

To: Members of the New York State Redistricting Commission

From: Joanne Eichel, 555 Main Street, Apt. 1108, Roosevelt Island, NY 10044

Subject: Opposition to the State Proposal for Redistricting Roosevelt Island

Date: January 12, 2023

Thank you for your work on redistricting. I am writing to let you know I strongly oppose the current proposal which removes Roosevelt Island from Manhattan's District 76 and places it in Queens District 36.

By NY State's own redistricting rules, districts must consist of contiguous territory and shall be as compact in form as possible. Also, the commission must take into account the maintenance of existing districts, pre-existing political subdivisions, including counties, cities, towns, and communities of interest. This proposal does not adhere to these rules.

The City Charter of New York City recognizes Roosevelt Island as a Manhattan community. In this proposal, Roosevelt Island is severed from long established communities of interest. Our political subdivision is not being respected.

The Constitution of New York State specifically provides two State legislators for each district, a Senator and an Assembly Member. Roosevelt Island, a Manhattan community, has a unique form of local governance. We are governed by an unelected, State appointed Public Benefit Corporation, the Roosevelt Island Operating Corp (RIOCI). All of our local services are administered by RIOCI, not by New York City.

Because of this unique relationship with NY State, in which our residents do not have a voting voice in their local government, it is imperative that we have the combined efforts of both Manhattan representatives, working together on our behalf, to provide responsive government and fair dealing with RIOCI.

Roosevelt Island is a Manhattan community. Our tramway is operated by the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOCI) to link residents with Manhattan destinations. All maintenance, repairs, and capital improvements must be made by this state agency. It is not part of the MTA system. Our tramway is a vital transportation link that is used each day by commuters to work and school children. It has no connection to Queens and is of no consequence to a Queens Assembly Member.

Roosevelt Island is a Manhattan community. Many of our children go to public and private schools in Manhattan, not Queens. This relationship is a community interest. Our only public school is located in a Manhattan school district, not Queens. Most of our high school students attend schools in Manhattan. Our Assembly Members have all had long, established relationships with our school district. We need to retain this Manhattan connection.

Roosevelt Island is a Manhattan community. Since our inception almost 50 years ago, Roosevelt Islanders have established enduring relationships with many Manhattan based communities of interest. We have a large immigrant and non-resident population who retain close ties with the United Nations. We have many UN officials, UN staff, and their families living in our community. The living quarters for the staff of Cornell Weill Hospital, in District 76 are located on Roosevelt Island. Also, a significant portion of our population work at nearby Manhattan hospitals. Many of our residents are actively engaged with religious institutions in Manhattan. Most of our working population commute to Manhattan for employment every workday.

Roosevelt Island is a Manhattan community. I hope you recognize the compelling need to not sever Roosevelt Island from its deep and profound Manhattan roots.

Thank you for your consideration.