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**Testimony by New York State Senator Brad Hoylman to the
NY Rising Lower Manhattan Community Planning Committee**

October 30, 2013

My name is Brad Hoylman and I represent New York State's 27th Senate District, which includes the neighborhoods of Clinton/Hell's Kitchen, Chelsea, Greenwich Village, the Upper West Side, Midtown/East Midtown, the East Village and Lower East Side. On behalf of my constituents, I would like to submit the following for consideration by the NY Rising Lower Manhattan Planning Committee.

I'd like to thank Governor Cuomo for initiating the NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program, for allocated Federal Supplemental disaster aid he fought for and for empowering communities like Lower Manhattan that were severely damaged in Superstorm Sandy to develop our own local rebuilding plans.

I'd also wish to thank Lower Manhattan Planning Committee Co-Chairs Catherine McVay-Hughes and Dan Ackerman and the other members of the planning committee for the hard work they are doing to develop a comprehensive plan to make our vulnerable communities stronger and more resilient for the future.

It is obvious that many hard decisions will be made as this committee's work progresses. That said, I urge that the Lower Manhattan planning area be extended beyond the southern tip of Manhattan to include all of the component neighborhoods badly affected by the storm.

The portions of Lower Manhattan that are included in the Committee's proposed planning area were indeed hit hard by Superstorm Sandy. But whereas the current area has northern boundaries of Delancey Street east of Essex Street and Canal Street west of Essex Street, a much larger area of Manhattan was also heavily affected.

As you can see in a map from the *New York Times* which I have provided (attached), flood zone peak water depth of 6 to 18 feet was recorded not only in the most southern areas of Manhattan, but also as far north as the mid-30s in Midtown East and the mid-20s in Midtown West. Parts of the West Village, Chelsea, Midtown West, Midtown East, and the Lower East Side, which are in the Senate district I represent, all suffered heavy flooding, which severely damaged homes, businesses and vital resources.

For instance, in the West Village:

- Bailey-Holt House, the first permanent housing facility for people living with HIV/ AIDS, suffered approximately \$1 million in damage after flooding, had to relocate all 44 of its residents for more than two months, and is still struggling to recoup its expenses.
- 33 apartments in the West Village Houses, a low-rise affordable co-op that runs from Morton to Bank Street between Washington and West Street, were rendered completely or partially uninhabitable by the storm, leaving many of those residents displaced into summer and some still waiting for repairs to be completed.
- At Westbeth, the Landmarked affordable artists housing between Bank and Bethune and Washington and West Streets, storm waters did such great damage to some of the building's elevators that two of them only came back on line 12 days ago.
 - The flooding in Westbeth's basement was so severe that the staff changing rooms, storage rooms for supplies, studios for rental, flea market space and sculpture studio that were located there are still not accessible. And the value of the artwork destroyed by the flood waters is beyond any estimate.

In Chelsea:

- Flemister House, supportive housing for New Yorkers living with HIV/ AIDS located on 22nd Street between 10th & 11th Avenues, needed to evacuate all 50 residents after their basement was completely submerged under 12 feet of water with an additional 5 feet flooding into the lobby area.
 - The building's electrical, mechanical and communication systems, including the boilers, HVAC, telephone and elevator were heavily damaged, if not totally destroyed.
- West Chelsea's renowned art galleries were also hit hard, with 18 of them located west of 10th Avenue from 19th to 28th Streets cumulatively filing claims for hundreds of thousands of dollars in damages.
- Hudson River Park, which runs along the west side from the West Village to Midtown West saw three of its piers entirely submerged and heavily damaged, its athletic fields flooded and its electrical systems for the park knocked out completely.
 - Total damage to the park was in the area of \$20 million.

In the east 20s and 30s:

- At NYU Hospital Centers, between 30th and 34th Streets along First Avenue, backup generators failed after the basement flooded, forcing more than 300 patients to be evacuated, including 20 babies in neo-natal intensive care, some on battery-powered respirators.
 - All told, the hospital suffered about \$1 billion in damage.

- Just south at First Avenue and 27th Street, Bellevue Hospital's basement flooded with 8.5 million gallons of water, destroying equipment and patient records, knocking out elevators, and shutting down the hospital for the first time in its 276 years.
 - It would not fully reopen for 99 days.
- At Peter Cooper Village, located between 20th and 23rd Street east of First Avenue, six feet of flooding damaged basement electrical systems and gas pumps, shorting intercom circuits and leaving some tenants without heat into December.
 - Nine of the twelve pumps that distribute drinking water to Peter Cooper Village buildings were damaged.
 - Complete repairs of destroyed basements are, as of late October 2013, still months away, with residents using temporary laundry rooms with limited capacity and no access to storage.

On the Lower East Side:

- Among those hardest hit in my district were NYCHA's Riis Houses, between 6th and 13th Street, Avenue D and the FDR, and Campos Plaza, between 12th and 14th Street, Avenues B and C.
 - At Riis flood waters went up to the second floor; at Campos up to the first floor.
 - Residents went weeks without heat, hot water and electricity and volunteers couldn't even get to some residents stuck in their apartments until flood waters receded.
 - The buildings sustained significant damage and the playground in Campos Plaza's courtyard has still not been reopened.
- And of course, no one can forget the explosion that rocked the 13th Street Con Ed substation when sea water engulfed its circuit breakers, leaving 250,000 New Yorkers south of 34th Street without power for nearly a week.
 - The substation has only been fully restored this month, nearly a year after the storm.

These are only some of examples of the damage flood waters wrought in parts of my district. Like many of the other affected areas, only now, a year later, are many of my constituents beginning to recover. I recognize the challenges this committee faces, and the limited resources available to tackle them. To that end, I recently joined State Senator Squadron, and a multitude of elected officials and community boards in urging the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery to allocate additional resources to meet the needs of the entire affected area.

That being said, the first step is to extend the lines of the catchment area northward to include other areas of Manhattan that were equally affected by Hurricane Sandy to be eligible to apply for relief. On behalf of the residents of the 27th State Senate District, I thank you for your consideration of my request.



In the days before the arrival of Hurricane Sandy, few people in New York City anticipated the scale of destruction of the storm. The map shows the estimated height reached by floodwaters, which topped 17 feet in some parts, according to surveys and weather data collected by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

<p> Flood zone</p> <p> Approximate area inundated by the storm</p>	<p>Building colors are the estimated peak water depth near building</p> <p> 6 to 18 feet</p> <p> 3 to 6</p> <p> 0 to 3</p>
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