



**TOBY ANN  
STAVISKY**  
STATE SENATOR  
16<sup>th</sup> DISTRICT

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**JAMES F.  
GENNARO**  
COUNCILMAN  
24<sup>th</sup> DISTRICT

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**RORY I.  
LANCMAN**  
ASSEMBLYMAN  
25<sup>th</sup> DISTRICT

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June 16, 2008

Mayor Michael Bloomberg  
City Hall  
New York, New York 10007

Re: Flooding in northeast Queens

Dear Mayor Bloomberg:

We write on behalf of our thousands of constituents who have endured years of streets and basements flooded with rainwater and sewage without the City offering any meaningful plan for solving this problem. This is no way for residents of a great city to have to live, and failure to finally act now promises that your legacy as Mayor will as much be one of indifference to thousands of hard-working middle class families as it is of anything else. Simply put, we are demanding that you show the same interest, determination and zeal in solving this dangerous problem as you showed in trying to implement congestion pricing or in trying to bring the Olympics to New York or in trying to build a stadium for the Jets. Solving this most basic municipal function is where your focus should be.

In New York City in 2008 raw sewage should not routinely flood residential basements. Streets should not become a raging river or a lake that swallows cars. These are dangerous conditions which also shatter the quality of life for those thousands of residents who endure them. Yet these are now regular occurrences, and the City has no real plan to solve these problems.

Our community has done its part. We have called 311, attended countless town hall meetings with the Department of Environmental Protection, submitted claims forms with both the City and the Federal Emergency Management Administration to document this crisis. Councilman Gennaro, as chair of the City Council's Environmental Protection Committee, held hearings after last summer's floods, where the problems were clearly identified and possible solutions were explored. Assemblyman Lancman has met

repeatedly with DEP and charted the basement and street flooding hot spots in our area. Together with Senator Toby Stavisky, state legislation was introduced to give modest financial support to homeowners to install check valves to prevent sewage backflow, which the City opposed without any proposed alternative. We have offered to help advocate in the City Council and the State Legislature on behalf of whatever plan the City chose to pursue to solve this problem once and for all. But you need to have a plan.

To add insult to injury, the City continues to siphon off money from our water taxes, which have seen double-digit increases two years in a row, to cover the City's general operating expenses instead of being exclusively dedicated to improving our antiquated water system. Even worse, homeowners impacted by these floods are left almost entirely to their own devices after disaster strikes; we invite you to visit Utopia Parkway after a flood to see homeowners literally bailing out their basements and cars without any assistance from the City.

We call on you to make fixing this problem a priority of your remaining time in office, and we reiterate our eagerness to work with you in the City Council and the State Legislature to obtain whatever support is necessary to implement your plan. But you need to have a plan. Our beleaguered constituents deserve no less.

Very truly yours,



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Assemblyman  
Rory I. Lancman



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Councilman  
James F. Gennaro



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State Senator  
Toby A. Stavisky

cc: Commissioner Emily Lloyd