



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

**In the Matter of the Proposed Merger between
Time Warner Cable of NY and Comcast Cable
Docket Number: 14-M-0183
June 19, 2014**

Statement on Behalf of Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams

Good evening. My name is Andrew Gounardes and I am General Counsel to Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams. I offer this statement on his behalf.

Thank you to the New York State Public Service Commission for holding this public hearing tonight on the proposed merger of Time Warner Cable and Comcast. It is important and appropriate that the Borough President's office comment on the proposed merger. I know that there are a lot of questions and concerns that many people have about this merger, but tonight I want to focus on the issue of public access and how important public access is for the people of Brooklyn.

As part of its franchise agreement with the City of New York, Time Warner Cable, and all of the other cable service providers operating across the city, have a contractual obligation to support Community Access Organizations which provide public access services for the residents of each borough. These agreements are subject to the approval of the Franchise and Concession Review Committee, on which each Borough President sits. When the cable service providers last renegotiated their franchise agreement with the city, the last administration at Borough Hall made sure that public access was a high priority and that Brooklyn's Community Access Organization, BRIC, received its fair share of support.

Why is public access so important? The answer is actually very simple. Public access helps sustain the free society that we all so deeply cherish in this age of digital democracy. When we empower the people of Brownsville and Bay Ridge, of Williamsburg and Brighton Beach, of Canarsie and Cobble Hill, with not only the means of digital information, but the tools to create digital information, we can break down barriers and unleash opportunities undreamt of across Brooklyn.

BRIC provides:

- The only unmediated coverage available to community leaders;
- Spiritual Outreach—Local religious programming representing all faiths comprises more than 20% of BRIC programs;

- Positive coverage of the Brooklyn-based cultural activities that do not get media attention in the mainstream press;
- A forum in which Brooklynites work together to create a community in our own image;
- Technical training and jobs – BRIC provides training that allows people not only to make themselves ready for jobs in media, but also to increase media literacy that is vital to participation in today’s world.

In this, we have one interest; we are One Brooklyn. We see the public resources which are part of this agreement as critical to our efforts to bring Brooklyn together as one—public access to cable channels, to equipment, to free media training, to interconnectivity. These are the tools that every modern society needs to create a real sense of community.

The Borough President’s Office strongly endorses and supports the work done by our Community Access Organization, BRIC. Brooklyn could not – would not – be what it is without the services and programming of BRIC, available to each of Brooklyn’s 2.6 million residents. Public access is so important to Brooklyn, and that is why our office asks the Public Service Commission to conditional approval of the proposed merger on the following points:

Channels

- Maintain Public, Education and Government (PEG) channel capacity at levels in current franchise agreements.
- Cablecast PEG channels with the same quality as the commercial channels.
- Keep the PEG channels in easily accessed, stable locations.

Financial Support

- Assure support for Public Access services, including vital training, production and distribution services now provided to digitally under-served populations, as well as hyper-local media coverage – regardless of any shift in the cable markets facilitated by the concentration of market power.
- Assure City revenues from franchise agreements continue at least at current levels, regardless of any shift in the cable markets.

The Borough President’s office looks forward to a continuing and productive relationship with Comcast, should the merger be approved, one in which the public interest works hand in hand with a very profitable business to create a telecommunications system that keeps Brooklyn at the forefront of new technologies.