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Testimony of State Senator Martin Connor

Before the New York City Department of City Planning

Re: The Domino Sugar Plant Proposal

July 31, 2007

After years of sliding into decrepitude, many Brooklyn neighborhoods have emerged as much sought after locations for development. The Williamsburg community in particular seems to have been transformed into a very trendy, and therefore increasingly expensive, neighborhood effectively pricing out many long-term residents.

Additionally, the Brooklyn Waterfront that once served as the heart of New York City's industrial sector has largely lost its manufacturing and shipping industries. For many years, I have been committed to opening up the waterfront to the public by converting open industrial landscapes into park space for public use and recreation. As part of my efforts, I joined with Assembly Member Joseph Lentol to Create East River State Park.

The Domino Sugar processing plant is a prominent symbol of New York City's industrial heritage. Though sugar is no longer processed in this site, there is a huge public sentiment for preservation of the core industrial architecture. In the plan before you, the main building's facade will be preserved, hopefully along with the Domino Sugar logo, and it will remain a signature feature in New York City's landscape. The proposed addition of 660 units of affordable housing will be available to families that make as little as $21,000 per year. It will also add 4 acres of open space to the community and introduce new transportation options, including a water taxi terminal and a jitney service to the local subway stations. In addition, the proposed creation of retail space will bring jobs to the local community. Most importantly, the public will gain access to a significant section of Williamsburg's waterfront.

I believe that this proposal has many benefits to the community at large in addition to providing new market rate and affordable housing to a community that is rapidly growing. The addition of the new open space and access to the river will make this project a true renovation of an abandoned former industrial site.

I support this proposal.