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November 15, 2018

Testimony of the New York Building Congress before the New York City Council Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises

On behalf of the Building Congress, we support the Garment Center Steering Committee's report and funding of the building of the New York City Industrial Development Agency Garment Center.

The New York Building Congress is a nearly one-hundred-year-old organization working to encourage the growth and success of the New York City building industry, and the vibrancy of the City at large. We represent more than 500 constituent organizations employing over a quarter million professionals and tradespeople.

New York's Garment District is the global hub of fashion, but it is also composed of many of the City's thriving and growing organizations. Between 2000 and 2016 job growth in the district has increased by 56. Many of the firms moving into the area include members of the design, architecture and engineering sector and just 3,000 square-foot each.

It's clear that funding the Garment Center is a smart investment that will allow New York to remain the global fashion epicenter. Since the 1950s there has been a steep decline in manufacturing due to global competition, resulting in a shift in industry. We implore you to consider the Steering Committee's recommendations, which will help enable fashion manufacturers to maintain a presence in the Garment District through stable, affordable, long-term leases and preserve 500,000 SF of Fashion Manufacturing space in the Garment Center project.

We support the City committing \$20 million to facilitate the purchase of the Garment Center building with a non-profit partner carrying out operations and management. In addition to acquiring the property, the Garment Center program has the potential to draw fashion innovators of the present and future.

The fashion industry is not just a quintessential part of the New York cultural fabric, it is an economic driver. This year, the industry has paid over 11 billion in wages and generated over 3 billion in taxes. A project of type will strengthen local manufacturing, helping New York's emerging designers innovate and established designers remain competitive.

Therefore, on behalf of the New York Building Congress we urge the Council to fully fund and support this crucial project to preserve New York's place as the fashion capital of the world.

Thank you for the time to be heard on this important matter.