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STACEY PHEFFER AMATO
Assemblywoman 23rd District
Queens County

August 16, 2021

Council Member Peter Koo
135-27 38th Ave, Suite 388
Flushing, NY 11354

Dear Council Member Koo,

I am writing on behalf of my constituents, who have raised numerous concerns regarding the Parks Department's staffing and swim safety awareness plan for the remainder of the beach season. As you may know, another young person recently died by drowning in my district, Rockaway Beach. These tragic events continue, even though childhood drowning is entirely preventable. Therefore, as the chair of the Parks Committee, I am requesting that you schedule a hearing immediately to hold the Parks Department accountable for constituents' concerns on the environment, enforcement, and education. After so many tragedies and close calls, they need to have a plan for lifeguard staffing for the remainder of the summer and next year, and to address water safety education.

In addition to our thriving community, many visitors look forward to coming to Rockaway for a day of sand, food, and water. However, our black and brown communities are particularly underserved by lifeguard staffing, with less abundant staffing on the beaches. Far too often these beach trips end in near-death incidents or fatality – fatality that was entirely preventable. Later months of the year are getting hotter and hotter due to global warming, and upcoming heat waves in August, September, and even October ensure that many families will be traveling to Rockaway and other beaches for an escape from the heat. It is imperative that the Parks Department develop an immediate action plan to keep everyone safe in the water, as events continue to occur. I have attached letters from myself and various civic organizations to the Parks Department, which have gone unresponded.

If you have any questions regarding the information presented in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me or my Legislative Coordinator, Maura Avington, at 718-945-9550.

Sincerely,

Stacey Pheffer Amato
Member of New York State Assembly
23rd District, Queens

CC: NYC Council Speaker Corey Johnson

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