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THE COUNCIL OF
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MARGARET S. CHIN
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June 28, 2021

The Honorable Governor Andrew Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NNYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

cc: B.J. Jones
President & Chief Executive Officer
Battery Park City Authority
200 Liberty Street, 24th Floor
New York, NY 10281

cc: Tammy Meltzer
Community Board 1 Chairperson
1 Centre Street, Room 2202 North
New York, NY 10007

Dear Governor Cuomo:

I am writing to urge you to halt current plans to erect a memorial in Battery Park City's Rockefeller Park. The announcement on June 23rd about the monument's siting and expedited construction timeline came as a shock to my office and the local Battery Park City community.

This memorial is the third memorial recent siting located in Battery Park City, with a Hurricane Maria Memorial in 2018 followed by the Mother Cabrini Memorial in fall 2020. All three projects have not included any form of public engagement. Yesterday, construction equipment was parked in Rockefeller Park with proposed area for the memorial already fenced off. The project is on course to create serious quality of life issues for local residents, who have relied on this open green space throughout the pandemic. I strongly encourage you to order construction to stop until there has been a proper process of community engagement with local residents and elected officials.

The absence of community engagement is also apparent in the design, which would require the removal and destruction of dozens of trees as well as 29,000 square feet of green open space. Parents also expressed serious concerns about the design and safety of the eternal flame. While I do believe it is appropriate to memorialize those lost to the pandemic, I feel this project has been drafted too hastily and is little more than a gesture. Residents rightly point out that a memorial of this magnitude should be in a more central location; the proposed site lies on one of the western-most points of Manhattan, not readily accessible by public transportation.

Our city suffered so tremendously during the pandemic that any attempt to honor our essential workers must be meaningful and it must be sincere. New Yorkers who kept essential services running cannot be cut out of the design of this dedication; everyone must have a voice in this project.

I strongly urge you to reconsider the proposed structure and location. Community engagement is key to building a meaningful monument.

Sincerely,
Margaret S. Chin

Council Member, District 1