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**Comments for January 5, 1999 Community Board #9 Public Hearing (ULURP) on
the JFK Airport Light Rail System**

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to the issue of the "AirTrain", the light rail system link to JFK International Airport proposed by the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey. My name is John Liu and I am representing the Queens Civic Congress, speaking for over 90 civic and community organizations spanning the borough of Queens.

The Queens Civic Congress and its civic and community groups recognize the need for an airport access solution. We are not opposed to the on-airport portion of the plan. However, we are opposed to proceeding with the construction of the spur, designed to run along the Van Wyck Expressway from Kennedy Airport to the LIRR station in Jamaica.

The current design for the JFK Airport-Jamaica segment of the AirTrain, or the "Van Wyck El", does not offer a seamless and comfortable ride to travelers, particularly those with luggage. With its inconvenient passenger transfers, the design will surely discourage ridership.

Its chosen technology, with steel-on-steel light rail cars, will not meet federal standards, and will be incompatible with New York City's existing mass transportation network.

The Van Wyck El will attract few airport users away from their cars, taxis and express buses and will therefore make hardly a dent on either the vehicular traffic to and from the airport or the air pollution emanating from these vehicles.

The Port Authority's own evaluation of ridership estimates does not justify the immense cost of the Van Wyck El.

As importantly, the project will have a profound negative impact on the homes and communities in its path. We are concerned with the serious objections that have been raised by the Queens residents living along the path of the project who want to ease the impact of this plan on their communities and who want greater consideration to be given to alternate proposals that have been suggested. These elevated trains will mar the residential landscape and create an ugly, noisy blight on Queens neighborhoods. The many years of construction along an already congested Van Wyck Expressway will ruin the quality of life of these residents, community facilities and businesses alike, causing them to suffer the highest degrees of noise and pollution. Traffic that will overflow into nearby streets and neighborhoods will result in safety hazards.

For these reasons and more, the Queens Civic Congress is opposed to the Van Wyck Expressway spur of the "AirTrain" airport access project. We urge our responsible public officials to seek a better solution for an airport access plan for New York City. A more careful design would result in a rail link that will be more effective for the city of New York and less harmful to the lives of Queens residents, both short-term and long-term. Thank you.