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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Terror Trials Don't Belong in Lower Manhattan, Downtown Alliance Tells City Council**

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**New York, February 12, 2009** – Downtown Alliance President Elizabeth H. Berger addressed the City Council committees on Lower Manhattan Redevelopment and Public Safety on the proposed 9/11 terror trials in Lower Manhattan.

Here is the full text of her remarks:

Good afternoon Madam Chair. This is certainly an auspicious start as Chair of the Lower Manhattan Redevelopment Committee and I commend you for holding this hearing and for your leadership on this important issue.

Lower Manhattan is not the place to hold the trials of Khalid Shaikh Mohammed and four accused Sept. 11 co-conspirators – it just doesn't make sense – and here's why.

The district is simply too dense, with too much going on and too much progress after 9/11 to introduce more police checkpoints, rooftop snipers and barriers. In one square mile, we have 54,000 residents – more than double the number on 9/11. We have more than 88 million square feet of office space and more than 306,000 workers, more than 5 million annual tourists and more than \$30 billion in construction – and that's just below Chambers Street. The consequences of these trials on all the surrounding areas – Chinatown, the Lower East Side and the Civic Center – would be crippling. It would clog streets, divert workers and residents, drive away tourists, and bring an added security threat.

Lower Manhattan has suffered enough. Downtown has spent eight and a half years recovering from the single worst day in New York City's history. On 9/11, we lost 2,749 lives, 60,000 jobs and 13 million square feet of office space. Twenty thousand residents were displaced from their homes.

But we are rebuilding with boldness and faith in the future. Today, when you walk around our district, you can see the results. Holding this trial in Foley Square would bring fresh trauma to a community still healing from the last one, and break the momentum all of us have worked so hard to build in Lower Manhattan. And more physical reminders of

threats to our security – no matter how necessary – will turn Lower Manhattan from a resurgent location of choice to a destination of last resort.

This is why the businesses, residents and other Downtown leaders are standing together to oppose holding these trials: we all know it just doesn't make sense for Lower Manhattan. Not here, and not now.

Case in point: as James Q. Wilson wrote in The Wall Street Journal on January 21, "No one knows when the trial in New York will start. When it does, don't plan on visiting Lower Manhattan."

Thank you once again for inviting me, Madam Chair, and I urge you and your colleagues to send a strong message to the Justice Department, on behalf of all New Yorkers, that Downtown is the wrong place for these trials.

*The mission of the Alliance for Downtown New York is to be the principal organization that provides Lower Manhattan's historic financial district with a premier physical and economic environment, advocates for businesses and property owners and promotes the area as a world-class destination for companies, workers, residents and visitors. The Downtown Alliance manages the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Business Improvement District (BID), serving an area roughly from City Hall to the Battery, from the East River to West Street.*

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