



Alliance for Downtown New York, Inc.
120 Broadway, Suite 3340
New York, NY 10271
212 566-6700 Fax 212 566-6707
www.DowntownNY.com

PRESS CONTACTS: Downtown Alliance: [James Yolles](#), (212) 835-2763, (202) 997-4559
Shea Communications: George Shea, Mark Faris (212) 627-5766

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DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE SUBMITS TESTIMONY ON PROPOSED VENDOR REGULATIONS

New York, NY (April 23, 2010) – The [Alliance for Downtown New York](#) today submitted testimony supporting a new proposal to curtail the number of vendors permitted in Battery Park, among other parks in Manhattan.

“The Downtown Alliance, which manages the Business Improvement District in Lower Manhattan, believes well-crafted—and *consistently enforced*—vending regulations are essential if everyone is to enjoy the city’s public spaces,” the testimony read. “Outdoor vending is a New York tradition—and Lower Manhattan would not be part of Gotham without it. Well-regulated vending provides our workers, residents and visitors with inexpensive dining and shopping alternatives. And it provides artists and entry-level entrepreneurs a way to earn a living.”

The full testimony is as follows:

Good morning.

I am Kaziem Woodbury, Assistant Vice President of Operations at the Alliance for Downtown New York, and I am here to speak for Elizabeth Berger, President of the Downtown Alliance. We want to commend you for your efforts to make the experience in and around the City’s parks convenient and welcoming for all New Yorkers and visitors.

While the Downtown Alliance believes that artists and other vendors of expressive materials have a time-honored place in New York City’s public parks, we don’t think they belong *in all places* there. Busy pedestrian walkways, entrances and seating areas, for example, should always remain clear and unobstructed so everyone can use them without difficulty.

For that reason, we support your proposal to set aside a finite number of spots in certain City spaces—including Battery Park—for vendors of expressive materials, spots that would be available every day, free of charge, on a first-come, first-served basis.

As you have pointed out, large groups of unregulated vendors can lead to congestion and pedestrian gridlock, giving rise to conditions that are potentially unsafe. They can

also detract from the experience of park visitors. The parks are for everyone. The opportunity of vendors to sell expressive materials in the parks must be balanced with the opportunity of the public to use—and enjoy—the parks without hindrance.

The Downtown Alliance, which manages the Business Improvement District in Lower Manhattan, believes well-crafted—and *consistently enforced*—vending regulations are essential if everyone is to enjoy the city's public spaces. The parks department has a history of regulating many other kinds of vendors and concessionaires—and the system has worked well.

With 25 acres of waterfront parkland and spectacular views of New York harbor, Battery Park is the largest public open space in Lower Manhattan. It is one of Downtown's signature venues, showcasing—as few other places can—New York's extraordinary blend of cosmopolitan energy, rich history and natural beauty. And it is heavily used—by many of Downtown's 304,000 workers, 55,000 residents and 5.8 million tourists a year.

The problem is this: The entrances and narrow pathways leading to Battery Park's esplanade often become oversaturated with vendors. The crowding that results makes this iconic public space potentially unsafe and difficult to use.

Outdoor vending is a New York tradition—and Lower Manhattan would not be part of Gotham without it. Well-regulated vending provides our workers, residents and visitors with inexpensive dining and shopping alternatives. And it provides artists and entry-level entrepreneurs a way to earn a living.

But the Downtown Alliance strongly objects to vending that overwhelms public spaces and limits accessibility. We applaud your efforts to keep the pedestrian experience in the City's parks safe, convenient and welcoming. And we are pleased to support your proposed regulations.

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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