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Science will reanimate New York City

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During the past twelve months of the global pandemic, the sciences have emerged at the forefront of a new dialogue driving change while racing to bring our lives back to "normal." But beyond vaccines, can the transformative impact of science also revive our city and usher in an economic rebirth?

Absolutely, and the time is now for the city to engage in a coordinated effort to make this a place where science can thrive. The urgency for faster discoveries is clear, as are the opportunities they create, but what is needed is a new vision—where we streamline our connections and work together across industries to make New York a true city of science.

We must create a bold strategy that taps into the region's rich scientific institutions, life sciences and technology companies, and top talent to form a coalition of sciences that leads us

out of our economic and health crises, and puts the city on a trajectory of success for decades to come.

The coalition must identify the technology, facilities and workforce development programs to create a linkage between each entity for optimal coordination and, therefore, growth. The coalition's plan must include ambitious and swift action.

First, we must come together to create public and private scientific and commercial partnerships, identifying where the trends of the New York science industry are headed, which technologies we should focus on, and what facilities must be built to meet those demands.

The city metropolitan region has the highest concentration of high-profile medical institutions in the world and the most scientists and biomedical engineers per capita in the country—they just need to be convened with a common goal. Given New York's international nature, we can invite experts from around the globe into conversations that concern all of us, such as creating a more sustainable, equitable planet through biological innovation. We can enlist the expertise of the tech community and its distribution channels to disseminate these messages broadly.

Second, the development process to build modern lab infrastructure and manufacturing space is time-intensive and costly. The city must remove the barriers to building much-needed lab spaces that meet the demands of companies and new startups. Expanded lab space means significant job growth and economic development.

Third, the coalition must identify all incentive programs from the federal and state governments to unlock critical subsidy programs to put this into action. Our financial community is eager to support this effort. The state's Empire State Development and the New York City Economic Development Corp. have invested nearly $1 billion in life sciences—both biosciences and technology—in the past several years to build this sector. The next mayor should build on this foundation.

The time to act is now.

President Joe Biden has pledged to "reinvigorate our national science and technology strategy," and in recognition of the vital impact of the field, has established the newly formed Office of Science and Technology Policy led by geneticist Eric Lander, ushering science into the president's Cabinet for the first time in history.

Several bipartisan bills are before Congress that, with the right coalition working on the city's behalf, can benefit New York. The Endless Frontier Act, sponsored by several senators including Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, proposes $100 billion for the advancement of scientific and technological innovation and $10 billion to create centers of emerging technology industries in regions across the United States. The Innovation Centers Acceleration Act aims to expand research and development to 80 metropolitan areas of the country, of which the New

York-Jersey City-Newark region is the largest. Its supporters in Congress include Rep. Joseph Morelle from upstate New York.

Finally, the America Labor, Economic competitiveness, Alliances, Democracy and Security Act aims to make the U.S. more competitive with China by infusing $350 billion into businesses, manufacturing, research and development, science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, and training programs here at home. With so much attention on science, the city and the state are poised to benefit from these federal funds.

Our city and our country are facing the toughest of challenges, but the city has all the necessary tools to overcome them if we can work strategically across industries. Together, we can build an interconnected, citywide network of science institutions and life science clusters to solve our most urgent problems while inspiring, educating and elevating our city and its residents for better tomorrows.

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