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**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

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**Dromm, Peralta and Fire Union Officials Demand City Firehouses  
be Kept Open in Wake of Massive Fire in Jackson Heights;  
Buildings Set to be Demolished During Press Conference**

**Jackson Heights, NY**, February 15, 2010 -- In the wake of the massive fire that destroyed a commercial strip on 37th Avenue between 84th & 85th Streets in Jackson Heights, Council Member Daniel Dromm, Assemblyman Jose Peralta and various Fire Union officials demand that all city firehouses remain open despite the city's looming budget cuts.

"We can't afford to lose any firehouses anywhere in the city. If one firehouse closes, firehouses in other communities will be called upon to cover those other communities. That will leave everyone short of firehouse coverage if an emergency occurs," said NYC Council Member Daniel Dromm. In a post 9/11 world, the Fire Department's resources should be expanding, not downsizing. The Department's own estimates have said response times will go up at least one minute as a result of the proposed closings. Fires reach the "flashover point" in minutes and one minute could very well mean the difference between life and death.

"The City has already reduced the number of firefighters in engine companies from five firefighters to four. Response times are now calculated in a different way. These changes are troublesome," Dromm explained. Response times are now calculated to not include the time a caller spends making the emergency call to 911. This creates the false impression that response times are down. Also, response times only consider when the Fire Engine arrives on the scene. It does not take into account the amount of time it takes to stretch hose lines, get water on the fire or administer EMS. Providing services could take another 10 minutes or more.

"While the City, the FDNY and the Office of Emergency Management did an excellent job here in Jackson Heights over the weekend, we need to continue to ensure the safety of our residents and not close firehouses," Dromm continued. The consequences of the firehouse closings can be disastrous and result in a rise in civilian fatalities, property damage, increased property insurance premiums, and increased civil liability.

"My office will be working closely with Council Member Dromm to ensure that the businesses affected by this devastating fire receive the resources and assistance they need to recover and rebuild. This weekend's fire further reinforces the critical need to keep all firehouses open. We cannot afford to have less fire protection in our neighborhoods; our lives and our businesses depend upon it." said Assemblyman Jose Peralta.

"I will make sure that the full resources of the City Council are available to residents and small businesses in this time of need. We are committed to helping the businesses and the community rebound from this fire," City Council Member Daniel Dromm concluded.

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