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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

Jersey City, NJ and Beit Shemesh, Israel Sign Sister Cities Agreement

The Two Municipalities Will Cooperate on Economic Partnerships Between Relevant Industries, Urban Planning, Diversity and Inclusion, and Workforce Development

JERSEY CITY — Mayor Steven M. Fulop and the Mayor of Beit Shemesh, Israel, Aliza Bloch, signed a sister city agreement between their two municipalities this week. The agreement, which has been in development for many months, was initiated by the **New Jersey-Israel Commission.**

The agreement aims to maximize the resources of each city by optimizing their shared industries, streamlining immigration and integration, leading urban revitalization in the face of rapid population growth and codifying shared workforce development strategies.

Beit Shemesh, the youngest city in Israel, is a medium-sized municipality that is growing rapidly. Located between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, its economy features light manufacturing, services, and an expanding tech sector. Mayor Bloch is seeking a major municipal partner in New Jersey to consolidate that growth. Beit Shemesh is an especially diverse community, featuring a sizeable



population of new immigrants, including many Russian speakers from the former Soviet Union, and an expanding flow of North American immigrants. One of Mayor Bloch's core goals is increasing social cohesion and understanding between these many groups.

"This is a particularly special moment not only for our Sister City relationship but also domestically as we see an unfortunate resurgence of antisemitism across the country and certainly in this region. Today is an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment in Jersey City and New Jersey to making sure that there is a strong bond with Israel, not only our words but also our actions," said **Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop**. "We look forward to building a meaningful, long-term relationship with Beit Shemesh that will establish more trade partnerships, work with corporations that can invest in both sides of the ocean, and make sure we have an opportunity to grow together."

Beit Shemesh Mayor Dr. Aliza Bloch stated: "It is no coincidence that this special partnership was founded between the cities of Beit Shemesh and Jersey City. Beit Shemesh has become a major player in the field of absorption and immigration, similar to Jersey City, where thousands of Jews found a refuge during the Holocaust. The connection between these two cities known for their diversity is built on a combination of willpower and responsibility. I am sure that the business community of Jersey City will see Beit Shemesh as a valuable base for economic cooperation. I would like to thank city council member Zvi Wolicki who was a partner in the previous trip in creating the connection. We are waiting for you in Beit Shemesh and are excited to continue this common path."

"A lasting bridge is being built by this new partnership that will enhance key relationships between Jersey City and Beit Shemesh, including through economic development," said **New Jersey Secretary of State Tahesha Way**. "I remain committed to bringing people together across every corner of New Jersey and am confident that this alliance will further that mission."

"Diplomacy is all about building bridges between states, communities and people and working together," said **Yuval Donio-Gidon, Consul for Public Diplomacy of Israel in New York**. "Sister cities are a large-scale manifestation of that vision, paving the way for strengthening economic and cultural cooperation between municipalities and thereby uniting multiple diverse populations. On behalf of the State of Israel, I commend Beit Shemesh and Jersey City for this deeply exciting agreement and look forward to the opportunities it will doubtless foster and provide."

"As our world faces unprecedented uncertainty, I am reassured that by working together, exchanging ideas, and crossing borders in this way, our society will be strengthened and we will meet the challenges of our time," said **Karin Elkis, Co-Chair of the New Jersey-Israel Commission**. "Congratulations to these outstanding cities — our Commission looks forward to supporting their newfound cooperation."

"The connection between New Jersey and Israel has reached new heights, and thanks to the hard work of Governor Phil Murphy, the New Jersey-Israel Commission and many others, we are celebrating an agreement that will strengthen the bond between our communities," said **Andrew H Gross, Executive Director of the New Jersey-Israel Commission**. "We commend Mayor Steven Fulop and Mayor Dr. Aliza Bloch on this exciting agreement between Jersey City and Beit Shemesh."

All media inquiries should be directed to Kimberly Scalcione at kscalcione@jcnj.org.