



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

Legislation to Improve Participation in Local Governance of Roosevelt Island Passes New York State Senate

JOSÉ M. SERRANO June 22, 2010

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(Albany, NY)-The New York State Senate today unanimously passed a bill (S7985/A10392), sponsored by Senator José M. Serrano (D-Manhattan/Bronx), that will improve the governance of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), while making it more representative of the residents of the area by improving accountability and increasing transparency and openness within the Corporation.

"This bill is designed to help Island Residents play a more active role in their governance," said Senator Serrano. "Just as Roosevelt Island is a wonderful, one-of-a-kind treasure to our city, it also has distinctive needs that are specific to the area."

RIOC, which has been managing Roosevelt Island since 1984, has also been responsible for overseeing the Island's development and allocating state capital funding. This legislation will reconstitute the RIOC board by requiring that all of its public members be residents of Roosevelt Island, and will improve the board's accountability by requiring that elected officials be provided with any and all information received by board members in board meeting agendas. It also stipulates that some of the board's public members are to be appointed upon the recommendation of the local elected officials representing the island.

"Elected officials are uniquely familiar with the challenges and needs of our constituents," said Serrano. "Providing electeds with all of the information received by the board further qualifies them to make informed recommendations as to who would be capable of working toward finding solutions to any problems facing the Island," said Senator Serrano.

The bill also improves openness and transparency within the board by specifying that meetings of the board, or any committee within the board, be subject to the open meetings law. In addition, it specifies that prior to hiring the chief executive officer of the corporation, the board must hold a public hearing to interview at least three qualified candidates for the position. During this hearing, Island residents will have the opportunity to get their questions answered by the candidates.

The bill has not yet passed the Assembly, where it is carried by Assemblyman Micah Kellner (D-Manhattan).

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