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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON NY1**

**Roma Torre:** And Mayor de Blasio is joining us now by phone to talk more about how the city is managing to dig out. Mr. Mayor, thanks for taking the time out to talk to us. I know it's been a very busy three days for you, certainly.

**Mayor:** Absolutely, Roma, my pleasure. I'm out here in Woodside, Queens. I'm with Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer. We're touring around the neighborhood checking the conditions. And, you know, a lot of good work has been done here by the Sanitation Department, but we also see some streets that definitely need more work today – that we're going to focusing on them. But, overall – I mean, thank God it's a beautiful sunny day. That's going to help us to continue to get this snow out of the way, so we can keep getting the city back to normal.

**Torre:** Mr. Mayor, you know, you did say overall – and I would have to commend you because overall your administration is getting high marks for its handling of this near-record-breaking snowstorm, but there are a number of complaints – and you say you're in Queens. Yesterday we heard in your news briefing that you were rather dissatisfied with the Sanitation's progress in the Queens area, and yet we're getting a lot of complaints here in our newsroom. What can you say to Queens' residents who still haven't seen their roads cleared?

**Mayor:** You know, first of all, let me give you the big picture – I mean, overall, for the city – all of our city employees did an outstanding job. Particularly, want to commend the men and women of the Sanitation Department because you look at our primary roads, our highways, our secondary roads all over the city outstanding considering this was, you know, 0.1 inch away from being the all-time largest snowfall in the history of New York City going back to 1869. You know, this was outstanding effort. I think what we've got in Queens is a mixed bag. Yesterday, I toured around, if you were where I was, South Jamaica or Flushing, or Long Island City, or Astoria even by yesterday morning – yesterday afternoon things – looked pretty good. In other neighborhoods, here in Woodside, Sunnyside, East Elmhurst, Corona definitely I was not satisfied by what I saw. And today it's better, but there's still more to be done. I mean, I'm going by a street right now – we're on 53<sup>rd</sup> Street at Skillman Avenue, this street is not done right, and we're going to make sure Sanitation focuses on it. This one has to be cleared, but a lot of other side streets have been cleared and Sanitation knows that they have to focus on the tertiary streets. They aren't quite clear. I think it's particularly in certain neighborhoods of Queens – some issues in Staten Island as well. I'd say, overall, performance in Manhattan, Brooklyn, The Bronx was very, very strong. Obviously, much of Queens; much of Staten Island very strong, but we're going in behind it, mopping up the areas where we still need to do more work.

**Torre:** Mr. Mayor, the last major snowstorm – the last really big snowstorm, last year, I do recall that Governor Cuomo shut down the trains with very little notice to you or your office. This year, he made the call to shut down the above ground trains. I'm just curious if the communication was any better, and how would you rate your coordination efforts with the state's agencies?

**Mayor:** I think it was night and day, Roma. I think last time the coordination was not sufficient and the decision, obviously, was debatable. I think everyone's learned their lessons since then, on both sides, that we needed to really talk minute-to-minute hour-to-hour to do better in those situations; very dynamic situations. Lots of coordination this time – staffs were talking consistently. The Governor and I talked about a half dozen times in the last couple of days. And I think the MTA made the right decision. They kept the underground service going, that was smart – better than last time. But they got the buses off the streets in time to not have them stranded. And you remember back in 2010 that was a huge problem in that big storm – how many buses were left out too long and got stranded; same with the overland trains – that they needed to be stopped. They did that at a smart time, so the Governor, the state, the MTA made good decisions. We were tightly coordinated with them. And look, I think the big picture here is this is now the age of extreme weather, and this is because of global warming. We're going to see these kinds of exceptional storms. You know if we had gotten 0.2 more inches it would have been the biggest snowfall in New York City history. The one that we missed last time – we missed it not by much, but then it went on and socked Boston. You remember how long Boston had to dig out. So, we have to be ready for much bigger storms. Here in this city, we have the experience and the personnel, and the equipment – 2,500 plows were out yesterday all over the city. So, we can do it. But I think in terms of those precautions like travel ban and knowing when it's time to reduce MTA service – I think this is the kind of thing we're going to have to do more going forward.

**Torre:** Mr. Mayor, Public Advocate Letitia James was calling earlier for a delayed opening of city schools, noting the treacherous nature as she put it in some of the – on some of the streets in the school zones. You did not heed that call. I'm curious why?

**Mayor:** Respect her greatly, but disagree with her on this one. The – I am a parent, obviously, until June I was a public school parent. Obviously, number one issue is the safety of our kids, but look, knowing how much of the city had been cleared out yesterday; and how good the situation was compared to what it might have been given how much snow we knew that we could get school open, and we could do it safely. It doesn't mean there aren't some places where there still isn't too much snow that needs to be shoveled out; it doesn't mean it's perfect, but we make one decision for the whole school system. That's the important thing to recognize. We have to go up or down for the entire system. There's no way to segment it. And for the vast majority of kids in our schools – in our city today they could get to school, and we did not want to leave them hanging or their many, many working parents. We did not want to leave them in a jam. And so, I'm convinced it was the right decision, but I'm sure for some people it was certainly inconvenient and difficult; and I never fail to notice that, but it's just we have to make one decision for 1.1 million kids, and all their family members. And this was the right one in my view.

**Torre:** Mr. Mayor, I know that you would prefer that people leave their cars parked even though they're buried under mountains of snow. But for those folks who have to dig their cars out – I'm curious, where are they supposed to put the snow that they're shoveling out? That's a big issue.

**Mayor:** Well, first of all – Roma, the first question people have to ask themselves – this has been an emergency situation – it's not your garden variety; it's one of the worst snowfalls we've ever had. If they really need to take their car out – now that they now in a pretty unprecedented move that alternate side is cancelled all the way through this coming Saturday; if you don't need to take your car out, don't take it out. And I think, bluntly, a lot of people take their car out for convenience or habit. In this instance, we've given them the freedom that they could just – they could just leave their car; they don't even have to shovel it – let the sun, let the warmer weather take a lot of snow away for you. Leave it where it is. If you're really absolutely must take your car out, try to shovel the least possible snow off of it; try to keep it to the sidewalk side, but look, what's happening in a lot of these smaller streets in Queens – we send a front end loader through, a big piece of equipment, clear the streets; people come out and then start shoveling everything into the streets, it's blocked again. You know, you take this much snow off a bunch of cars you can literally block the street again. And that's not in anyone's interest. We certainly want to keep the streets clear for our emergency vehicles. So, my message to New

Yorkers is I'm giving you an option you normally don't have – a week where you do not have to move your car. Take advantage of the option – take advantage of the option.

**Torre:** Finally, Mr. Mayor, we don't have much time left, but I do have to mention that our meteorologist, John Davitt, is forecasting a possible – another nor'easter a little bit later on this week. It's very much up in the air how serious if at all, but I have to ask you what lessons did you learn from this blizzard that you could apply to future storms?

**Mayor:** Well, there's no question some very good lessons – get out there early, assume the worse, which we did. We were assuming a bigger storm than what we were hearing from the National Weather Service, and thank God we did. So, we had all of our equipment; all of our personnel in action. The storm, as you know, hit several hours earlier than expected, but all of our salt spreaders were prepositioned, so they were able to respond and the plows as well. So, again, I'm going to be assuming bigger and faster storms than even the National Weather Service projects. And we'll certainly be ready for them. And we're going to do a [inaudible] action report on what happened all over the city. We want to figure out how we can do better in some neighborhoods in Queens. Again, some went very well, others need more work. So each time we're trying to learn and make adjustments, and we'll do that again this time.

**Torre:** Alright. Mayor de Blasio thanks so much for speaking with us. I know it's going to be a busy week for you.

**Mayor:** Oh yes. Alright, take care.

**Torre:** And take care to you.

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