

Katherine Conkling Thompson  
131 Calyer Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11222

February 14, 2023

Dear Independent Redistricting Commission,

I have lived in Greenpoint since 1996, raised 3 children and have been an active member of the community. In 1991, I helped found the Greenpoint/ Williamsburg Youth Soccer League and was assistant commissioner for 12 years. GWYSL represents 1,000's of children and families from all across North Brooklyn. Since 2015 I have been the Co-chair of the Friends of Bushwick Inlet Park. In 2016 FBIP spearheaded and won the fight to get the city to fulfill its 2005 Greenpoint/ Williamsburg Waterfront Rezoning promise to the North Brooklyn community and complete the CitiStorage acquisition of the 27 acre park. This we achieved through grassroots organizing, and building coalitions between local community groups, elected officials and literally 1,000's of neighbors. Since 2020, been an active member of the No NBK Pipeline Alliance.

Today I am submitting testimony in opposition of the proposed redrawing of Assembly District 50.

To be a resident of Greenpoint means you have to get involved with community issues because our health, humanity and future depends on civic engagement and activism. We have SO many issues to contend with- superfund sites and the largest oil spill on the East Coast, a 110 acre fossil fuel storage production and distribution facility, and the legacy of heavy industrial manufacturing which has left us with a toxic brew of carcinogenic chemicals, poisoning our neighbors and children, causing asthma, cancer & autoimmune disorders. The neighborhoods of Greenpoint, North and South Williamsburg were divided by decades of red-lining and disenfranchisement. Williamsburg was physically bifurcated by the racist BQE (Brooklyn Queens Expressway) which has cut off access for the Latin communities to the waterfront neighborhoods and put them in harm's way by exposing them to poisonous levels of particulate matter from the highway which has caused unprecedented asthma rates . Since the 2005 rezoning, developers have become hugely wealthy but the community is faced with rampant over development, displacement and a perpetual lack of public open space. The promised 27 acre Bushwick Inlet Park is still ¾ undeveloped, un-remediated and remains off limits to the public and for this public amenity we must fight for continuously,

The impact of toxic environmental pollution does not follow drawn district lines- The polluted contamination flows underground, it blows over fences and roofs with the wind. For generations now, our Greenpoint/Williamsburg community has fought together alongside our elected officials for environmental and social justice. It is imperative that our community born from our rich history of activism remains intact as we continue to fight to remedy past injustices and face new challenges brought forth by the climate emergency. We share the past and we want to share the future together. Cutting off the industrial portion of Greenpoint would redefine and deeply undermine our identity. Geographically, our neighborhood is connected and defined by the loop of Newtown Creek superfund site, the Brooklyn "G" train, McGuinness Blvd, the East River waterfront and the industrial IBZ. Splitting our neighborhood apart does not make any practical sense and, beyond that, it would deny us our history, our shared battles and victories and future together. Please do not divide North Brooklyn.

Sincerely,  
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