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THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

CHAIRMAN  
Subcommittee on Trust and Estates  
COMMITTEES  
Aging  
Cities  
Health  
Judiciary  
Ways and Means

May 2, 2017

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor  
New York State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

As you already know, Mayor de Blasio recently accepted the recommendation of the Independent Commission on New York City Criminal Justice and Incarceration Reform to begin the closure of the Rikers Island ("Rikers") jail complex. The city aims to complete the closure over a ten-year period.

If the City of New York follows through on this commitment, the challenge will be to find an alternate use for the 400 acre campus that is innovative, environmentally friendly and comports with the reality that the neighborhood adjacent to Rikers Island is densely populated. Therefore, we believe it is important to have constructive discussions and input from community leaders and local representatives to develop an acceptable redevelopment plan for Rikers.

Recently, some interest groups have suggested that the Port Authority consider expanding LaGuardia Airport onto Rikers. The advocates for this proposal argue that this would allow for LaGuardia Airport to accommodate transcontinental flights. We would vigorously oppose this idea. The residents of Queens County are already overburdened with excessive airplane noise and it would be unfair to subject them to any increase in air traffic over their skies. Furthermore, the New York City metropolitan area is already serviced by two airports, JFK and Newark, which allow for transcontinental flights.

Over the last 12 years, there has been a 47% increase in takeoffs from LaGuardia Airport. This increase, coupled with the implementation of NextGen departure procedures at LaGuardia in 2012, has resulted in my office being inundated with constituent calls asking for relief from airplane noise. This excessive noise is measurably and causally linked to adverse health and environmental impacts and deteriorating property values. The residents of Queens, like all New Yorkers, are entitled to the quiet enjoyment of their homes and do not deserve any further diminishment of their quality of life.

We strongly urge you to rule out any LaGuardia Airport expansion at Rikers Island that would potentially increase air traffic, and instead consider economic development initiatives that all the residents of Queens and all New Yorkers can take pride in and enjoy.

Thank you for your time, we look forward to working with you and other parties to find a fair and forward looking solution to the re-use of Rikers Island.

Sincerely,