

December 21, 2011

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of the State of New York
633 Third Avenue, 39th Floor
New York, NY 10017

Re: The Loss of More than 100 Union Jobs in
New York City -- A Big Blow to Consumer Protection

Dear Hon. Cuomo:

Tourism is an enormous source of revenue for New York City. But the value of this industry to New Yorkers goes considerably beyond monetary gain: it generates good will and understanding between our citizens and folks from around the world, including visitors from across the United States.

These benefits, both financial and emotional, are currently under threat, ironically from one of the largest companies within New York City tourism: Gray Line, the double-decker bus company, has announced a plan to fire their staff of more than 100 licensed, highly knowledgeable tour guides (all of whom are unionized) and replace them with taped narration. It is rumored that other companies will follow suit, resulting in the loss of an untold number of well-paying jobs.

We cannot let this happen! A tape can never provide our visitors with the intensive, up to the minute information that professional tour guides offer. Nor can it project the fabled New York personality – spontaneous, warm and outspoken – which draws tourists to our city every bit as much as our celebrated landmarks.

Our City code already contains protection for visitors from bad practices within the tourism industry. For example, it demands that tour guides be licensed, and in order to obtain such a license an applicant must pass a written exam that tests for knowledge of our history, culture, street and traffic patterns, and other aspects of New York City life.

We ask that this protection – and implied commitment to excellence – be expanded by passing legislation with the following language, or by urging the commissioner of the Department of Consumer Affairs to add this language to the DCA code:

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Council Member Gale Brewer and State Senator Tom Duane stand with licensed York City tour guides in their struggle to maintain excellence in tourism. Won't you please join them – and the Chelsea Reform Democratic Club – in demanding that this consumer protection is assured?

Respectfully submitted for the
CHELSEA REFORM DEMOCRATIC CLUB
Steven Skyles-Mulligan
Steven Skyles-Mulligan, President

HOME CLUB OF:

City Council Speaker
Christine C. Quinn

State Senators
Tom Duane
and
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Richard Gottfried

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CORRESPONDING
SECY.
Linda Longstreet

RECORDING SECY.
John R. Johnson

PAST PRESIDENT
Judy Richheimer
(acting)

December 21, 2011

Hon. Bill de Blasio
Public Advocate
One Centre Street, 15th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Re: The Loss of More than 100 Union Jobs in
New York City -- A Big Blow to Consumer Protection

Dear Hon. de Blasio:

Tourism is an enormous source of revenue for New York City. But the value of this industry to New Yorkers goes considerably beyond monetary gain: it generates good will and understanding between our citizens and folks from around the world, including visitors from across the United States.

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PAST PRESIDENT
Judy Richheimer
(acting)

December 21, 2011

Hon. Thomas K. Duane, Senator
New York State Senate, District 29
322 Eighth Avenue, Suite 1700
New York, NY 10001

Re: The Loss of More than 100 Union Jobs in
New York City -- A Big Blow to Consumer Protection

Dear Hon. Duane:

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John R. Johnson

PAST PRESIDENT
Judy Richheimer
(acting)

December 21, 2011

Hon. Richard Gottfried, Assembly Member
New York State 75th Assembly District
242 West 27th Street
New York, NY 10001

Re: The Loss of More than 100 Union Jobs in
New York City -- A Big Blow to Consumer Protection

Dear Hon. Gottfried:

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PAST PRESIDENT
Judy Richheimer
(acting)

December 21, 2011

Hon. Jerrold Nadler, Congressman
U.S. Congressional District Office 8
201 Varick Street, Suite 669
New York, NY 10014

Re: The Loss of More than 100 Union Jobs in
New York City -- A Big Blow to Consumer Protection

Dear Hon. Nadler:

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(acting)

Steven Skyles-Mulligan, President

December 21, 2011

Hon. Christine C. Quinn, Council Speaker
New York City Council District 3
224 West 30th Street, Suite 1206
New York, NY 10001

Re: The Loss of More than 100 Union Jobs in
New York City -- A Big Blow to Consumer Protection

Dear Hon. Quinn:

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PAST PRESIDENT
Judy Richheimer
(acting)

December 21, 2011

Hon. Eric T. Schneiderman
New York State Attorney General
120 Broadway
New York, NY 10271

Re: The Loss of More than 100 Union Jobs in
New York City -- A Big Blow to Consumer Protection

Dear Hon. Schneiderman:

Tourism is an enormous source of revenue for New York City. But the value of this industry to New Yorkers goes considerably beyond monetary gain: it generates good will and understanding between our citizens and folks from around the world, including visitors from across the United States.

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John R. Johnson

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Judy Richheimer
(acting)

Steven Skyles-Mulligan, President

December 21, 2011

Hon. Scott Stringer
Manhattan Borough President
One Centre Street, 19th Floor So.
New York, NY 10007

Re: The Loss of More than 100 Union Jobs in
New York City -- A Big Blow to Consumer Protection

Dear Hon. Stringer:

Tourism is an enormous source of revenue for New York City. But the value of this industry to New Yorkers goes considerably beyond monetary gain: it generates good will and understanding between our citizens and folks from around the world, including visitors from across the United States.

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PAST PRESIDENT
Judy Richeimer
(acting)

December 21, 2011

Hon. Gail A. Brewer, Council Member
New York City Council District 6
563 Columbus Avenue
New York, NY 10024

Re: The Loss of More than 100 Union Jobs in
New York City -- A Big Blow to Consumer Protection

Dear Hon. Brewer:

Tourism is an enormous source of revenue for New York City. But the value of this industry to New Yorkers goes considerably beyond monetary gain: it generates good will and understanding between our citizens and folks from around the world, including visitors from across the United States.

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PAST PRESIDENT
Judy Richeimer
(acting)

December 21, 2011

Hon. Daniel R. Garodnick, Council Member
New York City Council District 4
211 East 43rd Street, Suite 1205
New York, NY 10017

Re: The Loss of More than 100 Union Jobs in
New York City -- A Big Blow to Consumer Protection

Dear Hon. Garodnick:

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Hon. Jonathan Mintz, Commissioner
NYC Department of Consumer Affairs
42 Broadway
New York, NY 10024

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and
Assembly Member
Richard Gottfried

STATE
COMMITTEEWOMAN
Doris Corrigan

DISTRICT LEADERS
Mary Dorman
and
Tom Schuler

CLUB PRESIDENT
Steven Skyles-Mulligan

TREASURER
Paul J. Groncki

VICE PRESIDENTS
David A. Caraway
Maarten de Kadt
Lydia R. Hummel
Donathan Salkain

CORRESPONDING
SECY.
Linda Longstreet

RECORDING SECY.
John R. Johnson

PAST PRESIDENT
Judy Richheimer
(acting)

December 21, 2011

Via Fax to the following Manhattan Community Boards

Comm. Board 1 (212-442-5055) Comm. Board 2 (212-254-5102)
Comm. Board 3 (212-533-3659) Comm. Board 4 (212-947-9512)
Comm. Board 5 (212-465-1628) Comm. Board 6 (212-319-3772)
Comm. Board 7 (212-595-9317) Comm. Board 8 (212-758-4616)
Comm. Board 9 (212-662-7396) Comm. Board 10 (212-662-4215)
Comm. Board 11 (212-369-3571) Comm. Board 12 (212-740-8197)

Re: The Loss of More than 100 Union Jobs in
New York City -- A Big Blow to Consumer Protection

Tourism is an enormous source of revenue for New York City. But the value of this industry to New Yorkers goes considerably beyond monetary gain: it generates good will and understanding between our citizens and folks from around the world, including visitors from across the United States.

These benefits, both financial and emotional, are currently under threat, ironically from one of the largest companies within New York City tourism: Gray Line, the double-decker bus company, has announced a plan to fire their staff of more than 100 licensed, highly knowledgeable tour guides (all of whom are unionized) and replace them with taped narration. It is rumored that other companies will follow suit, resulting in the loss of an untold number of well-paying jobs.

We cannot let this happen! A tape can never provide our visitors with the intensive, up to the minute information that professional tour guides offer. Nor can it project the fabled New York personality – spontaneous, warm and outspoken – which draws tourists to our city every bit as much as our celebrated landmarks.

Our City code already contains protection for visitors from bad practices within the tourism industry. For example, it demands that tour guides be licensed, and in order to obtain such a license an applicant must pass a written exam that tests for knowledge of our history, culture, street and traffic patterns, and other aspects of New York City life.

We ask that this protection – and implied commitment to excellence – be expanded by passing legislation with the following language, or by urging the commissioner of the Department of Consumer Affairs to add this language to the DCA code:

If directions, answers to inquires, explanations, descriptions, or lectures are given in any form in a sightseeing vehicle licensed by the DCA that has a capacity of more than seven passengers, then a licensed sightseeing guide must be present on the vehicle to assure passengers of quality care, guidance and safety.

Council Member Gale Brewer and State Senator Tom Duane stand with licensed York City tour guides in their struggle to maintain excellence in tourism. Won't you please join them – and the Chelsea Reform Democratic Club – in demanding that this consumer protection is assured?

Respectfully submitted for the
CHELSEA REFORM DEMOCRATIC CLUB
Steven Skyles-Mulligan
Steven Skyles-Mulligan, President

HOME CLUB OF:

City Council Speaker
Christine C. Quinn

State Senators
Tom Duane
and
Assembly Member
Richard Gottfried

STATE
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John R. Johnson

PAST PRESIDENT
Judy Richeimer
(acting)

December 21, 2011

Ms. Bettina Damiani, Project Director
Good Jobs New York
11 Park Place, Suite 701
New York, NY 10007

Re: The Loss of More than 100 Union Jobs in
New York City -- A Big Blow to Consumer Protection

Dear Ms. Damiani:

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