

Dear Speaker Johnson and Council Members,

I'm April Somboun and I'm writing to you on behalf of my North Heights Neighbors and the 300 residents of the Bridge Harbor Heights Condominiums, located at 55 to 81 Poplar Street, between Hicks and Henry Streets.

We are particularly impacted by the BQE because our community lies as close as 30 feet from elevated portions of the highway. The BQE vibrations have impacted our historic 19th Century buildings and we are deeply concerned about the structural integrity of our homes.

I would like to take this opportunity to share our support for the recommendations that have been made, given 21st Century transportation and environmental realities, to reduce the number of BQE traffic lanes from six to four, to lower speed limits, and to limit the size and weight of trucks on the roadway.

We understand the imminent need for repair of the BQE, but one thing we must bring to your attention is our experience from the many years our community dealt with the Brooklyn Bridge rehabilitation. Since the Bridge is directly across Old Fulton Street from our homes, we were in the thick of things, with glaring lights, large idling trucks and construction vehicles with their diesel emissions, and significant noise in the overnight hours when much of the work was done.

In the spirit of equity and fairness, we strongly believe that staging for the BQE project should not use the same area adjacent to the Bridge along Old Fulton Street/Cadman Plaza West. We cannot and should not bear the brunt of the staging again.

Given our experience with the Bridge project, it is essential that there be much better communication between residents and the DOT going forward. We ask that someone be available on site who possesses authority to make decisions and direct contractors when issues with the community arise. Also, we want to ensure that environmental conditions, especially air quality, are carefully monitored during the project given the location of PS 8 at the intersection of Hicks and Poplar streets, across from our homes.

Thank you to the BQE Panel and to the Council for your leadership and for giving us this opportunity to share our thoughts and concerns. We hope that we can all work together to ensure that this is as smooth and easy a process as possible for us and for all residents affected by the BQE.

Sincerely,

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