



January 5, 2018

The Honorable Governor Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We write as representatives of Brooklyn and Staten Island residents who will be directly affected by the massive reconstruction of the Brooklyn Queens Expressway (BQE) from Atlantic Avenue to Sands Street, including the triple cantilevered portion in Brooklyn Heights. We strongly urge you to include design-build authorization for the project in the Fiscal Year 2019 Executive Budget. By authorizing a design-build procurement process, the State would enable the City of New York to expedite the BQE rehabilitation process by as many as two years and save taxpayers over \$113 million, based upon a conservative estimate of the project's current cost of \$1.9 billion. This portion of Interstate 278 (I-278) is a critical link in the region's transportation system and a prolonged reconstruction could damage the region's economy.

By way of background, the BQE serves as a major access point to and from the East River bridges between Brooklyn and Manhattan and is a crucial route for freight trucks. The triple cantilever portion of the 1.5 mile stretch between Atlantic Avenue and Sands Street, constructed in the mid-1940s, is remarkable for its mode of construction of two roadways and a wide promenade cantilevered off the bluff of Brooklyn's "heights" – highly unusual for its time and engineered in a way that makes its reconstruction a complex and daunting undertaking. The roadways have been deteriorating rapidly, and have not undergone a major update since their construction. This project includes a series of 26 bridge structures, many exit and entrance ramps and retaining walls. Currently, it carries over 150,000 cars and trucks per day with increasing volume. Because of the high levels of congestion, including large freight trucks, the roadway is under increasingly serious pressure, particularly to the outermost lane of each level of the cantilevered portion. Analysis conducted by the New York City Department of Transportation has concluded that a complete rehabilitation of this segment of the BQE must begin now to ensure long-term safety and avoid severe service disruptions over the next decade.

According to NYC DOT, if construction is not complete by approximately 2026, the agency will most likely have to bar truck traffic from the BQE between Atlantic Avenue and Sands Street to extend the useful life of the structures. This potential diversion would have a profound impact on both traffic and public safety throughout Brooklyn communities and the region. The only way to mitigate this massive disruption is to authorize the City to use design-build for this project.

The City has repeatedly requested authorization from the State to proceed on multiple projects using design-build. Most recently, a bill (A8134/S6427, Benedetto/Lanza) authorizing design-build for eight projects passed the Assembly in 2017 and has significant bipartisan support in both chambers, as well as the backing of the business community, and many industry and organized labor stakeholders. We strongly support this broader authorization, but want to underscore the particular urgency of the BQE

project. Due to time-sensitive deadlines in the project's procurement process, legislation to authorize design-build for this project needs to be enacted by the end of the State budget process at the latest. NYC DOT needs to issue a Request for Qualifications no later than this spring to begin procuring a design-build team for the project.

As you know, the State has utilized design-build on many projects with great success, including the Kosciuszko Bridge and the Mario Cuomo Bridge. Design-build, which has now guided many significant construction projects across the country for decades, merges the construction and design phases, which results in lower costs and expedited project completion. Moreover, it also mitigates litigation and other administrative obstacles that sometimes come with the traditional design-bid-build process. The two years that could be saved on this particular project will greatly reduce the multiple impacts on the residential and business communities of this disruptive but essential reconstruction. No jurisdiction would reasonably pursue a project of this magnitude and complexity without design-build and it must be authorized for this project without delay.

This project will enormously impact the neighborhoods adjacent to the BQE, including the Downtown Brooklyn business district – the third largest business district in the state – for years to come. It will also affect vehicular traffic throughout the BQE corridor, including the possible diversion of heavy trucks to local streets, which cannot sustain the wear and tear of an increased number of large trucks. It is critical that design-build for the BQE be included in the Executive Budget and enacted as part of the final State Budget adopted this spring. This project must be able to proceed using a process that will lessen these impacts and save taxpayers' money, at no cost to the State.

We would greatly appreciate your attention to this critical priority. If you or your staff wish to discuss this matter as you prepare the Executive Budget, please contact us via Senator Brian Kavanagh's office at 212-298-5565 or Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon's office at 718-246-4889.

Sincerely,



Senator Brian Kavanagh
Senator Martin Malave Dilan
Senator Martin Golden
Senator Jesse Hamilton
Senator Andrew Lanza
Senator Velmanette Montgomery
Senator Kevin Parker
Senator Roxanne Persaud
Senator Diane Savino



Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon
Assemblymember Robert Carroll
Assemblymember Michael Cusick
Assemblymember Maritza Davila
Assemblymember Pamela Harris
Assemblymember Joseph Lentol
Assemblymember Nicole Malliotakis
Assemblymember Walter Mosley
Assemblymember Felix Ortiz
Assemblymember Matthew Titone

cc: The Honorable Carl Heastie, Speaker of the New York State Assembly
The Honorable John Flanagan, Majority Leader, New York State Senate
The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Democratic Conference Leader, New York State Senate
The Honorable Jeffrey Klein, Independent Democratic Conference Leader, New York State Senate
The Honorable Brian Kolb, Minority Leader, New York State Assembly
The Honorable Simcha Felder, Chair, Cities Committee, New York State Senate
The Honorable Michael Benedetto, Chair, Cities Committee, New York State Assembly