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8TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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March 21, 2013

The Honorable Ray LaHood
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

We write to urge you to allocate a portion of Superstorm Sandy federal disaster recovery aid in New York State towards restoration of the abandoned Rockaway Beach Rail Line. This line will provide safe, reliable transportation for the devastated communities of Southwest Queens and Rockaway.

Funding to restore the rail line would not only pave the way for a more expeditious recovery for families and small businesses still struggling throughout Southwest Queens and Rockaway, but it will also stimulate our economy, create hundreds of jobs for local residents and significantly increase pedestrian traffic to rejuvenate small businesses and allow our communities to flourish.

The Rockaway Beach Rail Line, abandoned in the mid-1960's, provided residents with a safe, affordable and expedient way to access other parts of the borough and city with a 45 minute commute to midtown Manhattan. The current public transit infrastructure of Queens is hardly capable of servicing the present population, and does not provide room for future growth. The creation of an enhanced and sustainable transportation infrastructure is not only necessary in the post-Sandy environment, but crucial for our families as a robust evacuation route in the event of a future disaster.

Nearly five months after Sandy, many small businesses and homeowners are still suffering from the extensive damage caused by the storm. It is of paramount importance that we continue to assist our local families and businesses at this critical time and allow our communities to fully recover and rebuild. The complete restoration of the abandoned rail line would represent a significant step in the right direction.

For the reasons set forth above, we respectfully request that you allocate funds from the federal disaster recovery aid to New York State to assist in restoring the abandoned Rockaway Beach Rail Line. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



HAKEEM S. JEFFRIES
Member of Congress
New York, 8th District



GREGORY MEEKS
Member of Congress
New York, 5th District



PHILLIP GOLDFEDER
Member of Assembly
New York, 23rd District