



May 28, 2025

Dear Governor Hochul, Mayor Adams, NYSDOT Commissioner Dominguez, NYCDOT Commissioner Rodriguez, and Deputy Mayor Roth:

In April 2024, our organizations came together to launch the Brooklyn Queens Expressway Environmental Justice Coalition (BQE-EJC.) We represent a diverse set of neighborhoods and communities in Brooklyn and Queens linked by a common goal – to address the harm caused by the BQE and to envision a cleaner, safer, more sustainable future for our boroughs.

Our advocacy and organizing are rooted in the principles of equitable transportation access and healthy environments — key tenets of environmental justice — for all the communities impacted by the BQE.

We acknowledge that re-imagining the BQE is not an easy task. Still, we are inspired by cities here in the U.S. (including many in New York State) and across the world that have removed or dramatically reduced urban highways, such as Seoul, Paris, Madrid, Milwaukee, Portland, San Francisco, and Rochester. These transformations, when accompanied by investments in public and active transit, have improved public health, reduced air and noise pollution, helped to reconnect and heal communities which have been divided and marginalized and by these polluting roadways. Reducing or removing these highways has not resulted in traffic “carmageddon.” Instead, cities have used the opportunity to utilize land previously covered by asphalt and concrete for more productive, healthy, and sustainable uses.

We are urging you to halt NYCDOT’s proposed multi-billion-dollar project to rebuild and potentially expand the BQE’s Triple Cantilever; a project that would embed this malignant roadway in our communities for generations to come. We support the approach outlined in the letter sent by U.S. Representatives Goldman and Velázquez, State Senator Gounardes, Assemblymember Simon, and Councilmember Restler on December 9, 2024. This letter called on NYCDOT to develop an immediate and straightforward stabilization plan to preserve the safety and integrity of the Triple Cantilever for the next 15 to 20 years, allowing time to develop a long-term, community-driven, and sustainable plan that prioritizes the allocation of resources for neighborhood-specific and place-based solutions.



The robust repair option is the fiscally prudent and life-safety focused approach, made even more urgent by the current environment: federal-level funding for NYC-based projects is unlikely, an upcoming mayoral election in New York City may create new priorities, and high tariffs on steel and other imports will balloon the costs of this project before it even begins.

Just as importantly, a full-scale rebuild of BQE Central would foreclose the possibility of any meaningful transformation along the rest of the BQE corridor. This is both unacceptable and unjust to communities in BQE North and South that have borne the brunt of the harm from this highway for so many decades. Data from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Community Air Monitoring Initiative demonstrate that the BQE is Brooklyn's highest source of air pollution; highlighting how imperative it is that approaches to land use around the highway prioritize the physical and economic well-being of the communities that currently live, study, play, and work nearby.

We appreciate that NYCDOT has undertaken some of the interim repair recommendations made by the BQE Expert Panel in 2020 to extend the life of the structure, and we commend the city and state for the successful implementation of the weigh-in-motion automated enforcement system on the BQE.

Still, it's clear that cities and states must take the reins of aggressive climate and infrastructure policy absent federal leadership. Any long-term plan for the BQE must include a dramatic reduction of vehicle miles traveled, along with reduced climate, air and noise pollution. It must shift most public investment from highway expansion to active, public, and freight transit. This is this vital conversation we must have about the future of the BQE, and we hope to be partners with you in this discussion going forward.

Signed,

The Brooklyn-Queens Expressway - Environmental Justice Coalition

El Puente
UPROSE
NYC Environmental Justice Alliance
Red Hook Initiative
Woodside on the Move



Brooklyn Heights Association
Cobble Hill Association
Riders Alliance
Open Plans
DUMBO Neighborhood Alliance
North Heights Neighbors
350 Brooklyn
Tri-State Transportation Campaign
360 Furman

cc: U.S. Representative Dan Goldman, U.S. Representative Nydia Velázquez, State Senator Andrew Gounardes, State Senator Julia Salazar, Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon, Assemblymember Maritza Davila, Assemblymember Emily Gallagher, Assemblymember Marcela Mitaynes, Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso, Councilmember Lincoln Restler, Councilmember Jennifer Gutiérrez, Councilmember Alexa Avilés, Councilmember Shahana Hanif.