



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

June 12, 2007

The Honorable Joseph Bruno
New York State Senate
909 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Senator Bruno:

I write to urge that you enact S5988 before the end of the legislative session, which will enable the City to reactivate a Marine Transfer Station (MTS) on the Gansevoort peninsula in Manhattan. Authorizing the reactivation of the Gansevoort MTS is the final legislative hurdle to implementing the historic Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) that was overwhelmingly adopted by the City Council last July and approved by the State DEC in October 2006. Implementation of the SWMP will eliminate an estimated 5.6 million truck miles traveled every year by both long-haul waste trucks in the City and Department of Sanitation (DSNY) trucks, and it will thereby reduce carbon emissions, significantly improve our air quality, and lead to a better quality of life for all New Yorkers.

The SWMP will fundamentally transform how New York City handles its solid waste and recyclables, and will rectify the decades-long inequities that have forced a few communities to bear a substantially disproportionate share of sanitation facilities needed to handle the more than 22,000 tons of waste and recyclables that the City generates every day. The Gansevoort MTS is critical to ensuring that every borough, including Manhattan, is responsible for processing its own waste and recyclables rather than exporting them by truck to another borough. Failure to authorize the Gansevoort MTS will jeopardize the entire SWMP.

There are those who object to certain elements of the SWMP, and the Gansevoort MTS is no exception. You have likely heard from opponents of the facility, who suggest that the City's plan to reactivate the Gansevoort MTS is "illegal," that it will impede development of Hudson River Park, and that the City has failed to consider alternative sites. To borrow from the late Senator Moynihan, they are entitled to their own opinions, but they are not entitled to their own facts.

Reactivating the Gansevoort MTS is neither illegal nor an alienation of parkland. S5988 expands the definition of "compatible government use" under the Hudson River Park Act (HRPA) to include the operation of an MTS on Gansevoort pier, a change in law that is entirely within the discretion and authority of the State Legislature to make. Ensuring the continued viability of such uses was necessary to reclaim Manhattan's waterfront for Hudson River Park, and reactivating the Gansevoort MTS will not meaningfully reduce the park's 550 acres or

otherwise impact its development. The Gansevoort MTS will take-up only two-thirds of an acre and will sit almost entirely over water; and with the exception of an access road that would be required for Fire Department use even without the MTS, the remainder of the 7-acre Gansevoort peninsula will be developed as a public park (a rendering of the Park and MTS is attached).

Building the 550-acre Hudson River Park is a top priority for our Administration. The City has committed nearly \$160 million to the park, and more than \$100 million of that amount has been appropriated since I became Mayor. Nor have we hesitated to make the additional investments necessary to ensure that park construction continues to proceed quickly and efficiently. (For example, the City recently spent \$8 million to relocate the NYPD's mounted unit from Pier 63 so that construction of the park moves forward on schedule.) While Hudson River Park will be a destination for the entire City (and the world), Westside residents of Manhattan are its greatest beneficiaries. Requiring this community to also make room for a recycling MTS and environmental education center on Gansevoort peninsula is more than reasonable.

Finally, opponents of the Gansevoort MTS continue to put forward unworkable alternatives that could ultimately delay (and perhaps entirely frustrate) construction of the facilities needed to ensure that Manhattan can handle its own waste. The Department of Sanitation examined the feasibility of numerous sites during the development of the SWMP, including Pier 57, Pier 76 and other locations that are addressed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the plan (available at www.nyc.gov/html/dsny). None is a suitable alternative to reactivating the MTS on Gansevoort peninsula. To briefly address Piers 57 and 76:

- Pier 57. A sanitation facility has never operated at pier 57 and the well-developed park plans do not contemplate adapting the pier for this use. After an extensive public process, the Hudson River Park Trust has conditionally accepted a proposal for the future use of Pier 57 that includes a large banquet facility, several museums, more than an acre of rooftop public open space, a marina and a variety of showrooms and retail stores. In addition, the pier is listed on the State and National Registers of historic places and is not a suitable location for an MTS.
- Pier 76. Pier 76 has never hosted a sanitation facility, and the roads and ramps required to access an MTS on the pier would necessitate the creation of narrow, disconnected park spaces that create safety concerns and would be ill-suited for public use. Unlike Pier 76, the Gansevoort peninsula can accommodate an MTS and preserve the vast majority of available space for safe, easily accessible park use. Furthermore, the commuter and tourist-related marine traffic to the north of the site would complicate and adversely impact barge access to and from any MTS facility.

With respect to the Gansevoort peninsula, reactivating the MTS was initially supported by community advocates and others who, faced with the prospect of implementation, now oppose this location. At the conclusion of the site selection process, the operational and other difficulties presented by the alternative piers considered; the community and official support for

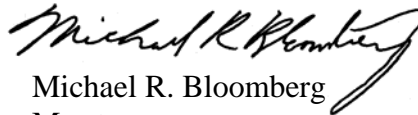
Gansevoort pier; and the fact that an MTS has been successfully operated at the pier since the 1950s led to its selection as the best location to accept Manhattan's recyclables.

The SWMP is the product of exhaustive study and compromises achieved after years of public consultation, discussion, and debate. The Gansevoort MTS—like each of the four other MTSs that will be built as part of the SWMP—is just one component of this citywide plan that was achieved with the broad-based support of local elected officials, community groups and environmental advocates and experts.¹ City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, who represents the district where the Gansevoort MTS will operate, was instrumental to passing the entire plan, and stood with me just 10 days ago to reiterate the need to move forward with this critical part of it. The Gansevoort MTS will help to ensure that the Borough of Manhattan has sufficient capacity to handle its own waste and recyclables; no single legislator should be allowed to undo the historic, balanced set of compromises that made the SWMP possible.

We are committed to working with elected officials and community groups to ensure that the Gansevoort MTS and environmental education center is safe, environmentally responsible, and compatible with Hudson River Park. But the time to consider alternative locations has passed. With the Gansevoort MTS in operation, there will be approximately 13,600 fewer DSNY truck trips between Manhattan and the Bronx and New Jersey every day. If the Gansevoort facility cannot be built, Manhattan's recyclables will continue to be trucked to facilities in the Bronx and New Jersey; and the Manhattan commercial waste that could otherwise be processed at West 59th Street will continue to be processed at transfer stations in Brooklyn and the Bronx. Such a result is unjust and entirely preventable.

I respectfully ask that you support S5988 and authorize the construction of the Gansevoort MTS before the end of this legislative session.

Sincerely,



Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Eliot Spitzer

¹ Organizations that support the SWMP and participated in its development and passage include the Organization of Waterfront Neighborhoods (OWN), the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the West Harlem/Morningside Heights Sanitation Coalition and West Harlem Environmental Action, Sustainable South Bronx, the NYC Environmental Justice Alliance (NYCEJA), UPROSE, Williamsburg/Greenpoint Organizations United for Trash Reduction And Garbage Equity, Nos Quedamos, the NY League of Conservation Voters and Environmental Defense.