

DISTRICT OFFICE
166-08 24TH ROAD
WHITESTONE, NEW YORK 11357
TEL: (718) 631-6703
FAX: (718) 631-6707



CITY HALL OFFICE
250 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10007

THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
DANIEL J. HALLORAN, III
COUNCIL MEMBER, 19TH DISTRICT, QUEENS

May 19, 2011

The Honorable Michael Bloomberg
Mayor, City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Mayor Bloomberg,

The Council was recently informed that Engine Company 306 in Bayside, Queens is on the list for potential closure. This news came as a disappointment to me and stirred deep concern for my constituents in Northeast Queens. I strongly urge you to reconsider this proposal.

Engine 306 is situated off Bell Boulevard in the heart of one and two family wood homes, the commercial corridor of Bell Boulevard, which contains countless restaurants and taverns using high output gas driven cooking units, and the Bay Terrace cooperatives, high rise structures. Such a closure would clearly imperil the safety of Northeast Queens.

Most of Bayside would, under this proposal, be served by Engine 320, located on Francis Lewis Boulevard in Whitestone, which is 1.6 miles away, or Engine 313 in Douglaston which is nearly 2 miles away. This will add significant time to respond for this already-underserved neighborhood. As you are well aware, Queens already has some of the highest response times in the City and these cuts would worsen those already well above the median Citywide average. Given the geographic dispersion of fire-houses in my district the largest potential for fatalities and economic damage caused solely by untimely response is heightened. Moreover, your choice to eliminate the fifth man on Engine companies now means in order to run line at a fire two companies must be present- that will no longer be feasible in my district, in any meaningfully responsible manner with this closure.

While I agree with you that our City must balance its budget, it must do so by cutting bureaucracy and inefficiency, eliminating redundancy, reigning in overtime & cost-overruns, terminating unnecessary programs and service, and renegotiating exorbitant pension outlays. It must not do so by cutting basic services that save lives and are the quintessential functions of government. This City has spent billions on outside consultants who have botched their timetables, far overrun their targeted costs, and who have operated without constraint or

account in a virtual state of impunity, yet we are now penny-pinching the very safety of our families and businesses.

We should never compromise on Public Safety; when a life is on the line, every single second counts. Bayside is a large suburban neighborhood, with many old wood-framed houses. Waiting for a fire company to arrive from Whitestone or Little Neck could mean the loss of life and property. Further, such a scheme also pulls resources away from these other neighborhoods, leading to a potentially deadly cycle in a district such as mine. We were stretched thin during the Tornado of 2010, I shudder to think of the consequences of such a drastic action as closing one of the handful of fire-companies in my district.

I urge you to reconsider this reckless plan of closures, and in particular the targeting of Engine 306 in Bayside. On behalf of my brothers who still serve this City in the FDNY and the residents of my community, I tell you, we cannot risk precious minutes and seconds with those lives in the balance. We must not.

In Liberty,


Dan Halloran

Council Member, District 19