



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

Sanders & SEQ Electeds Host Historic Meeting Regarding JFK Development

JAMES SANDERS JR. June 8, 2017



State Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village, Far Rockaway) joined community leaders and elected representatives from Southeast Queens to host a historic meeting regarding the \$10 billion rebuild of JFK Airport. The goal was to receive feedback from residents about the plans and to educate them on how they can take advantage of job opportunities and the availability of contracting opportunities for Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises.

"We need to embrace and take advantage of this opportunity so that we can cement NYC and NYS as a premiere destination for travelers," Sanders said. "In an area that has been devastated by foreclosures, slammed by Hurricane Sandy, and which has among some of the poorest ZIP Codes in Queens, we need to use the JFK project as a chance for economic development and community building."

Hersh Parekh, the Queens Regional Representative for Governor Cuomo's Office, said the key to improving one's chances to get a JFK construction contract is be pro active and to get certified as an MWBE by the Port Authority and the State of New York as soon as possible, while the planning process is still in the beginning stages. In response to some questions from attendees, Parekh said that if a company does not have the capacity to be considered for a contract it should team up with a senior firm and collaborate in order to meet capacity requirements.

Parekh added that the project would also generate good paying jobs, living wage jobs and would also be utilizing union labor. He noted that residents in New York are fortunate that the state has raised the minimum wage unlike some other states.

In addition to questions about economic development and jobs, some community members had concerns about air and noise pollution and traffic congestion from the increase in passengers traveling through the new airport.

Parekh said when the project improves the drive-ability of the Van Wyck Expressway, for example, there will be less cars and trucks idling, which will reduce the emissions being sent into the air and around the community. Also, some airlines have changed the aircraft that they use to reduce noise, emissions and pollution.

"We are expecting 100 million passengers traveling through JFK in the next 30 years," Parekh said. "If we don't grow the capacity of JFK, for every one million passengers that JFK cannot accommodate, the region loses \$140 million in wages, \$400 million in sales, and 2,500 jobs. So this isn't just about making sure passengers and travelers passing through JFK are able to be served, an extension of that is economic development benefits to the community, with dollars and jobs."

The JFK project aims to address safety, efficiency and usability, making travel a better, more pleasurable, experience for residents and visitors, and bringing this gateway to the forefront of the modern era. The Governor has promised to include MWBEs in the creation of that vision. It's part of the state's 30 percent MWBE contracting goal.

"I have made it my mission to work with business leaders and advocates to redesign and level the playing field in a way that helps MWBEs realize their full potential," Sanders said. "I am the father of MWBEs, having authored Local Law 1 and Local 129, during my time in the City Council. I am also the ranking member on the Senate's Labor Committee and Banking Committee, and the leader of the Senate's new Task Force on MWBEs."

Elected representatives joining Sanders at the meeting, which was held on Thursday, June 8, 2017 at the Robert Ross Johnson Family Life Center in St. Albans, were: State Senator Leroy Comrie and Assembly Members Michelle Titus, Alicia Hyndman and Clyde Vanel.

"I am proud to be working with my colleagues in Southeast, Queens government on bringing about a better day, especially for the shrunken and starving black businesses in the area who could really benefit from obtaining a JFK rebuild contract," Sanders said. "As politicians, we could have chosen to be territorial but we are not taking that road. We are going to be partners and we are going to make sure that this project helps businesses grow. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity and what good is it if all the work goes to firms outside of New York."