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THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

KAMILLAH M. HANKS

COUNCIL MEMBER, 49TH DISTRICT, STATEN ISLAND

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July 7, 2022

Hon. Dennis Walcott
Chair
New York City Districting Commission
253 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chairman and Districting Commission Members:

We write to you today as the current and former New York City Council Members representing District 49, the North Shore of Staten Island, and also as its lifelong residents. In light of the New York City Districting Commission's expected vote on new City Council maps, we are asking you to support maps that keep the district representing the North Shore of Staten Island entirely within the borough.

The New York City Charter instructs the Districting Commission to keep "communities of interest" together, and that could not be of greater significance to District 49. It is abundantly clear to North Shore residents and to all Staten Islanders that the interests and the needs of its constituents are distinctive — even from those of neighboring Brooklyn and Manhattan.

The North Shore has the largest minority community on Staten Island. It took former Council Member Debi Rose 25 years to become the first African American woman elected into office here. She ran for office on the North Shore three times, and she served her community for three terms. As her successor and the current Council Member with the privilege of serving the North Shore, Council Member Kamillah Hanks is only the second African American woman to hold this seat in the borough's history. Together, we have a proven commitment to this district and to its interests, which are further represented by a myriad of diverse community leaders and organizations, including ones from the African American, Latin American, Central American, South East Asian and West African communities.

Compared to the rest of Staten Island, the North Shore is particularly unique in terms of race and ethnicity. If expanded to another borough, this uniqueness will be diluted due to the potential cultural and socioeconomic implications. Adding this district to another borough would change its dynamic and silence the voices of its constituents, as well as jeopardize the resources needed for the district to thrive.

Staten Island is a special place, especially when compared to its four counterpart boroughs. We wholeheartedly support the efforts of the other members of the Staten Island delegation, Minority Leader Joe Borelli and Council Member David Carr, in ensuring that the needs of our entire borough are met and that all of its residents are considered throughout the districting process.

Splitting District 49 between any other boroughs would do an injustice to the residents and community organizations who have historically been underrepresented and unheard — and as its former and current City representatives, we urge you to not let that happen.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Kamillah M. Hanks
Council Member, District 49

Deborah L. Rose
Former Council Member, District 49

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