

An Open Letter on Open Restaurants

to New York City Council Speaker
Adrienne E. Adams

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Dear Speaker Adams,

We understand that the New York City Council is poised to vote on a bill (Intro No. 31-A) that will create a **Permanent Open Restaurants** program. Crafted behind closed doors under the watchful eye of New York City Hospitality Alliance lobbyists, **the legislation promises to continue to wreak havoc on residential quality of life.** The bill will make a mammoth citywide program already occupying a vast swath of our common sidewalks and streets permanent.

Despite this dramatic change to our shared public space, **the Council plans to vote on this new legislation without a single public hearing**, without any public comment, and without engagement with the fifty-nine Community Boards who are charged by the City Charter with speaking for its neighborhoods.

This **disregard for the democratic process** is reminiscent of what took place in Fall 2020, when the City Council resolved to make the emergency Open Restaurants program permanent with no public notice. The result of that resolution was two years of intolerable noise, garbage, rat infestations, blocked pedestrian and disability access, fire hazards, and tens of thousands of ignored 311 complaints.

Yet despite these abominable conditions, the City Council is again attempting to create a permanent outdoor dining program in the same way. The results will be more of the same. In fact, this legislation will extend the unregulated pandemic-era Open Restaurants program for another 18 months, leaving **an already failed program on our doorsteps and under our windows.**

While the fingerprints of restaurant lobbyists are all over Intro No. 31-A, the concerns of New Yorkers continue to be ignored. We want residents to be heard. We want immediate public hearings in all five boroughs. We want a process of Community Board engagement. We want a robust, independent Environmental Impact Study. We need truly representative, local democracy to return to New York City. **We appeal to you for your leadership on this matter.**

Sincerely,

CueUp Facilitation Team

... on behalf of the more than thirty community leaders listed below.

Kathryn Arntzen
President, Central Village Block Association

Diem Boyd
Founder, LES Dwellers

Robert Camacho
District Leader, 54th Assembly District

michele campo
Bowery Block Association

Leslie Clark
West Village Residents Association

Emma Culbert, President
Linda Culbert, Secretary
SPaCE: a lower east side block association

Lynn Ellsworth
Humanscale NYC

Sally Greenspan
President, Council of Chelsea Block Associations

Christianne Greiert
Lower Seaman Avenue Tenants' Association

David Gruber
Carmine St. Block Association

Michael Kenna
President, 67 West 87th Street HDFC

Judy Klein
100 West 17th Street Block Association

Jan Lee
The Chinatown Core Block Association

Myra Manning and Kimon Retzos
Safety First Alliance

Micki McGee
South Village Neighbors

Renee Monroe
Broadway Residents Coalition

David Mulkins
President, Bowery Alliance of Neighbors

Katherine O'Sullivan
Inwood Preservation

Ricardo Pacheco
President, Jackson Heights Coops Alliance

Shannon Phipps
Berry St. Alliance

Nancy Preston
Moving Forward Unidos

Kate Puls and Judith Zaborowski
Co-Chairs, 9th Street A-1 Block Association

Sandy Reiburn
President, Preserve Our Brooklyn Neighborhoods

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West 10th Street Residents Association

Susi Schropp
8 Saint Marks Place Tenants Association

Steve Starosta
President, W. 15th St. Block Association

Sean Sweeney
Director, Soho Alliance

Stuart Waldman
Bedford Downing Block Association

Stuart Zamsky
East Fifth Street Block Association