May 20, 2022

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor, New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
President Pro Tempore and Majority Leader, New York State Senate
172 State Street, Capitol Building, Room 330
Albany, NY 12247

The Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Speaker, New York State Assembly
198 State Street, Legislative Office Building, Room 932
Albany, NY 12248

Subject: Support from New York City Council Members for New York Senate Bill S4937C and New York Assembly Bill A6262A regarding hotel conversion to affordable housing

Dear Governor Hochul and Speakers Stewart-Cousins and Heastie,

We write in strong support of the sister bills currently being heard by the New York State Senate (S4937C) and the New York State Assembly (A6262A) which would facilitate conversions of hotels to residential uses.

These bills would amend Section 103 of the Multiple Dwelling Law to add a new subdivision 7 allowing Class B hotels to be used as permanent housing while retaining existing status and certificate of occupancy. This bill would not negate any other existing provision of law that would otherwise prohibit residential use, provided that such occupancy:

1. Shall be subject to the approval of the local housing agency;
2. Shall be within or close to a residentially zoned district;
3. Shall be in agreement with the local hotel union where applicable; and
4. Shall be either financed by the state or by the local housing agency for the purposes of affordable housing for residents making no more than 60 percent of the area median income. Such residential units must also be operated by a nonprofit organization and must be rent stabilized with permanent affordability restrictions upon completion of conversion.

These bills will drastically increase the stock of affordable housing in New York City and State. The economic toll the COVID-19 pandemic has had on working people has brought our city’s affordability crisis to a breaking point. It is crucial that our land use strategies are flexible and adaptable enough to combat this current crisis, and to meet the most basic needs of our most vulnerable neighbors. The oversaturation of hotels left many sitting empty even prior to the pandemic, and now we can match the existing supply of these buildings to the unmet demand for permanent affordable housing.

This pivot to residential use mutually benefits the needs of communities and hotel owners alike, providing new opportunities for both housing and economic development. These bills create an innovative option for properties that are already well-positioned for safe and quality affordable housing.

This is a statewide issue and is therefore a statewide opportunity. Union agreement and agency approval will hold these conversions accountable, while this decisive action at the state level meets the urgency of our affordability crisis.

We urge you as legislators and elected officials to seize this opportunity and to vote to approve S4937C and A6262A.
Sincerely,

Christopher Marte  
NYC Council Member, District 1

Erik Bottcher  
NYC Council Member, District 3

Keith Powers  
NYC Council Member, District 4

Julie Menin  
NYC Council Member, District 5

Shaun Abreu  
NYC Council Member, District 7

Diana Ayala  
NYC Council Member, District 8

Eric Dinowitz  
NYC Council Member, District 11

Kristin Richardson Jordan  
NYC Council Member, District 9

Kevin C. Riley  
NYC Council Member, District 12

Marjorie Velázquez  
NYC Council Member, District 13

Pierina Ana Sanchez  
NYC Council Member, District 14

Oswald Feliz  
NYC Council Member, District 15
Governor Hochul, Speaker Stewart-Cousins, Speaker Heastie

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Amanda Farías
NYC Council Member, District 18

Lincoln Restler
NYC Council Member, District 33

Sandra Ung,
NYC Council Member, District 20

Jennifer Gutiérrez
NYC Council Member, District 34

Shekar Krishnan
NYC Council Member, District 25

Chi Ossé
NYC Council Member, District 36

Julie Won
NYC Council Member, District 26

Sandy Nurse
NYC Council Member, District 37

Nantasha Williams
NYC Council Member, District 27

Shahana Hanif
NYC Council Member, District 39

Lynn Schulman
NYC Council Member, District 29

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NYC Council Member, District 40
Darlene Mealy  
NYC Council Member, District 41

Justin Brannan  
NYC Council Member, District 43

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NYC Council Member, District 45

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NYC Council Member, District 46