



May 14, 2020

Honorable Corey Johnson  
New York City Council  
250 Broadway, Suite #1804  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Johnson,

Transportation is one of the most important issues that the New York City government must address as it begins to consider reopening our city in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis. New Yorkers are in desperate need of safer and healthier ways to get around our city - especially essential workers who put their lives on the line every day. However, we are concerned that when non-essential businesses begin to reopen, many commuters will drive private automobiles or rely on for-hire vehicles out of fear of using mass transit. More cars on the road will make our streets less safe and less likely to achieve Vision Zero. This is also contrary to the goals of the upcoming congestion pricing objectives of reducing vehicular traffic. More automobile emissions will also make our air quality worse, especially in environmental justice communities, which is strongly tied to worse health outcomes for people who are infected with COVID-19.

To ensure that alternative means of transportation are available, the State legislature adopted a law to authorize the use of e-bikes and e-scooters as part of the state budget. However, City law conflicts with the state law and local legislation is needed to establish a pilot for e-scooters. Therefore, the undersigned organizations strongly support the passage of Intro 1266, which would create a pilot program for a shared electric scooter service. As an alternative to cars, e-scooters will decrease traffic congestion and reduce greenhouse gas and particulate matter emissions, improving the air quality of our city. E-scooters will play an especially important role as many residents return to work after stay at home orders are lifted. E-bikes and e-scooters, with proper safety protocols in place, give New Yorkers a safe and emission-free way to travel while still practicing safe social distancing. They also provide another multi-modal tool to connect people in transit deserts to mass transportation.

A strong majority of 34 Council members have already signed on as co-sponsors to Intro 1266. This, coupled with the State's recent legalization of e-scooters in the FY 2021 budget, shows that there is already strong legislative support for this pilot.

While the COVID-19 crisis has forced painful tragedies and challenges on the city, it has also created an opportunity to build back better. Our transportation system needs to have more safe, emission-free options so that residents can commute while social distancing without making congestion and air quality worse. We ask that you strongly consider passing this bill as quickly as possible so that we can begin implementing an e-scooter pilot program and provide New Yorkers with a new alternative mode of transportation.

Thank you,

Jule Tighe  
President  
New York League of Conservation Voters

Nick Sifuentes  
Executive Director  
Tri-State Transportation Campaign

Julie Samuels  
Executive Director  
Tech:NYC

Marco Conner DiAquoi  
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Transportation Alternatives

Kate Slevin  
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Karen Imas  
Senior Director of Programs  
Waterfront Alliance

Thomas J. Grech  
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Queens Chamber of Commerce

Justin Pascone  
Director, Policy  
New York Building Congress

Steven Wasserman  
The Legal Aid Society

CC: Council Member Fernando Cabrera