



May 29, 2014

Shaun Donovan, Secretary
United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street SW
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Donovan:

We write to express our support for the “Big U” resiliency proposal, one of the finalists in the Rebuild by Design (RxD) competition initiated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). We believe that the “Big U” proposal has the potential to accomplish the improvements to “the physical, social, economic, and ecological resilience of communities throughout the Sandy-affected region” that the RxD competition has challenged its entrants to achieve.

When Hurricane Sandy hit Lower Manhattan, our offices engaged in a variety of outreach efforts to help our constituents prepare for the storm and then to recover from the damage and disruption it caused. From this experience, it was evident that better long-term planning was needed to mitigate the impacts of future disasters. The “Big U” proposal embodies the types of steps that should be taken to improve disaster planning, and we encourage HUD to strongly consider the proposal’s merits.

In drafting the “Big U” plan, the Bjarke Ingels Group engaged local communities, creatively incorporating the needs and ideas of residents and community-based organizations into their work. The result has been an enthusiastically supported proposal that should make our communities stronger and more resilient.

We applaud HUD’s commitment to encourage and fund innovative plans to make coastal communities more resilient. For these reasons, we ask that the “Big U” proposal be selected and funded for implementation. Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please feel free to contact any of us.

Sincerely,

Daniel Squadron
State Senator

Brian Kavanagh
Assembly Member

Sheldon Silver
Assembly Member

Jerry Nadler Carolyn B. Maloney Gale A. Brewer
Jerry Nadler Carolyn Maloney Gale A. Brewer
Congress Member Congress Member Manhattan Borough President

Brad Hoylman Linda Rosenthal Rosie Mendez
Brad Hoylman Linda Rosenthal Rosie Mendez
State Senator Assembly Member Council Member

Margaret Chin

Margaret Chin
Council Member

cc: Senator Charles E. Schumer
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand