

February 22, 2016

The Honorable Mary Bassett, MD, MPH
Commissioner
NYC DOHMH
42-09 28th Street, 8th Floor
Queens, NY 11101

Dear Commissioner Bassett:

We hope this letter finds you well.

Each year we write to you before mosquito season begins to ask your agency to be as aggressive as possible fighting to limit the effects of West Nile Virus. We write these letters not because they are fun to write or to be argumentative; rather, the perception in our community is that the mosquito population continues to grow unabated year after year. And, the complaints from our constituents are coming earlier and earlier. In fact, we have already heard reports of a possible West Nile fatality in Ocean Breeze earlier this month, which we are attempting to confirm.

While we all love the mild winter we have experienced to date, we also fear it will lead to an even larger mosquito population in 2016.

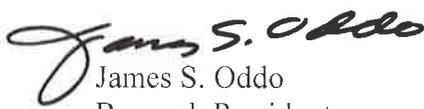
We understand the current protocol allows the spraying of pesticides only after West Nile is discovered, and furthermore, we know that many of our constituents dislike the spraying of these chemicals into the air they breathe; but we still have to do something. This could mean an even more aggressive approach larvaciding, or the use of new and inventive methods that may be available but are not yet used to stop mosquitoes from hatching in the first place.

Finally, although reports indicate that Zika Virus is not transmitted via mosquito in New York City, it is on the minds of New Yorkers. This means that increased mosquito activity will lead to a great deal of angst, particularly among pregnant women and their families, unless we do something to limit the numbers of mosquitos in our communities.

We, therefore, ask for an explanation of DOHMH's plan to combat mosquitoes in 2016. The yearly increasing mosquito population, the mild winter, and the consciousness of Zika Virus all point to the need for a comprehensive and aggressive plan.

Thank you for your time, courtesy, and attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,


James S. Oddo
Borough President


Steven Matteo
Minority Leader

