



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew Gounardes

Sen. Gounardes Joins Community Organizations to Call for State Funding for Brooklyn Ferry Service to Governors Island

ANDREW GOUNARDES March 29, 2024

| ISSUE: **GOVERNORS ISLAND, FERRY SERVICE**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MARCH 29, 2024

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State Senator Andrew Gounardes, Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon, and Council Member Lincoln Restler joined local community organizations at Brooklyn Bridge Park's Pier 6 today to call for funding for Brooklyn ferry service to Governors Island in this year's state budget.

Governors Island is a unique, dynamic year-round destination for New Yorkers from across the city. The Island features over 120 acres of open space, activities for kids, free public art and cultural programming, and environmental and educational offerings for all ages. Since 2010, [the Trust for Governors Island](#) has offered seasonal weekend ferry service from Brooklyn between May and October, along with daily service from Manhattan. In 2021, the Trust expanded this service to include Red Hook/Atlantic Basin and Brooklyn Bridge Park. These ferries are free for kids, older adults, military service members, IDNYC holders, and NYCHA residents. Of the nearly 1 million annual visitors to the Island, 43% arrive using free ferry fares.

Brooklyn ferry service is essential for connecting the borough's communities directly to the vibrant educational, environmental and cultural programming offered on Governors Island. In prior seasons, the Brooklyn ferry service saw an average ridership of 10,000-15,000 riders per month from May through October. This service benefits Brooklynites from many different neighborhoods; residents from Bed-Stuy, Flatbush, Clinton Hill, Prospect Heights, Kensington, and South Slope are all included in the ten zip codes in Brooklyn that most frequently ride these ferries. In fact, five of the six most-represented zip codes in citywide Governors Island Ferry ridership come from Brooklyn.

Without support from the state, the Trust only has funding to offer ferry service from Memorial Day through the end of June this year, and no funding at all to run it in Fiscal Year 2025.

Senator Gounardes successfully fought to include \$625,000 for the Brooklyn ferry service in the Senate One-House Budget Resolution. Now, state and local lawmakers are joining local community organizations and nonprofits that rely on access to the Island in calling on the state legislature and Governor Kathy Hochul to include this funding in the final state budget. This funding helps ensure all Brooklynites have access to the green space, resources

and programming on Governors Island.

"Governors Island is a unique New York treasure: a place where we can enjoy precious green space, offer educational opportunities for kids, showcase local artists, and study our changing climate," said **State Senator Andrew Gounardes**. "Providing frequent, easily accessible ferry service is crucial to making sure New Yorkers can enjoy all the opportunities this space offers, which is why I'm pushing so hard to ensure ferry funding is included in the final state budget. I'm grateful to the Trust for Governors Island for their crucial work, and to my colleagues in state and local government for their partnership in keeping Governors Island accessible to all New Yorkers."

"I am pleased to support funding for Brooklyn ferry service to Governors Island in the One House Budget, and I urge Governor Hochul to include this funding in the final state budget," said **State Senator Roxanne J. Persaud**. "Brooklyn has some of the highest ridership of these ferries, and it's essential for Brooklynites to continue to have access to the resources and programming offered on Governors Island."

"If we want the community to continue to experience the wonders of Governors Island, we must include funding in the state budget for ferry service to the Island. Ensuring public access to Governors Island will allow communities to explore the rich educational, environmental, and cultural programs throughout the year. I'm glad to join Senator Gounardes to fight for all Brooklynites to continue to access this incredible destination," said **Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon**.

"Governors Island is one of the premier parks in New York City," said **Council Member Lincoln Restler**. "It has become a hub of climate education, public art, and dynamic activities. I greatly appreciate Senator Andrew Gounardes' leadership to keep Governor's Island connected to its closest borough: Brooklyn. I join my colleagues to urge the Governor and state legislature to

fund the Brooklyn ferry to ensure New Yorkers continue to have access to Governor's Island."

"I wholeheartedly and enthusiastically support funding for the Brooklyn ferry service to Governors Island," said **Council Member Shahana Hanif**. "This vital connection ensures equitable access to the Island's educational, cultural, and environmental offerings for all Brooklynites. I urge Governor Hochul and the state legislature to prioritize this urgent funding in the final state budget and increase access to this cherished New York treasure."

"We are incredibly grateful for the support of Senator Gounardes and our colleagues in the New York State Senate, Assembly, and New York City Council for their advocacy efforts to secure critical funding for Brooklyn Ferry service," said **Clare Newman, President and CEO of the Trust for Governors Island**. "Expanding access to Governors Island for all New Yorkers is a critical part of our mission, and state funding for Brooklyn Ferry service will bolster the city's commitment to making Governors Island accessible for all."

"Brooklyn ferry service to Governors Island is a vital component of the spectacular, nature-connected, STE(A)M experiences Beam Center provides for hundreds of students and teachers every year," said **Brian Cohen, Executive Director of BEAM Center**. "Loss of this service is a distressing barrier to their access to this most magical and historically meaningful NYC space."

"We cannot create art without meaningful safe, vibrant spaces," said **Tiffiney Davis, Executive Director of Red Hook Art Project**. "Governors Island is our safe space. When people ask what feels like home, our artists say the Island gives them a sense of home and security. We need access. Please consider those children that some of us forget about."

Media Contact:

Billy Richling

Communications Director

State Senator Andrew Gounardes

billy@senatorgounardes.nyc

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