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Assemblywoman Stacey Pheffer Amato
23rd District, Queens County

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September 25, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

As the New York State Assemblywoman representing parts of South Queens, I am writing to express my firm support for QueensLink's application for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program. There is an undisputable need to reignite Queens' only north-south rail corridor which will finally allow access to jobs, education, and recreation for many communities.

The Rockaway Beach Branch corridor lies between two of the most congested roads in the City of New York, Woodhaven Blvd. and the Van Wyck Expwy. This City-owned right of way is uniquely positioned to reconnect southern Queens neighborhoods such as Richmond Hill, Woodhaven, Ozone Park, Howard Beach, Broad Channel and the Rockaway Peninsula with northern neighborhoods of Queens, and even midtown Manhattan. The re-creation of this rail line will provide opportunities for disadvantaged residents, while significantly reducing congestion and carbon emissions - resulting in cleaner air for the entire borough.

I am therefore requesting that the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) review the application the *Rockaway Beach Branch Community Equity Analysis* which will help re-connect the communities that need it the most. This funding will help enact a study to provide a framework for rectifying more than six decades of transit inequities in Queens' most disconnected and disadvantaged communities. By measuring the environmental, economic, and quality-of-life impacts of restoring this vital transit link, the USDOT has the opportunity conduct a comprehensive rails and trails study and review that will help enrich numerous community and provide needed resources and access.

Thank you for taking the opportunity to review this application and for looking into supporting the vital project of QueensLink. Should you have any questions regarding my support, please do not hesitate to reach out at 718-945-9550, or by contacting my Chief of Staff, Gregory Slade, at sladeg@nyassembly.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stacey Pheffer Amato". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Stacey" being the most prominent.

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