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**QUEENS CIVIC CONGRESS
TESTIMONY
To The
CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES
ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT ON BILLBOARDS**

City Hall, January 9, 2001

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The Queens Civic Congress is a coalition of almost 100 neighborhood and community organizations representing every part of the borough.

The proliferation of billboards of every kind draped across almost every visible surface in Queens is detrimental to the entire city. As one exits the Mid-town Tunnel, one's first experience of the borough is a visual assault.

The Congress has called for relief from this pollution that mars too many of the city's streets and highways, and increasingly, residential neighborhoods, some of them designated historic districts.

We support the billboard text amendment and urge the Council to make it part of the Zoning Resolution.

The amendment is a first step toward bringing order out of the visual chaos that is obliterating too many of New York's most valued vistas.

However, we are disappointed that the Commission grandfathered existing billboards; it did not address billboards in commercial overlays in lower-density neighborhoods and it did not anticipate newer forms of billboards. Authorizing the Department of Buildings to waive certain provisions does not encourage confidence in enforcement of the amendment.

The amendment does however extend regulation, for the first time, to manufacturing districts that are most in need of protection.

Bringing control of billboards to the fore of public planning will, we hope, encourage future administrations to adopt stronger and more comprehensive regulations.

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Queens Civic Congress Online, www.queensciviccongress.org, provides information on upcoming events, the civic congress platform and resource links to government, non-profit and community organizations.