

Malcolm Aaron Ertha
New York, New York 10044

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Members of the New York State
Independent Redistricting Commission

Re: Opposition to the State proposal for Redistricting Roosevelt Island

Thank you for considering Roosevelt Island's needs when determining the redistricting map for New York State's Assembly. Maintaining compact, contiguous territories, that preserve and support communities of interest are not only the guiding principles of your commission, but also vital considerations that can help avoid significant disruptions to governance and quality of life issues for the many people of this Manhattan community. To be clear: I am opposed to the current proposal, which removes Roosevelt Island from Manhattan's District 76 and places it in Queens. However, you have the time and ability to change this. I am confident that a subsequent draft of this map will consider our needs detailed in this letter. I am confident that a new version will show us as we have always been: a compact, contiguous, community of interest in Manhattan.

A significant consideration of need for this community of interest is the existing transit infrastructure. Our tramway is operated by the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) to link residents with Manhattan destinations. This vital transportation method does not connect to Queens. Therefore, it is of no consequence to a Queens assembly member. Maintenance of the tramway, used by more than two million passengers annually, could suffer with a loss in uniform government representation – a possibility caused by your current map draft, but something avoidable by actions you can take now.

The commission must consider the maintenance of existing districts, pre-existing political subdivisions, including counties, cities, towns, and communities of interest. Roosevelt Island has recently been confirmed to remain a Manhattan district for city council and state senate. Uniform cooperation from geographically aligned elected officials is paramount for Roosevelt Island given the nature of its governance by RIOC. With a diminished voice in local government, the people of Roosevelt Island would be hurt by pulling it out of Manhattan solely for the NYS Assembly. This community benefits most from keeping all levels of its government compact and contiguous to Manhattan.

Respectfully,

Malcolm Aaron Ertha