



Queens Civic Congress

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2007

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QUEENS CIVIC CONGRESS TO CITY HALL: PROVIDE FLOOD RELIEF

In testimony submitted to the City Council Committee on Environmental Protection, chaired by Queens Councilman James Gennaro, on "Oversight - Rising Waters: What Can the DEP Do About Flooding?" today (Monday, September 24, 2007) at City Hall, Queens Civic Congress Vice President Dorothy L. Woo outlined sensible actions the City can implement without reliance of more exorbitant capital projects:

Testimony to the City Council Committee on Environmental Protection
Oversight - Rising Waters: What Can the DEP Do About Flooding?
September 24, 2007

Thank you Chairman Gennaro for this opportunity to share concerns of Queens residents at this oversight hearing, "What Can the DEP Do About Flooding?" I am Dorothy L. Woo, Vice President of the Queens Civic Congress, and chair of its Infrastructure Committee. As a coalition of 100 civic, community, condo, co-operative, homeowner and tenant organizations, the Queens Civic Congress membership represents almost every community in the borough.

The Queens Civic Congress appreciates FEMA's relief program to assist homeowners and small business to recover from rainstorms damage on August 8 and July 18. Unfortunately, we find this program and the city response insufficient and impractical to resolve the chronic and severe flooding problem faced by Queens (and city) residents. No question, "man-made" mistakes more than rain contributed to the flooding disaster.

Queens residents – by and large proud hard working middle class people – choose to live here to raise our family. Residents demand more than handouts or onetime relief from FEMA which come with the requirement to reveal personal financial backgrounds in order to qualify for grants or loans. Queens residents demand a reliable sewer system free from water backup or seepage to our basements and in many cases the main floors of homes, apartments and businesses. After all, water bills include a rather significant wastewater service charge.

City agencies bear responsibility for disaster prevention now and in future. Therefore, Queens Civic Congress recommends:

- ✓ Installation of water prevention devices (free of charge) in homes which experience chronically sewer backup during heavy rains.

- ✓ Immediate enforcement of existing Zoning Resolution and Building Code requirements on properties with illegally paved front yards.
- ✓ Regular -- and frequent -- catch basin cleaning – every six months.
- ✓ Environmental impact review that impose any need for a flood plan before new construction and zoning map changes take affect.
- ✓ Elimination of real estate tax abatement in exchange for sewer improvements for any new construction where the floor area ratio (FAR) exceeds than the previous structure.

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Prepared by Dorothy L. Woo, Vice President, Queens Civic Congress, and chair, Infrastructure Committee.

Editor's note: The Borough-wide coalition recently release its new platform, CIVIC 2030, which may be viewed on the Queens Civic Congress website, [QueensCivicCongress.org](http://queensciviccongress.org/platform/2007-2008%20Platform%20(Civic%202030).pdf) at [http://queensciviccongress.org/platform/2007-2008%20Platform%20\(Civic%202030\).pdf](http://queensciviccongress.org/platform/2007-2008%20Platform%20(Civic%202030).pdf)

[Note: Queens Civic Congress Membership follows below]

Queens Civic Congress Members

Association of Old Forest Hills ♦ Auburndale Improvement Association ♦ Bayside Civic Database ♦ Bayside Clear-Spring Council ♦ Bayside Hills Civic Association ♦ Bayswater Civic Association ♦ Bay Terrace Community Alliance, Inc. ♦ Bellaire-BellVill Civic Association ♦ Belle Harbor Property Owners Association ♦ Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association ♦ Bellerose Hillside Civic Association ♦ Bell Park Manor Terrace Community Council ♦ Bowne Park Civic Association ♦ Briarwood Community Association ♦ Cambria Heights Civic Association ♦ Cherry Robinson Homeowners ♦ Civic Association of Utopia Estates ♦ C.O.M.E.T. (Communities of Maspeth-Elmhurst Together) ♦ Concerned Citizens of Laurelton ♦ Cornucopia Society ♦ Creedmoor Civic Association ♦ Deerfield Area Association ♦ Doug-Bay Manor Civic Association ♦ Douglas Manor Association ♦ Douglaston Civic Association ♦ Dutch Kills Civic Assn. of Long Island City ♦ East Flushing Civic Association ♦ Federated Block Associations of Laurelton ♦ Federation of Civic Associations of Southeast Queens ♦ Floral Park Community Council ♦ Flushing Heights Civic Association ♦ Flushing on the Hill Taxpayers Association ♦ Forest Hills Chamber of Commerce ♦ Forest Hills Crescents Association ♦ Forest Hills-Van Court Association ♦ Fresh Meadows Homeowners Association ♦ Georgetown Mews ♦ Glendale Civic Association of Queens ♦ Glen Oaks Village Owners, Inc. ♦ Greater Astoria Historical Society ♦ Greater Whitestone Taxpayers Civic Association ♦ Harding Heights Civic Association ♦ Hillcrest Estates Civic Association ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #1 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #2 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #3 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #4 ♦ Hollis 11423 Block Association ♦ Hollis Hills Civic Association ♦ Holliswood Civic Association ♦ Hollis Park Gardens Civic Association ♦ Holly Civic Association ♦ Hunters Point Community Coalition ♦ Hyde Park Gardens Cooperative ♦ Jackson Heights Beautification Group ♦ Jamaica Estates Association ♦ Jamaica Hill Community Association ♦ Juniper Park Civic Association ♦ Kew Forest Neighborhood Association ♦ Kew Gardens Civic Association ♦ Kew Gardens Hills Homeowners Association ♦ Kissena Park Civic Association ♦ Little Neck Bay Civic Association ♦ Little Neck Pines ♦ Malba Civic Association ♦ Meadowlark Gardens Owners ♦ Middle Village Maspeth Civic Association ♦ Middle Village Property Owners Association ♦ Mitchell Linden Civic Association ♦ Neponsit Property Owners Association ♦ Newtown Civic Association ♦ North Bellerose Civic Association ♦ North Flushing Civic Association ♦ North Hills Estates Civic Association ♦ Northwest Clearview Homeowners Association ♦ Norwood Civic Association ♦ Oakland Terrace/ Gardens Community Council ♦ Off Broadway Homeowners Association ♦ Our Neighborhood Improvement Association ♦ Parkway Village Historical Society ♦ Queensboro Hill Neighborhood Association ♦ Queens Colony Civic Association ♦ Queens Community Civic Corp. ♦ Queens Village Civic Association ♦ Ramblersville-Hawtree Civic Association ♦ Richmond Hill Historical Society ♦ Ridgewood Property Owners and Civic Association ♦ Rockaway Park Homeowners/ Residents ♦ Rocky Hill Civic Association ♦ Rosedale Civic Association ♦ Royal Ranch Association. ♦ Southeast Queens Concerned Neighbors ♦ South Ozone Park West Civic Association ♦ Springfield/Rosedale Community Action Association ♦ Station Road Civic Assoc. of Auburndale ♦ Sunnyside Gardens/Harrison Place Homeowners ♦ Surrey Estates Civic Association ♦ Union Turnpike Merchants Association ♦ United Forties Civic Association ♦ United Neighbors Civic Association ♦ Waldheim Neighborhood Association ♦ Wayanda Civic Association ♦ West Cunningham Park Civic Association ♦ Westmoreland Association ♦ Woodside Community Council