

**Testimony of Elisa Velazquez Mayoral Nominee to the Taxi and Limousine
Commission Before the New York City Council**

Committee on Rules, Privileges, and Elections

September 7, 2022

Good Afternoon Chair Powers, Madame Speaker and members of the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections. My name is Elisa Velazquez and I come before you today seeking your confirmation and consent to be appointed as a member of the Taxi and Limousine Commission also known as the TLC. Thank you in advance for your consideration and for the opportunity to tell you about myself and why I would like to serve on the TLC.

Currently, I am the Deputy Commissioner and Deputy Chief Financial Officer for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), a position to which I was recently promoted. In that role, I will continue to oversee the Agency Chief Contracting Office and will now oversee Expense & Miscellaneous Revenue Budget, Facilities Maintenance & Construction and Executive Support & Administration. I joined DEP in 2016, and prior to my new role, I was the Agency Chief Contracting Officer and Assistant Commissioner for Fiscal, where my duties included coordinating and executing all the procurement and fiscal operations, totaling approximately \$2 billion in expense and capital contracts and \$1.5 billion in payments per fiscal year.

Prior to DEP, I was Counsel to Queens Borough President Melinda Katz from January 2014 until I joined DEP in 2016. My duties as Counsel were to advise the Borough President and staff on various legal and policy issues, including conflicts of interests, land use and community board issues, compliance and budget issues and corporate governance. I also acted as the Borough President's representative on NYCERS, the Franchise Concession and Review Committee and the Queens Public Library Board of Directors.

Before serving as Counsel to the Borough President, I was General Counsel in the Mayor's Office of Contract Services (MOCS) from 2003 until 2013, where I advised the City Chief Procurement Officer, their staff, as well as the agency contracting staff on various aspects of procurement law while supervising the implementation of various legislative and policy reforms by the attorneys in such areas as M/WBE participation, environmentally preferable purchasing, and "Pay-to-Play" laws.

Prior to MOCS, I had extensive government experience, working for former Public Advocate Mark Green as Deputy Counsel and Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger as Assistant Counsel and Director of Constituent Services.

I am a Queens native, born in Flushing. I grew up in Manhattan and Staten Island and went to both college and law school in New York City. I am currently a proud Bellerose resident and have resided there for almost 20 years. I have two wonderful sons, one who is a music teacher and the other who is a junior in high school.

Throughout my career, which has spanned over 25 years, I have learned a lot about the huge behemoth that is city government bureaucracy; how to navigate it, manage it and use it to advance goals and initiatives. Finding the flexibility in the joints of government and learning how to leverage it is one of the many skills I have developed. I work hard to pass that along to all my staff and colleagues, as it is in my mind, one of the essential ingredients to success in city government.

Problem solving as a city government employee is challenging; there is never just one angle or facet to a problem. Problems come in layers, and to really understand what the problem is, you must peel back and examine each layer, so that the solution reached is comprehensive and

addresses most of the elements related to the problem and is implementable without unintended consequences.

Solving problems in city government also takes collaboration and communication. Often, the many cogs of the city government wheel are out of synch and do not connect the way they should. Communication and collaboration with colleagues and stakeholders are essential, within and across agencies. Problem solving also requires making tough decisions. As city employees, we are at our best when those decisions combined with tangible solutions benefit the New Yorkers we serve.

It is this perspective and experience that I believe has prepared me to serve on the Taxi & Limousine Commission, if approved. The TLC, taxi drivers and owners and the industry at large are going through a challenging time and have many problems to solve. It will require collaboration among all the stakeholders, analysis and data gathering, communication and collective thought. The TLC, is doing just that in a proactive, creative and dynamic way through its many initiatives, including the recently announced expansion to the Medallion Relief Program with Marblegate Asset Management and the New York Taxi Worker Alliance that will provide hundreds of millions of dollars in debt relief to medallion owners. I look forward to being a part of and contributing to that process. I am excited to get to know my colleagues on the Commission and the hardworking staff at TLC, if approved. It will be a true honor to be part of transformational change that will support, expand, and sustain New York City's ground transportation system and all the New Yorkers it employs and serves.

Thank you again for your consideration of my nomination to the TLC and I look forward to answering any questions.

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Appearance Card

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Name: Michael Henry Adams

Address: 41 Convent Avenue

I represent: Self

Address: _____

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in favor in opposition

Date: 9/7/2022

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Name: Sarah Carroll

Address: LPC, 1 Centre St, 9th floor

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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Nominee _____ Date: 9/7/22

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Name: Anthony Crowell

Address: Adams St. Bklyn. NY

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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Name: Milton Williams

Address: 250 Vesey St., 21st Fl.

I represent: Milton Williams

Address: 250 Vesey St.

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Name: Andrea Goldwyn

Address: _____

I represent: NY Landmarks Conservancy

Address: 1 United Hall of NYC

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Date: SARAH CARROLL

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Name: SIMEON BANKOFF

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I represent: _____

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Name: CHRISTABEL GUGON

Address: 115 TUDOR CITY PLACE NYC

I represent: SOCIETY FOR THE ARCHITECTURE

Address: OF THE CITY "

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Name: Clisa Velezquez

Address: 241st Street, Bellerose, 11426

I represent: myself

Address: same as above

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Name: Stana Sassow

Address: Stuart Place - White Plains NY

I represent: Center for Judicial

Address: Accountability, Inc

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Date: 9/7/22

Name: Gail Benjamin
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Address: Clifton Place, Brooklyn NY.

I represent: myself

Address: _____

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Date: 9/7/22
Milton Williams

Name: Jena Sassou
(PLEASE PRINT)

Address: Stewart Place NY 10013

I represent: Center for Judicial

Address: Accountability, Inc

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