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THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



ADRIANO ESPAILLAT
SENATOR
31ST DISTRICT

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COMMITTEE MEMBER
CODES

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
HIGHER EDUCATION
INSURANCE
FINANCE
JUDICIARY
RULES

February 11, 2014

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Governor Cuomo:

As elected officials representing Marble Hill, Inwood, Washington Heights, other neighborhoods in Upper Manhattan, we are concerned with the recent federal cuts to dedicated funding for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects, and request this funding be restored and expanded via the state's 2014-2015 SFY budget.

The adoption of the Complete Streets Law in 2011 has developed significant momentum for pedestrian and bicycle projects at the local level in our state, and these projects offer tremendous benefits, including safer streets, cleaner air quality, and increased commercial activity for small businesses located near these improvements. With disproportionately high rates of childhood asthma and pedestrian fatalities compared to the citywide average, Upper Manhattan residents are eager for a renewed focus on reducing traffic accidents and deaths, yet feel left behind, as more affluent neighborhoods through New York City have already benefitted from these changes more substantively.

But while there is broad consensus in our community on the need for additional pedestrian and bicycle projects, the new federal transportation law, MAP-21, has cut dedicated federal dollars for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure by 30 percent or \$12 million a year, and New York State Department of Transportation's (DOT) new Preservation First policy excludes new pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure from 80% of state budget spending.

Recent analysis¹ of the state's Transportation Improvement Plan reveals that DOT may actually spend less money on these types of projects than before the Complete Streets Law's passage. The recent \$67 million Transportation Enhancements Program disbursement came only after four consecutive fiscal years without any funding through this budget line.

¹ Tri-State Transportation Campaign, October 2013: <http://blog.tstc.org/2013/10/23/nys-passes-complete-streets-law-then-slashes-funding-for-pedestrian-and-bicycle-infrastructure/>

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As we fight to ensure streetscape changes needed to make conditions safer for pedestrians and bicyclists are brought to underserved, predominantly Black and Latino neighborhoods, we must shift funding to pursue this objective. We can no longer spend only pennies on the dollar in New York City and other urban regions while 27% of the fatalities resulting from car crashes are either pedestrians or bicyclists.

Pedestrian safety has taken center stage in New York City with a spate of pedestrian and cyclist deaths since the New Year. Our own community has not been exempt from these tragedies, nor has it been in years past. With a dedicated funding stream for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, we can ensure communities like Upper Manhattan and Marble Hill have adequate resources to address these challenges.

Thank you for your attention to this issue, and hope we can achieve a state budget that empowers our community to undertake these critical steps toward safer streets.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Adriano Espaillat in black ink.

Adriano Espaillat
State Senator, District 31

Handwritten signature of Ydanis Rodriguez in black ink.

Ydanis Rodriguez
NYC Council Member, District 10

Handwritten signature of Gabriela Rosa in black ink.

Gabriela Rosa
Assemblymember, District 72

Handwritten signature of Mark Levine in black ink.

Mark Levine
NYC Council Member, District 7

cc: New York State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver
New York State Senate Co-Leader and President Pro Tempore Jeff Klein
New York State Senate Co-Leader and President Pro Tempore Dean Skelos