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**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan**

February 25, 2021

Honorable Andrew Cuomo
Governor
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Senate Majority Leader
188 State Street Room 907, LOB
Albany, NY 11247

Honorable Carl Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly
LOB 932
Albany, NY 12248

Senator Liz Krueger
Chair, Finance Committee
211 East 43rd Street
New York, NY 10021

Senator Brian Kavanagh
Chair, Committee on Housing, Construction, & Community Dev.
250 Broadway, Room 2011
New York, NY 10007

A.M. Steven Cymbrowitz
Chair, Committee on Housing
1800 Sheepshead Bay Road
Brooklyn, NY 11235

A.M. Helene E. Weinstein
Chair, Committee on Ways and Means
3520 Nostrand Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11229

RE: Opposition to Part L of the New York State Executive Budget FY 2022

Dear Governor Cuomo, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Speaker Heastie, and Chairs Krueger, Kavanagh, Cymbrowitz and Weinstein:

I write to you in my capacity as Chair of Community Board 8 Manhattan to express our opposition to Part L of the FY 2022 Executive Budget now under consideration. This budget item allows for the conversion of small hotels and Class B and C office buildings to residential premises and supportive housing without the planning or community input that would ordinarily accompany such conversion. If adopted, this proposal would override both local zoning and the very principle of Home Rule. The New York City Zoning Resolution is a valued guide for all neighborhoods, and changes to it should only be undertaken with community participation. Community Board 8 Manhattan vehemently objects to the proposed Part L of the FY 2022 Executive Budget.

There are multiple problems with the proposal. First, this proposal replaces the imperfect controls of the New York City Zoning Resolution with no controls whatsoever regarding conversions of small hotels and certain commercial space to residential and supportive housing uses. Changes to zoning rules (whether broadly applicable or specific to a particular location) should only be undertaken with the input of the affected communities through the ULURP process, but the proposal allows for a wholesale override without any community consultation whatsoever.

In addition, the affordable housing component of the proposal is wholly insufficient and poorly structured. The plan requires only 25% of the total units created by the conversions to be affordable. Further the bill allows for these affordable units to be built anywhere in the city, reinforcing the “outer boroughs are for affordable housing” ethos already in place and doing nothing to address the urgent need for affordable housing in Manhattan Community District 8 and other areas that may be sites for conversions.

We strongly urge you to remove this undemocratic and community-defying proposal from the budget bill.
Sincerely,

Russell Squire

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cc: Honorable Bill de Blasio, Mayor of the City of New York
Honorable Carolyn Maloney, 12th Congressional District Representative
Honorable Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Honorable José M. Serrano, NYS Senator, 29th Senatorial District
Honorable Dan Quart, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member 76th Assembly District
Honorable Robert J. Rodriguez, NYS Assembly Member 68th Assembly District
Honorable Ben Kallos, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District
Honorable Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District