The Brooklyn Anti-Gentrification Network (BAN) stands in solidarity with our member organization UPROSE and opposes Industry City’s proposal to rezone Sunset Park’s industrial waterfront. Industry City’s proposal will accelerate gentrification in Sunset Park and it does not represent the voices of the people who already call Sunset Park home. The proposal would allow Industry City to expand their campus by 1.5 million square feet and expand luxury commercial and retail uses. But the people who live and work in Sunset Park don’t need more luxury retail and commercial uses on the waterfront; we need to keep our industrial sector industrial.

We know from the fallout of waterfront rezonings in Williamsburg and Greenpoint that Industry City’s proposal would further the rapid gentrification of Sunset Park. Industry City’s proposal would cause rents to further increase, leading to more displacement. It will also mean that well-paying industrial jobs would be replaced by lower-paying retail and service sector jobs. An average manufacturing salary is over $53,000, while an average retail salary is only $36,000, and $24,500 for food service. Neither of these negative impacts on the community have been addressed in the proposal’s Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

Instead of using the waterfront to cater exclusively to wealthy consumers, the industrial sector can be used as a hub for sustainable production, manufacturing, transportation, and communication. The New York’s Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act is expected to create over 150,000 new green jobs and funding mandates for frontline communities like ours. Sunset Park’s industrial areas provide the perfect infrastructure to grow businesses in renewable energy, sustainable manufacturing, retrofitting, and construction. Sunset Park has the opportunity to catalyze regional climate engagement and to create well-paying green jobs that will create sustainable economic benefits for the entire region. Industry City’s business-as-usual model will threaten this opportunity.

There have been many community meetings and rallies where Sunset Park residents have made it abundantly clear that they want “No Rezoning! No Conditions!” but Industry City, The Department of City Planning and Councilmember Carlos Menchaca have ignored this. The proposal under consideration today is no different from the application Industry City presented in 2017, despite vocal opposition from the community. We at BAN have seen how developers use community listening meetings to create the illusion of democracy. The meetings fulfill the mayor’s requirement for neighborhood involvement by giving community members a space to voice their concerns, but those concerns are never addressed in the final rezoning proposals. We have seen this pattern again and again—in Crown Heights, in Bushwick, and now in Sunset Park. It is insulting to our community, and we demand better.

UPROSE’s GRID Proposal is the community-led alternative for Sunset Park. The Green Resilient Industrial District plan or GRID was developed through years of community planning, organizing, and engagement. It positions Sunset Park’s industrial sector as the economic engine we need to build for climate adaptability, and train local businesses and residents for a green economy. The Brooklyn Anti-Gentrification Network opposes Industry City’s short-sighted plan and instead endorses UPROSE’s GRID Proposal for a sustainable future that will position Sunset Park as the economic engine to support a Just Transition into a green economy.