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THE COUNCIL OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
BRAD LANDER
DEPUTY LEADER FOR POLICY
39TH DISTRICT, BROOKLYN

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WOMEN'S ISSUE

Mark Klotz, Director
Division of Water, NYS DEC
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233

January 21, 2020

Dear Mr. Klotz,

As City Councilmember from Brooklyn's 39th District, which includes a large portion of the Gowanus Canal, I write to express my support for the attached Reclassification Petition submitted to NYS DEC on behalf of the Gowanus CAG. We must ensure that the Superfund clean-up and investments in new CSO infrastructure result in a safe and sustainable waterfront for the current and planned uses of this waterbody. The existing classification does not support habitat for diverse flora and fauna in the canal, nor recreation and other activities involving primary contact with the water that are currently underway on the canal. The City's anticipated rezoning of the Gowanus waterfront will increase water access and bring residential population growth, calling for even higher safety and environmental standards.

In September 2019, the Gowanus Canal Superfund Community Advisory Group (CAG) voted unanimously to formally petition the NYS DEC to reclassify the waters of the Gowanus Canal north of Hamilton Avenue from Class-SD to Class-I. The Class I designation would improve water quality standards and establish more stringent requirements for maximum allowable levels of chemical pollutants in the Gowanus Canal to protect and enhance the human and environmental health of the neighborhood. A Class-I designation has the following advantages over the existing designation:

- It brings the Gowanus Canal to the same standards as the East River (of which it is a tributary), supporting a best use of secondary recreation and fishing across the Upper Bay of the New York City Harbor.
- It requires a higher level of dissolved oxygen be maintained to support habitat, including fish propagation.
- It requires more stringent water quality requirements for toxic and dangerous pollutants like enterococcus and E. Coli.
- It ensures that pathogen requirements are met consistently, including wet weather.

As our community prepares for years of clean-up activities along the Gowanus Canal, we envision a neighborhood anchored around a safe, inviting waterbody and thriving ecosystem. The Gowanus Canal is a vital asset in the center of a growing neighborhood, and we must approach it's remediation with high standards and a long-term view. I strongly urge NYS DEC to take these matters seriously and prioritize the reclassification of the Gowanus Canal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Lander". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brad" being more prominent than the last name "Lander".

Brad Lander
New York City Council Member
39th Council District, Brooklyn