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October 5, 2011

Hon Members of the Transportation Committee
New York City Council
250 Broadway, 16th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Testimony AGAINST proposed Resolutions 892, 981 and A 8193

CHEKPEDS, a coalition of citizen business and institutions for pedestrian safety on the West side of Manhattan, is grateful to this committee for organizing a hearing on the safety of buses.

While we support the provisions included in those bills, we cannot support these bills as written because they are not addressing the majority of safety issues caused by the bus industry. We ask that the balance of the safety issues be addressed, by the laws explicitly giving cities the right to regulate where stops, loading and unloading takes place, what routes the buses can use in the city, and how much the private bus companies should be charged to compensate the city for the use of public space by private enterprises.

In midtown on the west side, there are over 1,000 daily departures and arrivals of long distance buses in or around the 34th Street corridor. There are 360 charter and tour buses parked in the 40's with 1,080 trips through our residential neighborhood at peak periods (seven months of the year twice a week). And indeed there are 6,000 bus trips to and from New Jersey every day, with many of these buses using residential streets for parking and idling.

These buses cause significant safety issues to the residents and businesses at the bus loading and unloading locations. These safety issues are statistically large since they occur 365 days, 24 hours a day, and often affect the same persons repeatedly.

- Loading and unloading of passengers that crowd the sidewalks by the hundreds with luggage routinely force pedestrians to step in the traffic and risk their lives.
- Buses idle for hours in place while loading and loading, as well as lining up for departure. Although each bus typically idles during the loading, loading a bus with 50 passenger and luggage takes more than 3 minutes. Indeed in locations (33rd Street and 9th Avenue) near a school, three minutes is three times the authorized time. Even with each bus idling for three minutes only, with a continuum of buses at the same location, this is equivalent to idling 24 hours a day. Residents have to close their windows and the harmful emissions get retail employees sick.
- Buses double-park, while waiting for the loading station to free up, obstructing traffic and pedestrian crossings. Taxis deliver and pick up passengers with luggage and drop them in the street, in the traffic.

CHEKPEDS is a coalition of over 1,500 businesses, individuals, and institutions dedicated to pedestrian safety in Clinton and Hell's Kitchen, on the West side of Manhattan and the sponsor of the 9th Avenue Renaissance project. excom@chekpeds.com
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- Buses cruise around residential streets, or idle in residential streets, waiting for their stops or to avoid traffic.

These safety issues are present daily, 365 days of the year and they affect large groups of residents, businesses, workers going to work, ladies going to Church, Children going to school. These people deserve the same attention to their safety as those travellers who do not want to pay more than \$1 to go to Boston.

Please make sure the laws explicitly give cities the right to regulate where stops, loading and unloading takes place, what routes the buses can use in the city, and how much the private bus companies should be charged to compensate the city for the use of public space by private enterprises.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Berthet". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping tail.

C. Berthet, co-founder