing to respectfully request that you take the necessary measures to prevent the advancement of this plan.

Among my concerns with the plan is the proposed selloff of the two branches of the NYPL family. The wealth of knowledge and resources that these two branches provide make them largely irreplaceable. Under the new proposal many of the historic stacks will be completely displaced. It is very troublesome to hear that under this proposal, over 1.5 million research books, many of them rare or one of a kind, that have been a part of the NYPL system since 1911, will be poached from the NYPL system.

Moreover, I am also concerned about the overcrowding that would take place under the new proposal. Library patrons will be forced to squeeze into the Central Library. Collections from the two libraries that were sold off will be housed in the already crowded Central Library and will be consolidated into a space that is one third the size they currently have. This will significantly increase the wait time to access materials as well as harm the Central Library's architectural integrity. This will just overextend a library that is consistently at capacity, further proliferating waiting time and greatly diminishing the available work space.

New Yorkers take pride in the NYPL being one of the world's premier research institutions. While the Schwarzman building is the most recognizable branch and a national, city, and state landmark, all the branches of the NYPL make the library the entity it is. I am hoping that the final chapter of this proposed plan has not been written yet and there is still room for discussion and perhaps an alternate ending.

I thank you for your leadership and consideration on this matter. If you have any questions or would like to discuss it in greater detail, please do not hesitate to contact me at (212) 828-5829 or via email Serrano@NYSenate.Gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "José M. Serrano". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

José M. Serrano