

GATEWAY PLAZA TENANTS ASSOCIATION

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Gateway Plaza Tenants Association, Elected Officials and Community Leaders Rally to Demand Rent Stabilization for All Gateway Plaza Tenants

NEW YORK, NY (Jun. 2, 2019) — The Gateway Plaza Tenants Association, along with residents and community leaders, rallied with Congressman Jerrold Nadler, NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, NYS Assembly Member Yuh-Line Niou and NYC Council Member Margaret Chin, to demand the extension of rent stabilization protections for all Gateway Plaza tenants,

In advance of the June 2020 pending expiration of rent protections at Gateway Plaza, the Gateway Plaza Tenants Association has been mobilizing tenants to urge the LeFrak Organization to complete its negotiations with Battery Park City Authority to renew the contractual rent protection agreement in place since 1987.

Gateway Plaza was the first residential building in Battery Park City. Completed in 1983, Gateway was originally envisioned as affordable housing for all tenants in the six-building, 1,700-unit development. In exchange, Gateway ownership has received a substantial discount on its annual ground lease payments for more than 30 years.

Gateway Plaza has always served as a haven for the middle-class families, young people and seniors who chose to make Battery Park City their home. In the aftermath of the terror attacks of 9/11, an overwhelming majority of Gateway Plaza residents returned to rebuild their community, spurring on the wildly successful revival of Battery Park City.

The rent stabilization agreement in effect from 1987 to mid-2009 covered all Gateway Plaza tenants. The current agreement, negotiated by the Battery Park City Authority and elected officials in 2009, secured rent stabilization through 2020 only for then-current residents.

Tenants who moved in after the date of the 2009 agreement, pay market-rate rents and are not covered by the stabilization protections afforded under the agreement. Since the current agreement was signed, rents in lower Manhattan have far exceeded the rate of inflation, and these tenants have reported significant annual rent increases that quickly render their homes unaffordable.

Gateway residents are demanding that the new rent stabilization agreement cover all tenants and that renewal rent increases be in accordance the NYC Rent Guideline Board guidelines. Further, the term of the new agreement should be extended through 2040 when the Gateway Plaza ground lease agreement with Battery Park City expires. If the term of the ground lease is extended, the rent protections should be extended for the same term.

“Our city is in a housing crisis,” said **Congressman Jerrold Nadler**. “Affordability is an issue that affects many middle-class New Yorkers, and the issue at Gateway Plaza is a prime example of middle-class families in New York City getting squeezed out of their neighborhoods. As the Battery Park City Authority and Gateway’s owner, the LeFrak Organization enter into discussions to renew their agreement, our priority must be the extension of rent stabilization protections to every current tenant at Gateway, not just to legacy tenants who have lived here in 2009. I am committed to working with my colleagues in government in the City and State level to ensure that Gateway Plaza remains an affordable community where residents can continue to live and bring up their families.”

“New Yorkers are increasingly feeling the squeeze on rents that keep going nowhere but up,” said **NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer**. “That’s why I’m proud to stand alongside the residents of the Gateway Plaza Tenants Association in Battery Park City to echo their demands for fair rental agreements for all of the development’s residents. We must build communities where working New Yorkers can find a place to call home and can make it in New York.”

“Gateway Plaza has long been a beacon of hope for middle-class residents in an increasingly unaffordable city, said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. “New Yorkers deserve to live free of worry that their rent will suddenly increase and become impossible to pay. I support the Gateway Plaza Tenants Association’s request for LeFrak Organization to work with the Battery Park City Authority to renew and expand rent stabilization protection to all Gateway Plaza residents.”

“Battery Park City is as vibrant and successful as it is today largely due to the residents at Gateway Plaza,” said **Assemblymember Yuh-Line Niou**. “The tenants at Gateway Plaza helped build our community and revitalized our neighborhood that was once a landfill. Even after September 11th, these tenants came back to rebuild and reestablish our community. Their dedication cannot go unrecognized. There should be no question that the residents at Gateway Plaza deserve to stay in the community they helped to develop. The current arbitrary rent increases are unacceptable. Not only do they eliminate the last remaining affordable housing stock we have in Battery Park City, these increases push out community members and especially destabilize the many senior residents who live on a fixed income at Gateway Plaza. I urge LeFrak and the Battery Park City Authority to resolve their negotiations immediately and include provisions to preserve and expand affordability in Gateway Plaza. Going forward, we must also continue to fight to expand the affordable housing stock in Battery Park City which remains as one of the most expensive places to live in New York.”

“As the Council Member representing Battery Park City, I have stood shoulder to shoulder with the Gateway Plaza Tenants Association to ensure their building remains a haven for the middle-class families, young people and seniors who choose to make this neighborhood their home,” said **Council Member Margaret S. Chin**. “For more than 30 years, the rent protection agreement between the LeFrak Organization and the Battery Park City Authority has been a vital tool in the effort to keep the neighborhood’s first residential building affordable. Today I am joining the Gateway Plaza Tenants Association to demand that the building be made affordable for all residents.”

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