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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

Testimony of Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer on The Port Authority Bus Terminal International Design + Deliverability Competition

July 21, 2016

Thank you Chair Degnan and Members of the Port Authority Board for the opportunity to testify today in regard to the International Design + Deliverability Competition. I am Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President.

The Port Authority Bus Terminal (“PABT”) plays an enormous role in the lives of residents, businesses, and commuters for the Borough of Manhattan, New York City, and the greater New York metropolitan area. It is in need of repair, and perhaps even replacement, and certainly an improved aesthetic. Such a crucial and complex undertaking requires a rigorous planning process that involves all stakeholders. Moving forward with a design competition, predicated on a series of pre-selected options, that includes little transparency or public engagement is not the right way. I join my fellow elected officials in calling for immediate termination of this Design Competition.

It is clear to me that any successful plan for a new Port Authority Bus Terminal would have to take into account its impact on the local neighborhood. Yes, the PABT serves a regional need, but its impacts will be most acutely felt in the immediate area. To adequately address the multitude of transportation, zoning, environmental, and quality of life considerations will require sustained coordination with the City and the community. Thus, it’s especially disturbing that without any public consultation, the Port Authority is apparently willing to build over blocks of homes, small businesses, and community spaces in the heart of Hell’s Kitchen. This is unacceptable.

Given the complexity of the region’s infrastructure needs now and in the future, it is also clear that a successful Bus Terminal must be integrated within the broader transportation framework. With major projects like the Gateway Tunnel, Moynihan Station, and a new Penn Station planned for the West Side, a new Bus Terminal must be analyzed and discussed in the context of the bigger picture. However, there has been absolutely no consideration of how these different projects should work together, and each has been presented in isolation.

For these and other reasons, I find the current Design Competition for the Port Authority Bus Terminal inadequate and call for it to be cancelled. Thank you again for your consideration of this testimony, and I look forward to working with you on a plan that would truly serve the people of New York and New Jersey.