

October 25, 2016

Hon. Melissa Mark Viverito  
Speaker of New York City Council  
250 Broadway, Suite 1856  
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Margaret Chin  
Council Member, 1<sup>st</sup> Council District  
250 Broadway, Suite 1804  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Mark-Viverito and Council Member Chin:

We are writing to you about the Street Vending Modernization Act recently proposed in the City Council that will make comprehensive reforms to the rules that govern street vending.

We are pleased to see that Council is interested in tackling comprehensive reform of the rules governing street vending. The SoHo Broadway corridor is a vibrant mixed use community that is also a popular shopping area attractive to vendors. While vendors are an important member of the SoHo Broadway community, our sidewalks are overcrowded with pedestrians competing with vendors for limited amounts of space.

While this legislation is a start, it does not go far enough in addressing many of the fundamental flaws facing the street vendor system. This legislation adds 4,200 new food vendor permits and loosens several location restrictions, but leaves the main elements of the system essentially unchanged.

The proposed legislation does not address the black market for food cart permits nor does it change the first come first served system by which locations are chosen. The legislation will not clear up the vagueness in the rules that leads to thousands of summonses that are issued and dismissed each year and does not modernize the food carts to address the noise and exhaust pollution they create. The legislation continues the one size fits all approach to siting vendors that does not give communities any input in the siting of a food vending cart on a public sidewalk. ***Please fix the system before adding any more food carts and loosening any location restrictions.***

Please form the Advisory Board and give vendors, small business owners, local residents and others the opportunity to shape a system that works for the City. Give Community Boards and BIDs a formal role on this advisory board as these organizations have a wealth of knowledge about the needs and concerns of their communities. ***Form the Advisory Board to hear from stakeholders about what is broken, use the***

**Board's recommendations to implement legislation that fixes the system and then figure out if more vendors can be handled.**

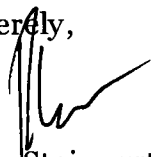
Please create the Street Vendor Enforcement Unit, it will be an important tool in ensuring the rules are being followed creating a more level playing field for vendors. More details are needed as to the size, authority and deployment of this unit to ensure that it has the resources needed to be successful. **Creating a Street Vendor Enforcement Unit is only part of the solution and is not a magic potion that will cure all of the problems of the current system.**

Please start a pilot designated vending locations program to test innovative approaches to the placement of vendors in our City. As currently drafted, a designated location could be an entire borough and DOT could rewrite all of the rules without meaningful oversight. **Significantly more detail is needed to define the goals, scale and scope of the designated vending locations to ensure that it is successful and makes improvements to the system.**

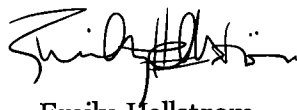
Street vending significantly impacts the quality of life of the significant residential population, the office workers and the ground floor retail business that call our district home. This is a once in a lifetime chance to reform the system, but it must be done in a way that allows meaningful input from impacted stakeholders-from small business owners, local residents, civic groups, property owners and vendors. **Forming an advisory board with meaningful opportunities for public input and dialogue must be the first step in that process.**

As currently drafted, the Initiative cannot support this legislation and we urge you to take the approach outlined above in tackling this much needed reform of the street vending system. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Brian Steinwurtzel  
President



Emily Hellstrom  
Vice President



Mark Dicus  
Executive Director

Cc: Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Tobi Bergman, Chairperson Community Board 2