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Assembly Member Kellner Congratulates New RIOC Board Members

Statement by NYS Assembly Member Micah Z. Kellner

“I am proud to congratulate Margie Smith and Michael Shinozaki on their long-awaited confirmation by the State Senate yesterday to the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation Board of Directors as well as Dr. Kathie Grimm on the confirmation of her re-nomination. Margie, Michael, and Kathie are three of Roosevelt Island’s most talented and dedicated community leaders, and they will be key contributors to a Board that has steadily grown more representative of the island it serves.

“I have been a consistent advocate for democratizing the RIOC Board, and these confirmations mark another important step forward in that process. I sponsor a bill (A.3953/S.1394) with Senator José Serrano, which would reconstitute the RIOC Board so that it is elected rather than appointed. In 2008, I secured funds for ballot machines so that the Roosevelt Island Residents Association could run their balloting. In that historic election islanders chose Dr. Grimm, along with five other nominees, to represent them on the Board. Margie and Michael were elected last May, in another successful ballot with excellent turnout.

“The island’s voters have chosen supremely qualified individuals with a proven commitment to serving their community. It goes to show that democracy really does work: when people are given the opportunity to participate in the governing of their own communities, they take their civic responsibility seriously. RIOC is better off for it, and so are the residents of Roosevelt Island.

“Unfortunately, the Governor has not always respected the will of Roosevelt Island’s voters, as when he failed to officially nominate two of the winners of the 2008 election. I will continue to advocate for full democratization of the RIOC Board—Roosevelt Islanders deserve nothing less.

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