



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** Res 1067-1999, **Version:** A

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Res. No. 1067-A

Resolution calling upon the Governor, the State Legislature and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to stop using the East Harlem Facility at 100th Street and Lexington Avenue as a bus depot.

By Council Members Reed, Carrion, Freed, Lopez, Marshall, Quinn, Sabini, Eisland and Miller; also Council Members Lasher, Perkins, Robinson, Eldridge and Nelson.

Whereas, The East Harlem bus depot at 100th Street and Lexington Avenue is currently closed and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) has included plans for an extensive renovation and expansion of the bus depot in its capital budget; and  
Whereas, The area around the bus depot is densely populated and composed mostly of public housing projects, tenements and mixed-income developments; and,  
Whereas, This facility is within a residential neighborhood zoned R7.2 and is unsuitable for the residential and limited commercial uses specified by the zoning resolution; and,  
Whereas, Six of the eight bus depots operated by the MTA New York City Transit are located above 96th Street in Manhattan; and,  
Whereas, Dr. Barbara Brenner, the Director of Community Relations for The Mount Sinai School of Medicine and the Mount Sinai Hospital, has written Governor George E. Pataki on October 29, 1999 stating that the continued use of this facility as a depot for buses would undermine efforts to reduce the high rates of asthma morbidity in the neighborhood; and,  
Whereas, Dr. Barbara Brenner stated in her letter, "We believe that poor housing conditions, pest infestations and outdoor air pollution, particularly diesel-based particulate pollutants, are the key environmental determinants of asthma in individuals;" and,  
Whereas, The New York City Health Department in 1996 found that East Harlem had the highest rate of hospitalization of children fourteen and under for asthma emergencies; and,  
Whereas, The rate of thirty hospitalizations per thousand East Harlem children was triple the rate for the whole City; and,  
Whereas, In Fiscal years 1999 and 2000, the City Council responded to numerous scientific studies that found high rates of asthma morbidity in low income neighborhoods by increasing funding in the Health Department's Asthma Initiative; and,  
Whereas, This initiative specifically targeted the East Harlem neighborhood for reductions in asthma morbidity and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority plans to expand its bus depot will hinder this goal; and,  
Whereas, The Coalition to Stop the 100th Street Bus Depot points to findings by the United States Environmental Protection Agency that the air quality in East Harlem does not meet fine particle level standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency, but in fact exceeds those standards by 200 percent; and this Federal agency has specifically noted that level of airborne toxins in upper Manhattan could cause an estimated 2,609 extra cancer cases per million people (more than 10 times the national average); and,  
Whereas, The dense population, the zoning resolutions and the findings of Mount Sinai Hospital and Mount Sinai School of medicine would normally justify the preparation of an environmental impact statement by The Metropolitan Transportation Authority, but this agency is unwisely claiming an exemption from the requirements of the State Environmental Quality Review, the City Environmental Quality Review and Federal environmental protections; and,  
Whereas, The failure to complete an environmental impact statement will deprive the MTA of the facts that they need to make a decision in the public interest; and,  
Whereas, The bus depot would be located on Lexington Avenue, at a stretch of the thoroughfare that is significantly narrower than it is south of 96th Street, contributing to the traffic congestion of upper Manhattan; and,  
Whereas, Traffic congestion and the idling of buses increase the pollution from the diesel engines; and,  
Whereas, The siting of the bus depot would retard the residential and commercial redevelopment of East Harlem currently taking place; and,  
Whereas, Notwithstanding any action taken by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the Authority must seek to avoid building this facility and must look at all possible alternatives and only in the unfortunate event that it is legally precluded from stopping this construction, then only as a last resort, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority should not operate buses that utilize only diesel fuel but should only operate buses that utilize compressed natural gas, electricity or an electric-diesel hybrid system using low-sulfur diesel fuel in order to reduce the damage caused by diesel emissions; and  
Whereas, The members of the East Harlem community have joined together in a broad-based coalition of residents, community-based organizations, health care providers, religious and environmental groups, in firm opposition to the 100th Street bus depot; now, therefore, be it Resolved that the Council of the City of New York calls upon the Governor, the State Legislature and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to stop using the East Harlem Facility at 100th Street and Lexington Avenue as a bus depot.

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