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Prepared Testimony of State Senator Daniel Squadron To New York City Council Land Use Committee On ULURP Commitment Tracking Legislation

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My name is Daniel Squadron, and I represent the 26th District in the New York State Senate. My district includes the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Brooklyn Heights, Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill, the Columbia Waterfront, DUMBO, Downtown Brooklyn, Fulton Ferry, Greenpoint, the Navy Yard, Vinegar Hill, and Williamsburg, and the Manhattan neighborhoods of Battery Park City, Chinatown, the East and South Villages, the Financial District, Little Italy, the Lower East Side, SoHo, and Tribeca.

I would like to thank Councilmember Greenfield for holding today's hearing and the opportunity to submit testimony. I would also like to thank Public Advocate James and Speaker Mark-Viverito for introducing Int. No. 1132, which would track and increase transparency on public Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) commitments.

As a state elected official, I get involved in city-governed ULURP processes infrequently. However, this legislation seeks to address concerns particularly relevant to Greenpoint and Williamsburg, which I represent.

In 2005, Greenpoint and Williamsburg underwent significant residential rezoning. That rezoning included a number of community commitments, including the promise of a nearly 30-acre Bushwick Inlet Park. However, over a decade after that rezoning, that full park has yet to materialize. While some progress has been made, the City has not expressed any plan for purchasing the final parcel for park build-out -- over a third of the promised park's acreage.

The failed promise for a full Bushwick Inlet Park is one that has now stretched two city administrations. Along with my local colleagues including Councilmember Levin, I have continued to urge the City to move forward on this promise, including introducing state legislation authorizing eminent domain at the site, along with Assemblymember Lentol and Senator Dilan.

The community has also organized strongly in the push for Bushwick Inlet Park, especially through the Friends of Bushwick Inlet Park. As I have said before, at its core, the fight for Bushwick Inlet Park is not just a local parks issue -- it is also about being able to trust a clear commitment from city government.

Int. No. 1132 seeks to track and annually report on ULURP commitments made by government entities. Bushwick Inlet Park is at least one example of the city failing to keep a rezoning commitment so far. While the rezoning and its residential development have moved forward, a generation of park-users have been unable to see a fully realized park, even while living with other impacts of the rezoning.

Ultimately, when the city makes a commitment, the community should have confidence that the check will not bounce. This legislation is an important step in ensuring accountability for ULURP commitments.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony today.