



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

MICAH Z. KELLNER
65th Assembly District

August 23, 2007

Hon. Margaret Forgione
Manhattan Borough Commissioner
New York City Department of Transportation
40 Worth Street, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10013

Dear Commissioner Forgione:

With the recent bridge disaster in Minnesota there has been a renewed focus on the condition, maintenance, and structural integrity of New York City's 790 bridges. The New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) should be applauded for keeping the vast majority of New York City's bridges in good repair. An exception in my district is the East 78th Pedestrian Bridge, which spans the FDR Drive. I was disturbed to learn that this bridge is one of three found to be in poor condition by DOT.

I am greatly concerned about the safety risks that the poor condition of the East 78th Street Pedestrian Bridge poses to pedestrians as well as the thousands of commuters who drive under the bridge along the FDR highway each day. Even if the bridge is no imminently in danger of catastrophic collapse, like what happened in Minnesota, even a smaller incident would endanger lives, inflict major damage to our transportation infrastructure, and create havoc on the FDR, causing a major citywide disruption to traffic circulation.

I understand that beginning in June, 2008 the 67-year-old bridge is scheduled for replacement with a new accessible structure. While this upgrade is long overdue it is still nine months away if it begins as scheduled and as you know it has already been delayed once. Please let me know what is being done in the interim. I urge DOT to ensure the structural integrity of the bridge by adopting a comprehensive safety plan until the refurbishment is complete.

Thank you for your attention to this issue, I look forward to hearing from you. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 212-860-4906 if you would like to discuss this issue further.

Very truly yours,

Micah Z. Kellner
Assembly Member