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JO ANNE SIMON
Assemblymember 52nd District

February 8, 2024

Richard Davey, President
MTA New York City Transit
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004

Re: Letter of Support for the Re-establishment of the B71 Bus Route

Dear Mr. Davey,

We, the undersigned, write in support of the re-establishment of the B71 bus route, which was a vital crosstown connector between Columbia Street Waterfront and Crown Heights and several neighborhoods in between. For well over a decade, a coalition of elected officials, community residents, schools, civic groups, advocates, and cultural institutions have called on the MTA and City DOT to bring back our bus. The MTA's current Brooklyn Bus Network Redesign is the perfect opportunity to ensure that these neighborhoods, which have experienced significant population growth, are connected once again.

Our neighbors and constituents were hit hard in 2010 when the MTA eliminated the B71, which ran along Union Street and was a lifeline for seniors, students, and families. Buses are vehicles of equity in our city. They disproportionately serve seniors, those with disabilities for whom the subway system is still mostly inaccessible, and residents of low-income neighborhoods, especially communities of color. We implore the MTA to re-establish this vital route or a similar crosstown connector that achieves the same goal. We support either reinstating the original B71 route, or an expanded route that was proposed in 2015 (between the Brooklyn Children's Museum and Pier 6 in Cobble Hill), or the expanded route proposed in 2019 (Brooklyn Children's Museum to lower Manhattan via Red Hook and the Gov. Hugh Carey Tunnel, with the western terminus of the B71 on Union Street).

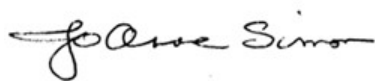
Since the elimination of the B71, the population has increased significantly, yet no new transit route has been added. The elimination of this route deprived locals of an essential crosstown transit option, which made stops at nine schools, three senior centers, small businesses, religious institutions, and multiple public housing developments. Students lost a route to school; seniors lost the bus that took them to the grocery store, library, and doctors' appointments; and families lost a ride to the Brooklyn Children's Museum and Prospect Park. There is a lack of alternative transit options to fill the vacuum left by the B71's elimination. It is easier for many to get to Manhattan from Brooklyn than for people to get from one part of Brooklyn to the other. We also wish to highlight the efforts that our colleagues in Red Hook (which some of us represent) have made by advocating for a connection from Red Hook to Manhattan, which could

be an extended B81. These bus lines would link our transit-starved communities to the places they need and want to go to.

To this day, 13 years after its elimination, constituents still ask electeds to fight to bring back this route. Despite historic investments in the MTA and significant population growth along the route, this line has yet to be restored, leaving thousands of riders stranded. If the MTA is genuinely committed to redesigning a bus network that prioritizes frequent service, faster travel, reliable service, better connection, and an easy ride, then it must include the reinstatement of the B71 or a similar connector.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this further, and are looking forward to an option like the B71 included in the next draft Brooklyn Bus Redesign.

Sincerely,



Jo Anne Simon
Assemblymember, AD 52



Daniel S. Goldman
Representative of the House, NY 10



Andrew Gounardes
Senator, SD 26



Zellnor Myrie
Senator, SD 20



Robert C. Carroll
Member of Assembly, AD 44



Brian A. Cunningham
Assemblymember, AD 43



Marcela Mitaynes
Assemblymember, AD 51



Alexa Avilés
Councilmember, CD 38



Shahana Hanif
Councilmember, CD 39

Cc: John Lieber, Chair and CEO, MTA
Frank Annicaro, Senior Vice President, Dept. of Buses Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso