



THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



ADRIANO ESPAILLAT
SENATOR
31ST DISTRICT

Stefano Pessina
CEO, Walgreens Boots Alliance
108 Wilmot Road
Deerfield, Illinois 60015

July 11, 2016

Dear Mr. Pessina,

The City Fresh Market at 125 East 116th street serves East Harlem families by providing an affordable, full-service supermarket to the community. Many food options they provide will no longer exist if they are forced to close their doors on August 1st and a Duane Reade is opened in its place. We believe the existence of this market is critical to the welfare of this community and we ask that you consider offering to sign a sublease with the City Fresh Market to keep it open.

East Harlem has long been considered a food desert, and the closing of Pathmark on 125th and Lexington last year has only made matters worse. Losing yet another supermarket, to a landlord that refuses to extend a lease, will leave families traveling long distances to provide affordable food for their families.

In Washington Heights we proudly came together to avoid a similar scenario. Working with a determined community, elected officials from around the city, the Associated's ownership and Walgreens, we were able to find a solution that allowed the Associated on 187th and Fort Washington to stay. We believe such a roadmap can be applied to this situation, and we ask that you join us in working to bring the landlord to the negotiating table so the terms of a sublease can be discussed.

The owner of the 116th street City Fresh Market, Anthony Espinal, has expressed his ability and willingness to pay market rate to stay at his current location. He has a loyal following and does very well in that location. We saw an outpouring of support for him and a few other key stores in East Harlem at a Town Hall Speaker Mark-Viverito hosted last November. The closing of the Pathmark on 125th & Lexington brought the issue of food security into sharp highlight and helped many realize how vulnerable some of these community anchors are. In a community that values local small businesses, there will be great sensitivity around the replacement of this affordable, independently-owned supermarket with a large chain store.

We look forward to having an opportunity to meet with Walgreens regarding the future of access to high-quality produce throughout East Harlem.

Sincerely,

Adriano Espailat
State Senator

Melissa Mark-Viverito
Speaker of the New York City Council