

## **Community in Support of the Kingsbridge Armory Redevelopment Alliance (KARA)**

November 13, 2009

Dear City Councilmember,

We, the undersigned community organizations, are writing to draw your attention to an important issue that you will soon be voting on: The Related Companies' application for the rezoning and sale of the Kingsbridge Armory in the Bronx.

We want you to know that we oppose the sale of the Armory unless, and until, The Related Companies agrees to sign an enforceable, transparent Community Benefits Agreement that meets the conditions spelled out in the CBA presented to Related by Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz – and further meets the goals set forth by the Economic Development Corporation's own RFP.

The CBA written by Diaz, with significant input from the Kingsbridge Armory Redevelopment Alliance (KARA), Community Board 7, and State Assemblyman Jose Rivera, calls for: permanent living wage jobs, first source local hiring, community and recreation space, and protection of the right of retail workers to join a union without fear or intimidation.

This community benefits agreement seeks to ensure that developers see Kingsbridge as more than a source of cheap labor and easily developed real estate. When issuing the RFP for the redevelopment of the Armory, the EDC understood the need for city-subsidized development to benefit the community by calling for “development plans that maximize the number of jobs that meet the City's living wage and health benefits standards (‘living wage jobs’)”.

The core principles that we are urging you to support are:

- 1) Everyone in a publicly subsidized development must be paid at least a living wage;
- 2) Their right to join a union without fear or intimidation from their employer must be protected;
- 3) Local community concerns must be respected by preserving local businesses, creating community space, providing affordable recreational facilities, and addressing other issues, such as severe traffic congestion and the additional environmental and health hazards such projects will create.

Your vote is important to us because what happens at the Armory will affect future development plans in all of our communities. If Related is allowed to go forward with their plans, we, the public, will be providing them with more than \$90 million in tax breaks and repairs to the Armory. If the development of the Armory is allowed to proceed without these community

benefits stipulations, the City's public investment would create poverty-wage jobs: 1,200 part-time, minimum wage, no benefit jobs, according to Related. If Related are allowed to do this in the Bronx, we expect they, and other developers, will try to do the same in our communities.

In the coming weeks, community members will be visiting to discuss their concerns with you. For more information, visit KARA's website – <http://www.ourarmory.org>.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Margaret Hughes, Executive Director  
Brooklyn Congregations United

Haeyoung Yoon, Executive Director  
CAAAY

Ann Bragg, Board Member  
Community Voices Heard

Steven Herrick, Executive Director  
Cooper Square Committee

Michelle Neugebauer, Executive Director  
Cypress Hills LDC

Michelle de la Uz, Executive Director  
Fifth Avenue Committee, Inc.

Valery Jean, Executive Director  
Sandra Robinson, Co-Chair  
FUREE

Damaris Reyes, Executive Director  
Good Old Lower East Side, Inc.

David Pagan, Executive Director  
Los Sures

Andrew Friedman, Co-Director  
Make the Road New York

Wanda Salaman, Executive Director  
Mothers on the Move

Sean Barry, Executive Director  
New York City Aids Housing Network

Carrie Brunk, Executive Director  
NY Jobs with Justice

Deborah Howard, Executive Director  
Pratt Area Community Council

Irma Rodriguez, Executive Director  
Queens Community House

Victor Papa, Executive Director  
Two Bridges Neighborhood Council