



**Written Testimony  
New York City Council  
Committee on Consumer Affairs and Business Licensing  
Submitted on behalf of Randy Peers  
President & CEO, Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce**

**Thursday, June 4, 2020**

We submit this written testimony in support of Introduction Number 1957, establishing temporary outdoor dining areas for restaurants and food vendors while the temporary spacing order is in place due to the coronavirus pandemic. The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce is among the largest and most influential business advocacy organizations in New York, having spent the last hundred years developing and promoting policies that drive economic development and advance its members' interests. We are the voice of Brooklyn's business community, offering the promotion, support and advocacy businesses need to continue creating jobs and opportunities in their communities.

Our team at the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce has been working around the clock to help our small businesses weather the COVID-19 crisis and offer them the support, tools, and resources that they need to survive. We need our businesses to safely get back to work as soon as possible and are looking forward to our city reopening. Nonetheless, it is going to be difficult for many of our industries – particularly our vibrant restaurants – to operate safely and make enough money to cover basic expenses. Thank you for introducing this bill to help our restaurants, who have been so hard hit by this crisis and forced to transition to a new model with only takeout and delivery. Allowing them to quickly evolve further and widely offer dining services outdoors is a major step in bringing these critical community anchors, and our neighborhoods, back to life.

We look forward to working with you, Business Improvement Districts, private landlords and community members to cite potential locations for these outdoor spaces. We appreciate you setting out a fast timeline for temporary permits for outdoor dining and that there is no cost associated with them. We want you to know that we will be there alongside these restaurants, providing guidance, distributing personal protective equipment, offering grants and loans to fund sanitizing services, inventory, operations, and distancing design. We are eager to collaborate with you further over the next few months to roll out additional programs that help our businesses get back on their feet so that our city can rebuild and rebound. Introduction Number 1957 is a great first step in taking us there. Thank you for your support of New York City's small businesses.