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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

April 15, 2019  
Start: 10:06 a.m.  
Recess: 12:38 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: COSTA G. CONSTANTINIDES  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

RAFAEL L. ESPINAL, JR.  
STEPHEN T. LEVIN  
CARLOS MENCHACA  
DONOVAN J. RICHARDS  
ERIC A. ULRICH  
KALMAN YEGER

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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Ivan Kimball  
Vice President of Energy Management for Con Edison

Kyle Kimball  
Vice President of Government, Regional and Community Affairs for Con Edison

Kim Fraczek  
Director of Sane Energy Project

Annie Garneva  
Representing Sane Energy Project and the Stop the Williams Pipeline Coalition

Noelle Picone  
Volunteer with the Surfrider Foundation New York City Chapter

Kimberly Ong  
Senior Attorney at the Natural Resources Defense Council, NRDC

Bruce Rosen  
Resident of New York City Co-op

Jainey Bavishi  
Director of the Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency

Jean Belford  
Board Member for Rockaway Women for Progress, RWP

Lillian Belford  
Rockaway Women for Progress, RWP

Lee Ziesche  
Sane Energy Project Organizer and Documentary Filmmaker

Jackie Weisberg  
350 Brooklyn Organization

Sara Gronim  
350 Brooklyn Organization

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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Bridget Klapinski  
Co-Vice President of the Rockaway Beach Civic  
Association, Resident of Rockaway

Vincent Albanese  
New York State Laborers Organizing Fund

Lisa Harrison  
Core Team Member of Sane Energy

Alvaro Alcocer  
Resident of New York City, Business Owner,  
Environmental Advocate

Wendy Scher  
Member of IBEW Local Union Three

Rachel Rivera  
Board Member of New York Communities for Change

Patrick Houston  
Organizer with New York Communities for Change

Nikita Scott  
Volunteer Chairperson of the Surfrider Foundation  
New York City Chapter

Robert Wood  
Organizer with the Climate Justice Group 350  
Brooklyn

Jeremy Jones  
Co-Vice President of the Rockaway Beach Civic  
Association

Carl Johnson  
Business Agent with Plumbers Local Union Number  
One

Ariana Hernandez  
Student with New York Public Interest Research  
Group, NYPIRG

Ira Macner  
New York City Resident

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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Barbara Hertel  
Resident of Southside Williamsburg, New York City

Laura Shindell  
Organizer with Food and Water Watch

Ken schles  
Resident of New York City

[gavel]

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Quite please.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Good morning, I'm Corey Johnson, Speaker of the New York City Council and I want to thank you all for joining us today for this important hearing of the Environmental Protection Committee on the environmental impacts of the Williams Company's proposed Northeast supply enhancement also known as the Williams pipeline. I want to thank the Chair of this great Committee, Costa Constantinides for convening this hearing today and for his steadfast commitment to protecting our city and our planet from environmental harm. The Williams pipeline is a gas pipeline that is proposed to run under the C-floor from Raritan Bay in New Jersey to an existing pipeline offshore of the Rockaways. It is an... it is an expansion of an already existing transcontinental gas pipeline which brings fracked and offshore natural gas from the Gulf Coast of Texas through Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama up the East Coast and to the New York City area. In order for the Williams pipeline to proceed it needs to receive a water quality certification permit from the New York State Department of Environmental

1 Conservation that indicates the... that the proposed  
2 pipeline will not violate water quality standards. I  
3 cannot believe that at a time when we are talking  
4 about a green new deal and discussing bold local  
5 legislation to limit greenhouse gas emissions of our  
6 buildings in New York City we are still being asked  
7 to support fracking and to expand fossil fuel  
8 pipelines. This is discouraging when the health of  
9 our local waters might be impacted by these projects.  
10 As many here know, I have previously made public my  
11 opposition to this fracked gas pipeline expansion in  
12 New York Harbor. In March I submitted comments to the  
13 State Department of Environmental Conservation that  
14 expressed my opposition to this pipeline receiving  
15 the necessary water quality certification permit. The  
16 state has until May 16<sup>th</sup> to decide whether or not to  
17 approve or deny the permit and thus could approve or  
18 deny the pipeline. Today we are hearing a resolution  
19 that expresses the concerns raised by this pipeline.  
20 First the project is completely contrary to, to the  
21 New York State greenhouse gas reduction goals and  
22 clean energy standards established by the Governor as  
23 well as our own local greenhouse reduction...  
24 greenhouse gas reduction goals. Second, the toxic  
25

1 sediment that may be disturbed by this pipeline's  
2 construction could, could push back years of  
3 incredible work that has gone into cleaning up New  
4 York Harbor over the past many decades. Third, this  
5 expansion is estimated to cost nearly one billion  
6 dollars, the burden of which will be borne entirely  
7 by local rate payers. Williams Company stands to make  
8 a 14 percent return on their investment regardless of  
9 the state of the market for this gas. Infrastructure  
10 should be built when we need it not solely to enhance  
11 the profits of a corporation. Finally, I have  
12 concerns regarding the safety record of Williams  
13 Companies. Since 2008 research shows that ten  
14 Williams Transco pipelines and compressor stations  
15 have exploded and or caught fire. The federal  
16 pipeline and hazardous material safety administration  
17 has repeatedly fined Williams for violation of safety  
18 procedures. With our coastal communities still  
19 recovering from hurricane Sandy and the climate  
20 change causing stronger, more frequent storms it  
21 would profoundly irresponsible to commit us to  
22 decades of increased fossil fuel consumption and this  
23 pipeline would do just that. At a time when we're  
24 working to stop climate change from progressing, to  
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1  
2 reduce greenhouse gas emissions in our city and to  
3 shift our energy supply towards renewable, cleaner  
4 energy, this pipeline directly conflicts with the  
5 goals of our city and our state. Our planet is  
6 closing in on a breaking point, we have to transition  
7 from investing in fossil fuel infrastructure to  
8 clean, renewable energy, we have to act decisively  
9 and we have to act now and I look forward to the City  
10 Council doing our part so we can act. I want to thank  
11 everyone in attendance and everyone who's here to  
12 speak today on this issue and I will now turn it over  
13 to the Chair of this Committee, Constantinides.

14 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you  
15 Speaker Johnson and thank you for your continued  
16 commitment to this city and to making us greener and  
17 more sustainable. I am Costa Constantinides, Chair of  
18 the Environmental Protection Committee and today we  
19 have an oversight hearing on the environmental  
20 impacts of the proposed Williams pipeline. The  
21 pipeline, 37 miles in length, 17.3 miles of which  
22 would go through New York waters, the planned track  
23 of the NESC runs parallel to already existing  
24 pipeline along the entirety of the proposed length.  
25 The pipeline extension is estimated to cost as the



1 Speaker said close to one billion dollars. The impact  
2 of such a pipeline could have on our environment and  
3 climate are disastrous and profound. New York City is  
4 responsible for one percent of the greenhouse gas  
5 emissions in the entire nation. And New York City has  
6 already taken a number of aggressive steps to, to, to  
7 advance goals enumerated in OneNYC. New York City  
8 passed my law, Local 66 of 2014, which requires the  
9 city to reduce citywide greenhouse gas emissions 80  
10 percent by 2050. This pipeline would continue our  
11 dependence of fossil fuels and increase greenhouse  
12 gas emissions. While burning less oil and coal,  
13 burning natural gas emits carbon dioxide into our  
14 atmosphere. Further fracked natural gas primarily  
15 comprised of methane which traps heat far more  
16 effectively than CO2 with global warming potential  
17 valued to be calculated 20 to 30 times higher than  
18 CO2 over a 100-year period. Scientists even argue  
19 that methane is 80 times more effective at trapping  
20 heat than CO2. This pipeline increases our reliance  
21 on fossil fuels and fracked gas. This is the entasis  
22 of how we need to plan for a green energy future as  
23 our capacity to provide fossil fuel increases, we  
24 become more reliant on systems that utilize these  
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2 fossil fuels. The opportunity for investment and  
3 renewable technology and the development of green  
4 jobs to provide that energy is diminished. Further,  
5 there are some serious concerns about the quality of  
6 the sea floor sediment that would dredge up as the  
7 Speaker spoke about. In 2016 and 2018 New York State  
8 DEC denied William's applications for water quality  
9 permits due to deficiencies with the company's plans  
10 concerning the handling of toxic sediment that  
11 construction of the pipeline is likely to dredge up.  
12 The sea, sea floor sediment along the path of the  
13 pipeline is said to have highly contaminated  
14 sediments, the project requires a 23-mile-long  
15 undersea trench that be dug through an area that  
16 prior to 1970s sustain industrial waste and sewage  
17 dumping. While natural processes have capped this  
18 toxic material and unpolluted sediment, the act of  
19 dredging would expose and release it into the water  
20 columns high level class C sediment defined as highly  
21 contaminated. Trenching from construction of this  
22 pipeline could release dangerous contaminants into  
23 the sediment such as polychlorinated brifentanil,  
24 arsenic and lead which once stirred up it could be  
25 carried further into New York Harbor where it could

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2 be harmful to aquatic life. These dangerous sediments  
3 would be released back into the environment, back  
4 into the food chain and inevitably into the body of  
5 anyone who consumes the products from the mid-  
6 Atlantic's multi billion dollar a year seafood  
7 industry. Many of us here today as the Speaker spoke  
8 about and we followed his lead, submitted comments to  
9 DEC in opposition to this project. Today we are also  
10 hearing a resolution calling upon DEC to deny the  
11 water quality certification for the construction of  
12 the Northeast supply enhancement pipeline through New  
13 York Harbor. The life expectancy of natural gas  
14 pipeline is approximately 50 years, however the  
15 decision to invest in a natural gas pipeline  
16 subsidized by our rate payers is investment in past  
17 technology. It's an investment that will result in  
18 stranded assets that shareholders will absorb. We can  
19 simply not be used for 50 years. We have been told  
20 that if the Williams pipeline is not approved there  
21 will be no way to service new accounts in the growing  
22 parts of Brooklyn, but the same claim was made in  
23 Westchester. Instead once the moratorium on new gas  
24 pipelines was imposed the, the PSC ordered the  
25 installation of geothermal heat pumps in thousands of

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2 individual homes. Only if we take a few... a firm stand  
3 and, and... will we get to the future that we need. The  
4 PSC will act, there are site sourced alternatives  
5 that carbon... that are carbon free. If we stand  
6 against this pipeline it means we have faith in our  
7 ability to take these transformative steps. Such  
8 transformative measures are being taken throughout  
9 our region and... but they are not being taken with new  
10 natural gas pipelines. Again, I want to thank Speaker  
11 Johnson and... for your leadership and I want to  
12 recognize that we have Council Member Kalman Yeger of  
13 the Committee here today as well from Brooklyn, thank  
14 you Council Member for being here and with that we'll  
15 call up the first witness for testimony. So, Ivan  
16 Kimball, Kyle Kimball from Con Edison. Good morning.

17 IVAN KIMBALL: Good morning, thank you  
18 Mr. Chairman and Mr. Speaker and members of the  
19 Committee for the opportunity to provide comments  
20 today. My name is Ivan Kimball and I'm the Vice  
21 President of Energy Management for Con Edison. I'm  
22 joined by my colleague, Kyle Kimball, Vice President  
23 of Government, Regional and Community Affairs. Our  
24 comments today are focused on the current natural gas  
25 supply constraints in New York City, how this project

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2 indirectly alleviates those constraints and how we  
3 can work together to achieve the goals our shared  
4 vision of a clean energy future. Con Edison has been  
5 a leader in transitioning the New York City energy  
6 grid, the most complex in the world, to a grid that  
7 will facilitate the transition to a clean energy  
8 future. We agree that the climate is changing; we see  
9 that... we see that in massive storms, cold spells and  
10 heat waves that have impacted our system. We have  
11 spent over one billion dollars to make our system  
12 more resilient to the impacts of climate change. I  
13 would like to briefly explain how the proposed  
14 Northeast Supply Enhancement or NESE project impacts  
15 gas supply to Con Edison's service territory.

16 Although Con Edison has no role in the development of  
17 the NESE project, nor are we a direct customer, the  
18 project is one that benefits Con Edison customers  
19 indirectly. Con Edison provides natural gas to the  
20 Bronx, Manhattan and certain parts of Queens.

21 National Grid covers the rest of Queens, Brooklyn and  
22 Staten Island. To cover the five boroughs, both  
23 utilities share some of the natural gas transmission  
24 infrastructure that allows natural gas to flow in the  
25 five boroughs, whether they are customers of Con

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2 Edison or National Grid. Demand for natural gas in  
3 our service area has grown 30 percent since 2011.  
4 That's largely due to a successful policy to  
5 accelerate oil to gas conversions, such as New York  
6 City's clean heat program and natural gas being the  
7 fuel of choice for new construction because it is  
8 cleaner and more economical than oil. As gas demand  
9 grows there are only three choices to meet the  
10 demand; additional capacity on new infrastructure;  
11 find additional capacity on existing infrastructure;  
12 or reduce demand for natural gas. I'll take them in  
13 reverse order. We are already underway on item number  
14 three, working to reduce demand for and dependence on  
15 natural gas by our customers with incentives to  
16 choose cleaner and more efficient alternatives. We  
17 can talk more about this during the Q and A. On item  
18 number two, we are actively looking for ways to  
19 improve the efficiency of our existing  
20 infrastructure. Which leaves us at item number one.  
21 Because all of our customers are served by the shared  
22 transmission infrastructure, if the NESE project is  
23 rejected, Con Edison and National Grid customers will  
24 be competing more intensely for the same already  
25 strained natural gas supply flowing through existing

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2 infrastructure. This competition could result in  
3 increased gas constraints in New York City for  
4 already tight natural gas supplies, not to mention  
5 higher prices for the natural gas itself. This is a  
6 straightforward exercise in balancing supply and  
7 demand. To the extent we are not able to meet the  
8 demand needs of our customers for new or expanded  
9 natural gas service, we would have to move quickly to  
10 declare a moratorium on new gas connections in our  
11 service area. The inability to meet natural gas  
12 demand without new interstate pipeline infrastructure  
13 has been a growing concern for Con Edison. As you may  
14 know, we put in place a temporary moratorium in  
15 Westchester on new gas connections. This moratorium  
16 decision was driven by a need to balance available  
17 supply with demand, to maintain reliability for our  
18 existing Westchester customers. Con Edison has a duty  
19 to deliver natural gas safely and reliably to every  
20 firm customer on the days of peak demand, which are  
21 typically the coldest days of the year. If we  
22 forecast that we cannot meet the demand for natural  
23 gas on the days of peak demand, we cannot responsibly  
24 add new customers, which typically number about 1,700  
25 new connections each year. These are gas connections

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2 to new affordable housing, residential and commercial  
3 developments, oil to gas conversions, new restaurants  
4 and renovations that will all have to find  
5 alternatives to natural gas for their heating and  
6 cooking needs. Replacing the demand for natural gas  
7 with demand for electricity is considered the best  
8 way to decarbonize the heating and cooling of  
9 buildings. Beneficial electrification is only  
10 beneficial when the grid is green, when the electrons  
11 that are flowing and replacing natural gas are  
12 renewable. Right now, that is not the case. Con  
13 Edison, Inc. is the second largest solar developer in  
14 North America, and yet we are not able to bring that  
15 expertise to New York State. To achieve the level of  
16 renewable electrons flowing into New... into the New  
17 York City metropolitan area, we need all of the tools  
18 in play, and we cannot afford artificial constraints  
19 that prohibit utilities from owning solar and wind  
20 farms in New York State. We have shared goals when it  
21 comes to reducing emissions and there are numerous  
22 projects already underway at Con Edison to reduce  
23 carbon emissions, but we have to work together to  
24 create an orderly transition to the clean energy  
25 future we all envision. It is our shared



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2 responsibility as policy makers, energy providers and  
3 environmental advocates to ensure that New Yorkers  
4 have access to affordable and cleaner energies. We  
5 know that our customers want clean, safe and reliable  
6 energy, and they want it to be delivered affordably.  
7 We have to work together to design an orderly  
8 transition to arrive at a clean energy future that is  
9 accessible, affordable, and does not threaten the  
10 economic health of the region or access to  
11 opportunity. Thank you for this time and we're happy  
12 to answer any questions.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you Mr.  
14 Kimball for being here today. I wanted to ask how  
15 much of the power energy source is delivered by your  
16 utility Con Edison to New York City currently comes  
17 from fossil fuels?

18 IVAN KIMBALL: Are you talking about the  
19 electric side or the... on the gas side?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: The gas side.

21 IVAN KIMBALL: On the gas side we... all of  
22 the natural gas that we provide is a fossil fuel, is  
23 that what you're asking?

24

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: And, and what is  
3 the plan to move towards more renewable energy  
4 sources on the gas side?

5 IVAN KIMBALL: So, we filed a smart  
6 solutions program a couple of years ago and we  
7 recently got funding from the PSC for over 200  
8 million dollars to move to renewable sources for a  
9 clean heat program which is part of the... part of that  
10 program as well as enhanced energy efficiency  
11 programs to reduce demand for customers.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: And what targets  
13 does Con Ed have for renewable energy delivery for  
14 2020, 2025, as you start moving five years in the  
15 future on intervals what's the plan to move towards  
16 more renewable?

17 IVAN KIMBALL: So, that... so, the program  
18 that we, we put forth that smart solutions program  
19 would address about five percent of our current  
20 demand, current peak demand over a five to ten year  
21 period and, and we have said that we will continue to  
22 look at additional opportunities for that but, but we  
23 don't have a specific target at this point.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Why not, why is  
25 there not a specific target?

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IVAN KIMBALL: We've been working as the, the process of going... been going forward to, to work with the PSC to determine what the right funding level is to support those programs.

KYLE KIMBALL: And we put out an RFP a couple of years ago and basically asked the market what it could provide in terms of renewable gas or gas demand reduction programs and so the five percent that Ivan's talking about is basically what the market told us it could do and so we're about to... eventually we'll go out and, and... within the year or two once we get these programs in place and the programs that Ivan talked about in terms of creating more... we have three different renewable gas facilities that we're planning on doing and we're also working on trying to reduce the demand so incentivizing heat pumps, ground source heat pumps, a lot of different programs, we will then go out for a second solicitation and again ask the market what it can do so it's a... it's a partnership we have, it's less about our specific goals and more about what the market feels that it can provide customers in an affordable way.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: And I know you  
3 testified that although Con Edison has no role in the  
4 development of the Williams pipeline nor are you a  
5 direct customer you talked about how the pipeline  
6 effects both National Grid and Con Edison and  
7 creating additional connections for, for gas, do you  
8 all given your experience or given what you know have  
9 any concerns about the pipeline?

10 IVAN KIMBALL: No new concerns about the  
11 pipeline, no.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: What were the  
13 previous concerns?

14 IVAN KIMBALL: No, just the, the normal  
15 safety concerns that, that we have for delivering gas  
16 reliably for our customers that, that go under the  
17 existing regulations and, and processes that we have.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: No environmental  
19 concerns about this project from everything that you  
20 know?

21 KYLE KIMBALL: We're not necessarily here  
22 to... we're not here to talk necessarily... to testify  
23 that this... because we're not in this project we can't  
24 testify that it is something that we would support or  
25 is designed the way we would support it or

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2 environmentally meets the standards that we would  
3 have its more that we just felt like that in this  
4 conversation about making hard choices as we  
5 transition to a clean energy future that there was  
6 not sufficient... not a sufficient conversation going  
7 on in the public realm around the fact that we are...  
8 would potentially have to do a moratorium in this  
9 city and that people didn't necessarily understand  
10 that the five boroughs were through the sort of the  
11 transitive property dependent and it had impacts in  
12 this city so, we're not here to necessarily say this  
13 is a project that we would have done or that we are  
14 in support of the project but rather under... helping  
15 the, the conversation that this has impacts on the  
16 city.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr.

18 Chair.

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you  
20 Speaker Johnson. What is the climate impact of the  
21 gas, which is overwhelmingly fracked gas from the  
22 pipeline?

23 [off mic dialogue]

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IVAN KIMBALL: I don't... I don't know what the particular impact would be, I mean just emissions...

KYLE KIMBALL: So, I guess the, the climate impact of greenhouse gases in general or...

CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Yes, uh-huh.

KYLE KIMBALL: So, we... as, as I think as Ivan said we believe that climate change is real, we are working as quickly as we can we believe to transition people off, I don't think there's a dispute that there is an impact from burning fossil fuels on our side.

CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So, so... but we... the numbers I've heard are somewhere in the neighborhood of eight million metric tons of CO2 that would be created from this pipeline, does that sound in the ballpark?

KYLE KIMBALL: It's not our project and I can't necessarily tell you, its... sorry, that's what we... its not our project so we're just literally here to talk about the relationship between this project and our service to... [cross-talk]

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2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So, how do  
3 you feel this project fits within the state's plans  
4 for greening our grid?

5 KYLE KIMBALL: So, I think this is... this  
6 is... this is the crux of the conversation and I'm glad  
7 you asked this, I mean I think that... we believe that  
8 natural gas has a role to play. So, and as, as Ivan  
9 said at the end of the day, I think everyone in this  
10 room wants more renewable electrons flowing into the  
11 system... [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Uh-huh...  
13 [cross-talk]

14 KYLE KIMBALL: ...I don't think there's any  
15 dispute about that among anyone in the room, what we  
16 are in the middle of a conversation about is how do  
17 we get there and we believe that natural gas... that...  
18 we believe that we are not in a position to deliver  
19 customer... energy to customers reliably if we  
20 completely stop providing natural gas right now. We  
21 believe there's a role for the natural gas to get to  
22 a renewable energy future, there's one. Two, we have  
23 to work with people to make sure that the options  
24 that we are presenting in terms of ground force heat  
25 pumps, air source heat pumps and a lot of the

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2 different technologies that are yet to come are  
3 affordable, I don't think we're, we're not  
4 necessarily having a conversation about that yet but  
5 we should. I think the third piece is how do we work  
6 together to reduce... in terms of reducing demand  
7 because right now gas demand is growing because  
8 people don't necessarily feel like they have  
9 alternatives, so I think we have to work together...  
10 [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Well I mean  
12 I'll, I'll ask this question, I've asked this  
13 question of you... [cross-talk]

14 KYLE KIMBALL: Sure... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...before so  
16 I'm not going to stop now but your also offering  
17 incentives to use natural gas, right, I mean because  
18 I've heard stories from developers about you saying  
19 to them they're looking at geothermal, they're  
20 looking at renewable and you're saying well, you know  
21 you can get this million dollar or two million dollar  
22 incentive by using natural gas so aren't we just  
23 incentivizing them to use more natural gas and not  
24 really having those conversations around renewable  
25 energy?



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2 KYLE KIMBALL: There's a program that is  
3 for commercial developers but that is ending in one  
4 month.

5 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Oh, its  
6 ending in one month.

7 KYLE KIMBALL: Yeah...

8 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay,  
9 because that's... I've heard that story more than once  
10 that they want to move... [cross-talk]

11 KYLE KIMBALL: It's only... it's only for a  
12 small amount of commercial developer who... [cross-  
13 talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Uh-huh...  
15 [cross-talk]

16 KYLE KIMBALL: ...but that's... like I said  
17 its ending in May.

18 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: But we're  
19 incentivizing that move to natural gas so of course  
20 then they're... the, the demand for natural gas is  
21 growing because it's being incentivized?

22 KYLE KIMBALL: Yeah, these are people who  
23 are transitioning from oil.

24

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay. But  
3 we're trying to move them to renewables and we're  
4 saying to them no, take this instead.

5 KYLE KIMBALL: We're not necessarily  
6 saying take the... we're not saying to a developer in  
7 this case that you should do this, we're saying to,  
8 to somebody who's building something that... because  
9 there's a lot of... there are some choices that someone  
10 could make but they might... if they make this choice  
11 to transition from oil there is like... an incentive  
12 program but that... like I said it is ending.

13 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: The... you  
14 know the other question I have is how long is this  
15 pipeline built to last for?

16 IVAN KIMBALL: I... yeah, I think in  
17 general pipelines are built to last for 40 years.

18 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: 40 to 50...

19 [cross-talk]

20 IVAN KIMBALL: ...or more... [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...so... [cross-  
22 talk]

23 IVAN KIMBALL: ...right.

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Have we  
25 thought about what our energy needs would be over the

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2 next 40 years and 50 years and where this fits into  
3 that?

4 KYLE KIMBALL: Our approach really is to  
5 use existing infrastructures we have in place to get  
6 through this transition period so in terms of getting  
7 more natural gas on existing infrastructure either  
8 through compression or different small projects you  
9 can do on our distribution system to help move gas  
10 differently around the city again, as part of this  
11 transition program.

12 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Did the  
13 Williams company reach out to you or did they... you  
14 reach out to them about this project? Well I guess  
15 you're not involved, this a natural... [cross-talk]

16 KYLE KIMBALL: Yeah, we're not involved.

17 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay. I mean  
18 that's... my concern is that, you know I've... our  
19 communities have heard this story before about  
20 reliability and affordability but my bill keeps going  
21 up every month, we see the rate payers having to pay  
22 more every month even though you say that natural gas  
23 is less expensive and you know we've built power  
24 plants in 2000 that were supposed to be for three  
25 years in environmental justice communities and those

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2 communities... if you were born the year that they put  
3 those power plants in you're now old enough to vote.  
4 So, even though they were supposed to be a three-year  
5 life cycle we're talking about 18, 19 years later  
6 those plants still exist. So, we keep talking about  
7 moving to a renewable energy future but we keep  
8 locking ourselves in on fossil fuel infrastructure  
9 that's going to be there for a generation and I don't  
10 see the conversation around renewables being robust,  
11 we need to start... you know I understand that Con  
12 Edison as you've said more than once in front of this  
13 committee what are you doing on the state level to be  
14 able to get into the solar market, the wind market,  
15 what are you doing to get to renewables, what is the  
16 plan here beyond just coming here and testifying that  
17 you're frustrated about not being able to be able to  
18 grow solar and wind, I want to hear something else  
19 other than you're frustrated because I'm frustrated  
20 too?

21 KYLE KIMBALL: So, we have... we have...  
22 we're working... actually working with the legislature  
23 to get... to get legislation passed and I would say  
24 we've had some good success in Albany in this last  
25 session, there was nothing in the budget, it was not

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2 introduced as part of the budget but we worked very  
3 hard to try to get it introduced, introduced so we  
4 are working very hard at the state level to get that  
5 and we can use... we can use everyone's support to get...  
6 because I think... at the end of the day you want as  
7 many tools in the tool kit to get to these renewable  
8 electrons flowing into the New York City area or  
9 otherwise known as zone J and we have to have your  
10 support and, and of those who want to see more  
11 renewable assets we could use your support in  
12 advancing this idea.

13 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I mean I  
14 want more renewable electrons in zone J, that...  
15 there's no argument here that... [cross-talk]

16 KYLE KIMBALL: Yeah... [cross-talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...I think you  
18 have a room full of people that would like to see  
19 that as well...

20 KYLE KIMBALL: But I think that's... an  
21 interesting part of the dialogue is that when we talk  
22 about this people have no idea that we can't do that  
23 in New York State, they think that we're just not and  
24 I think that's again part of the dialogue that we  
25 want to get the message out that we are trying very

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2 hard, again, we are the number two developer outside..  
3 in North America outside of New York State and we  
4 want to be able to do that in New York State. People  
5 think that we are simply tied to fossil fuels in a  
6 way that's really not true.

7 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Well you  
8 know I think we're going to have a disagreement on  
9 the particular pipeline but I do.. we do agree.. have  
10 an agreement that we need more renewable energy in  
11 our communities, we need to start powering, we need  
12 to rethink how we power a city in the 21<sup>st</sup> century  
13 and I don't believe that fossil fuels are, are the  
14 way for us to think about the next 50 years of our  
15 lives. So, I, I want to recognize Council Member  
16 Espinal who's here from Brooklyn and then.. questions?  
17 Okay, Council Member Espinal has a question slash  
18 statement.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: No.. yeah, no I  
20 don't have any questions but I just want to express  
21 my support for this resolution so I would love to be  
22 signed on, I think that as you mentioned Mr. Chair  
23 and now more than ever we should be talking about how  
24 do we continue building infrastructure for renewable  
25 energies instead of building a pipeline for fracked

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2 gas, you know the state of New York, the city of New  
3 York continues to say that we believe in climate  
4 change, continues to... or we made a statement that  
5 we're against fracked gas but here we are allowing  
6 for the potential of fracked gas coming into the  
7 state even though its coming from somewhere else. So,  
8 instead of... instead of building pipelines we should  
9 be building offshore, offshore wind looking at how do  
10 we retrofit our buildings with solar and all these  
11 other great ways to produce energy here in our city  
12 so I stand behind this resolution and I am against  
13 the, the Williams pipeline coming into New York.  
14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you  
16 Council Member Espinal, to be continued.

17 KYLE KIMBALL: Thank you for the time.

18 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.

19 Alright, the first panel is Kim Fraczek from Sane  
20 Energy Project; Annie Garneva from Sane Energy  
21 Project; Noelle Picone, Surfrider Foundation;  
22 Kimberly, Kimberly Ong, NRDC and Bruce Rosen, United  
23 for Action. I think we're working on getting you a  
24 chair, give me one second. Alright. Alright, so I  
25 know we started late today and I apologize for that

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2 but I think we're going to.. in order to.. we have to  
3 be done by one o'clock, I know there are other  
4 hearings today so we're going to put everyone on a  
5 four minute clock, okay. So, just give everyone four  
6 minutes, do your testimony and then at the end of  
7 each panel we'll ask questions, sounds good and  
8 everybody knows that this is the way to show your  
9 support already and just no yelling, no booing so I  
10 think we're good. Alright, great. Alright, ready when  
11 you are, alright, right there yeah. Make, make.. push  
12 your red button.

13 KIM FRACZEK: Oh, sure. Thank you so much  
14 for your environmental leadership and stewardship.  
15 I'm Kim Fraczek, I'm the Director of Sane Energy  
16 Project. We represent 7,500 New Yorkers that are  
17 working to stop the fossil fuel industry and to build  
18 an equitable renewable energy system in the state of  
19 New York. The renewable solutions are available and  
20 fracked gas from the Williams NESE pipeline is not a  
21 bridge fuel. It will bring us more climate change,  
22 more poison and a nosedive for our democracy. Case in  
23 point, Williams Company in partnership with the  
24 deliverers of this product, National Grid and Con Ed  
25 are currently running a false information campaign



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2 that is nothing more than a manufactured crisis to  
3 keep their unsustainable and inequitable business  
4 models in survival mode. They are telling New Yorkers  
5 that we will all be in the cold, in the dark and that  
6 our economy will come to a screeching halt if we  
7 don't build this pipeline and more fracked gas  
8 infrastructure expansion. This is simply an effort to  
9 keep business as usual and to create doubt in our  
10 ability to create a renewable industry in service to  
11 sustaining all life on planet earth. The CEOs of  
12 these companies who will benefit from this pipeline  
13 make in the millions per year, hardly an incentive  
14 for changing our infrastructure to distributed  
15 renewables that would break apart their monopoly on  
16 our energy choices, our economy and our democracy. We  
17 need New York City Council to express leadership for  
18 our health, safety and democracy and thank you for  
19 doing so. We achieved so much already; this is not  
20 the time to work backwards. We vetoed Port Ambrose  
21 LNG Port together, many of you stood up with us to  
22 Spectra Energy's pipeline in the West Village when  
23 this fracking infrastructure fight was not on many  
24 people's radars. We must not let Williams Company and  
25 the corporate utilities bully us backward. Now is

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2 the... now is the time to demand our city and state  
3 incentivize training for our labor force to move to  
4 renewable energy partnered with energy efficiency and  
5 beneficial electrification to create a cleaner and  
6 equitable system. Recently, Governor Cuomo and  
7 NYSERDA's renewable heat division led the way when  
8 Con Ed recently called for a moratorium on gas in  
9 Westchester County if they don't get more gas  
10 infrastructure. Sane Energy Project, along with  
11 elected officials, organized a delivery of hundreds  
12 of letters to the public service commission to see  
13 Con Ed's moratorium threat and we raised them an  
14 exchange of fossil fuel subsidies for renewable  
15 subsidies for our rate payer and taxpayer funded  
16 Green Bank and Clean Energy Fund. We have the  
17 solutions in our economy solar, offshore wind, energy  
18 efficiency, beneficial electrification instead of gas  
19 pipeline replacement and hey if St. Patrick's  
20 Cathedral in midtown Manhattan can go 100 percent  
21 geothermal, then there is no reason we cannot create  
22 a community, community geothermal loops to heat and  
23 cool our buildings. I attached for you a report that  
24 we issued called the Panic Report, manufacturing of  
25 panic for pipelines and profits by Con Edison,

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2 National Grid and Williams and I've also attached our  
3 renewable energy talking points that are notated and  
4 cited and how it... how the corporate utilities are  
5 manufacturing a crisis to keep business as usual.  
6 Thank you so much for your time.

7 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.

8 ANNIE GARNEVA: Hello. Good morning and  
9 thank you for holding this hearing and doing the  
10 necessary oversight of the dangers and unnecessary  
11 proposed Williams Pipeline that would carry fracked  
12 gas from our neighbors in Pennsylvania into the  
13 Rockaways, a New York City community that has already  
14 seen its own unfair share of environmental  
15 destabilization during superstorm Sandy and its  
16 continued aftermath. I and the members of the Stop  
17 the Williams Pipeline Coalition have been working to  
18 alert the public and elected officials like  
19 yourselves to this proposed pipeline and its  
20 multitude of dangers for the last two and a half  
21 years. In my short time with you today I would like  
22 to highlight the incredible harm that the  
23 construction process will cause to the harbor and  
24 marine and human life that depends on it. The main  
25 issue that we have is the toxins that would be

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2 dredged up through the process. One of the main  
3 negative consequences would be the dredging of toxins  
4 such as mercury and arsenic that have settled on the  
5 seabed. Stricter environmental laws, investments in  
6 waste treatment and the decline of industries on the  
7 rivers that flow into the region have led to a  
8 dramatic improvement in water quality after decades  
9 and decades of rampant industrial pollution akin to  
10 the project we are currently discussing. Williams  
11 itself has documented unsafe levels of toxic  
12 substances under the sea floor all along the proposed  
13 route. Approximately 83 percent of the samples it  
14 collected exceeded the New York State standards for  
15 one or more metals and approximately 33 percent of  
16 samples had excessive amounts of toxic, toxic organic  
17 pollutants that would require highly specialized  
18 regulation and construction techniques. It's not a  
19 question of whether these toxins exist, but a  
20 question of whether we're going to shut our eyes and  
21 keep being delusional about their consequences. The  
22 release of toxins is particularly concerning when it  
23 comes to bottom feeding marine life overall, and how  
24 this will impact the commercial and recreational  
25 purposes that this water is meant for by the law. For

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2 example, the endangered Atlantic sturgeon has been  
3 making a slow come back over the last 20 years, with  
4 the Rockaways being a major habitat area. As they are  
5 bottom feeders who forage for small clams,  
6 invertebrates and fish by sucking up large amounts of  
7 mud and sand, the trenching of the sea floor and  
8 dredging up of the toxins would A, inundate the  
9 sturgeon with pollutants of sediments for three to 12  
10 hours per day; B, reduce the amount of important prey  
11 and C, expose sturgeon to significantly higher levels  
12 of toxins through ingesting them. This example of  
13 toxic interaction can be applied to all animals  
14 within the harbor and especially a number of the  
15 bottom feeding species, who make up a large portion  
16 of the biomass within the ecosystem and play a vital  
17 role in our food web. These waters are specified as  
18 having to serve market and recreational purposes and  
19 include seven fishing grounds, any adverse impacts on  
20 these must be taken into priority over the  
21 construction of the pipeline. Toxins are passed down  
22 from one animal to the next and by entering the food  
23 chain they will eventually make their way into New  
24 Yorkers themselves through both commercial and  
25 recreational fishing and swimming. Here are some of

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2 the negative health consequences of the toxins.

3 Arsenic causes a variety of cancers in humans. Lead

4 leads to neurological impairments especially in

5 children. PCBs enter the food chain, with human

6 exposure to PCBs often coming from eating fish. The

7 class of organic compounds called dioxins are highly

8 toxic because they bind to body fat and accumulate in

9 the... they accumulate in both humans and animals. With

10 more than 90 percent of human exposure to PCBs coming

11 in through food including fish and shellfish, which

12 is one of our main growing industries in the city.

13 One could point to similar evidence of harms to

14 health for any of the metals or industrial compounds

15 we're talking about in the bottom of the sea floor.

16 The construction techniques that will be used to bury

17 this pipeline will also be a part of this problem. In

18 its filings with the federal government, Williams

19 said that jet trenching will be used for

20 approximately 64 percent of the route. Jet trenching

21 causes the most sediment disturbance and apparently

22 it will be used for more than half of the pipeline's

23 length except that no process has been put into place

24 as to what will be done to better this. The fate of

25 resuspended contaminants is dependent on many

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2 variables, variables that Williams has not included  
3 in any of their information. And you can read the  
4 rest of my testimony.

5 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Alright,  
6 great, thank you very much. Morning.

7 NOELLE PICONE: Good morning, my name is  
8 Noelle, I am a volunteer with the Surfrider  
9 Foundation New York City Chapter and Campaign Lead  
10 against the Williams Pipeline. I want to thank you  
11 for holding this hearing and I, I'd like to say the  
12 statements made by the Council Members this morning  
13 makes me very proud to be a New Yorker. If built the  
14 NESE pipeline's contribution towards climate change  
15 would directly contradict New York City's greenhouse  
16 emission goals as Speaker Johnson alluded to. This  
17 pipeline would carry fracked gas, which is largely  
18 methane, a greenhouse gas 86 times more powerful in  
19 the short term than CO2. When just 3.2 percent of  
20 methane leaks and gas infrastructure is known to leak  
21 as much as 11 percent, methane is a... is as bad for  
22 the climate as burning coal. The DEC estimates that  
23 this pipeline construction will result in the release  
24 of 99,781 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions  
25 or CO2E which is the equivalent, equivalent of

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2 burning 50,000 tons of coal. In 2014, New York City  
3 committed to reducing its greenhouse emissions by 80  
4 percent by 2050 compared to the 2005 level. This  
5 pipeline contradicts and jeopardizes New York City's  
6 emission reduction plan. The DEC notes that quote,  
7 "the amount of greenhouse, greenhouse gas emissions  
8 from construction and operation of this pipeline  
9 would be significant when compared to state and  
10 regional GHG emission reduction targets even before  
11 taking into account upstream or downstream  
12 emissions". As we all know hurricane Sandy caused  
13 massive damage to New York City as, as a whole from  
14 Rockaways to Coney Island to Lower Manhattan to  
15 Staten Island and the list goes on and on. Climate  
16 scientists agree that it is only a matter of time  
17 before a new superstorm would bring the same kind of  
18 damage. To climate proof quote, "Lower Manhattan and  
19 prevent similar catastrophic damage from another  
20 inevitable superstorm", Mayor De Blasio recently  
21 proposed using landfill to artificially extend the  
22 southern tip of Manhattan, an estimated 10-billion-  
23 dollar project. As the Mayor has said cities like New  
24 York are facing down the greatest threat to our  
25 survival on our own. Climate change has put New York



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2 City in such a vulnerable and precarious position  
3 that a proposal exists to literally extend the island  
4 of Manhattan to the tune of the ten billion dollars,  
5 this is the severity of the threat that we are  
6 facing. Given this, to not oppose this project which  
7 will most certainly contribute towards climate change  
8 would not only be illogical, but it would be  
9 irresponsible. The Council's own website states  
10 quote, "the Council can pass resolutions on state and  
11 federal issues that are relevant to New Yorkers", it  
12 further states that resolutions allow the Council to  
13 quote, "express a collective voice of the city".  
14 Recent history has taught us that climate change is  
15 an extremely relevant issue to all New Yorkers and by  
16 taking action to stop its devastating impacts you  
17 will dually be expressing a collective voice of this  
18 city. New York City is one of the greatest and most  
19 progressive cities in the world, we should not allow  
20 the fossil fuel industry to make enormous profit,  
21 profit for an unnecessary and dangerous project at  
22 the expense of our city instead we should be a leader  
23 in the global fight to combat climate change. This  
24 Council has an opportunity to do... to be such a leader

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2 by passing this resolution and asking the DEC to deny  
3 the permit for the construction of this pipeline.

4 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.

5 KIMBERLY ONG: Good morning Chairman  
6 Constantinides and members of the Committee and all  
7 of the pipeline fighters who have taken time out of  
8 their workdays to fill this room today, it's great to  
9 see you all here. my name is Kimberly Ong and I am  
10 Senior Attorney at the Natural Resources Defense  
11 Council. As you probably know, NRDC is a national,  
12 nonprofit legal and scientific organization  
13 headquartered in New York City. Since its founding in  
14 1970, NRDC has worked hard to protect waters in and  
15 around New York City. It has been a principal  
16 advocate for pollution prevention and water  
17 protection of the Catskill and Delaware watersheds,  
18 which provide drinking water to more than nine  
19 million residents including those of us in New York  
20 City. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before,  
21 before you today and thank you for providing us the  
22 forum to comment on this really important project. As  
23 you know, over 23 miles of the Northeast Supply  
24 Enhancement pipeline is proposed to be built very  
25 close to New York City, just off the shores of Staten

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2 Island and Queens. Part of that pipeline will be  
3 built by ripping up the bottom of New York Harbor,  
4 one of the city's most important waterbodies. New  
5 York Harbor serves as a lifeblood to the city and is  
6 an important place for fishing, swimming, boating and  
7 other forms of recreation for hundreds and thousands...  
8 of thousands of people and its home to a diverse  
9 collection of aquatic organisms, including two  
10 hundred species of fish and the endangered North  
11 Atlantic right whale, the endangered fin whale and  
12 the endangered Atlantic sturgeon. With much hard work  
13 by the city, its now the healthiest it's been in over  
14 a century. And New Yorkers are taking advantage of  
15 this, in New York City, the majority of shoreline  
16 along New York Harbor is designated as public space.  
17 And the national park sites in New York Harbor  
18 receive over 16 million visitors per year who spend  
19 nearly 560 million dollars in communities near the  
20 parks. But all of this is... all this progress could be  
21 undermined if the Northeast Enhancement pipeline goes  
22 forward. The vast majority of the pipeline in New  
23 York will be constructed using a trenching method,  
24 ripping up over one million cubic yards of sediment  
25 from the ocean floor. These activities would harm any

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2 living thing that lived in the project's path. It  
3 would also suspend sediments in the water, clogging  
4 fish gills, burying eggs, and making it too cloudy  
5 for aquatic animals to forage and migrate. Indeed,  
6 aquatic animals in an area larger than Central Park,  
7 about 945 acres of seafloor, would experience an  
8 increase in suspended sediment that could interfere  
9 with nearly every activity necessary to sustain,  
10 sustain life there. The pipeline developer also  
11 acknowledges that there are dangerous levels of toxic  
12 contaminants like PCBs, mercury and copper, in the  
13 sediment that creates a highly potential... a high  
14 potential for sediments to be toxic to aquatic life.  
15 Levels of mercury and copper would be so high that  
16 they would exceed state water quality standards for  
17 these chemicals. And once contaminants enter an  
18 animal, they can move up the food chain potentially  
19 harming and killing organisms that were directly  
20 exposed to the contaminants in the first place. New  
21 York City has an important role to play in the future  
22 of this pipeline. Before it moves forward, the  
23 Northeast Supply Enhancement pipeline must obtain  
24 several federal and state approvals. Without these  
25 approvals, the pipeline can't go forward. And as you

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2 are aware, New York State is currently considering  
3 granting the pipeline a water quality certification  
4 in accordance with section 401 of the Clean Water  
5 Act, this is one of the very few opportunities New  
6 York State has to stop this pipeline. And before New  
7 York State makes its, its decision on May 16<sup>th</sup>, the  
8 City Council can pass a resolution calling upon New  
9 York State to deny water quality certification permit  
10 for the construction of the Northeast Supply  
11 Enhancement pipeline through New York Harbor. This  
12 would send a powerful signal to the state that New  
13 Yorkers are not interested in hosting a fracked gas  
14 pipeline through one of their most important  
15 waterbodies and would put pressure on the state to  
16 respond in kind. In short, NRDC believes that New  
17 York... the Northeast Supply Enhancement pipeline must  
18 be stopped for the health and safety of all New  
19 Yorkers and for the protection of our sacred  
20 waterways. We strongly support a resolution against  
21 the Northeast Supply Enhancement pipeline, thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.

23 BRUCE ROSEN: Good morning, is it on?

24 Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to, to  
25 speak. I guess I wasn't amazed by hearing the utility

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2 reps talk about meeting customer demand. I live in a  
3 co-op that had decided to do the dual use when it had  
4 to get out of the, the more polluting oil on that.  
5 The Council of Co-ops and, and Condominiums in New  
6 York has only one story that it tells its members and  
7 that's about tapping into the fracked gas. That is a  
8 result in part of both the previous mayoralty, the  
9 real estate policies of which continue in this  
10 mayoralty as well as of course the real estate board  
11 and the partnership for New York. I think it'd be  
12 critical to note one, the, the major real estate  
13 investors in the city and globally are also invested  
14 in natural resources, natural resources include oil,  
15 natural gas, coal, fissionable material and of course  
16 the rarest that power everybody's cell phones. So,  
17 there here in that, we have a problem also of not  
18 only Con Ed but natural... National Grid. National Grid  
19 has a terrible safety record. The example of which  
20 took place during Sandy despite warnings from the  
21 staff of a loss of over a thousand homes in Breezy  
22 Point, that's very important because the then Mayor's  
23 priority within a week of Sandy hitting was to get a  
24 new high pressure gas pipeline constructed under  
25 Jamaica Bay and the Rockaway Peninsula and then after

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2 that was to push through another high pressure gas  
3 pipeline under the Hudson River between Jersey City  
4 and the west side of Manhattan which in fact the now  
5 Speaker participated in the demonstration against.  
6 So, we seem to go... be going in one way. As was said  
7 by the reps they don't even have the conversion  
8 interests on, on their scope and its not like we  
9 don't have the ability to do anything. At this point  
10 in time New York City is in the top ten cities in  
11 installed solar capacity not on a per capita basis,  
12 we have a way to go but one of the organizations that  
13 I support, WE ACT does such installations. The other  
14 thing is the technologies have been existing and been  
15 used in New York and have improved. An example is a  
16 building that was built in the 80's, the gymnasium  
17 of, of Pratt Institute in Brooklyn taps into the  
18 aquaria for its heating and cooling and if you just  
19 want to use water for the non-potable water for  
20 protection of a building there's 100 year old plus  
21 landmark across the street named the Waldorf building  
22 and that's what they used. So, it's not like we don't  
23 create the technology and know how to use it, it's  
24 more like there's an indifference to do... to doing  
25 that and there are invested interests in it that

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2 don't want us to do that so, if New York is going to  
3 be more serious than saying we know the science and  
4 walk the other way it has to say absolutely no and it  
5 has to go forward very quickly to conservation and  
6 renewable resources. Thank you very much.

7 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.

8 So, you've, you've answered most of my questions  
9 already when it comes to marine life in Jamaica Bay,  
10 seeing the resurgence of so many new wildlife there  
11 that were lost for a very long time, if you wanted to  
12 sort of expand and I know we're seeing whales,  
13 dolphins, I mean in the Bay that we haven't seen in a  
14 long... what, what do you think this means if we lock  
15 ourselves into this construction, what do you foresee  
16 our waterways reverting back to?

17 ANNIE GARNEVA: Sure, so over the past  
18 century I think the regulation finally stopped all  
19 the industrial toxins that were coming in the 70s and  
20 ever since that point we've... the... like Kim said this  
21 is the first time that we've had healthy waterways,  
22 for the first time this year we saw... what was the  
23 turtle named? Kemps ridley turtle come back on shore  
24 and lay eggs which we as environmentalists were so  
25 excited about and the moment it hit the news Williams



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2 just wrote it off as a onetime experience rather than  
3 an incredible symbol of marine life that we haven't  
4 seen for decades come back to our shores from  
5 cleanliness. The way that the construction is... now  
6 has been created it... there will be construction  
7 happening 24 hours a day in some form for 12 years...  
8 for 12 months straight which means that not only will  
9 there be 12 months straight of death that that means  
10 then it will take three... its projected it will take  
11 one to three years for those marine life to come  
12 back, to start re-growing so we're actually locking  
13 ourselves into four years of straight death across  
14 the entire harbor which is a major problem and  
15 Williams continues to try to just write it off by  
16 basically flipping the math on every aspect of, of  
17 the route which makes no sense.

18 KIMBERLY ONG: I believe that there's,  
19 there's been a claim by the, the natural gas pipeline  
20 developers that the type of harms that New York  
21 Harbor will experience will be quite temporary. They  
22 certainly say this in their environmental impact  
23 statement a number of times but I think, you know a  
24 good example of the real life impacts of this  
25 pipeline can be seen in the real life impacts that

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2 resulted from the Rockaway lateral pipeline which is  
3 a pipeline that was built in very similar... I mean  
4 right, right next to where the Northeast Supply  
5 Enhancement pipeline will be built. And there you  
6 just need to look at, you know like one animal like  
7 the surf clam for example who's populations were  
8 decimated after the construction of that pipeline  
9 that really never recovered and I think that that's a  
10 real danger for a lot of other aquatic animals that  
11 rely on New York Harbor for their survival.

12 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I know that  
13 Council Member Menchaca also joined us here at the  
14 Committee. I want to thank each and every one of you  
15 for your efforts and your work and your advocacy and  
16 I appreciate you being here and taking your time  
17 today. One, one last question or statement, yeah.

18 BRUCE ROSEN: I'd just like to say that  
19 the fracktivists here to get the ban on the state  
20 said and that was not the point that was being made  
21 by certain people downstate, there would be no  
22 sacrifice zones, no sacrifice zones didn't just mean  
23 62 counties in New York State, it meant we did not  
24 want the sacrifice of the citizens of our neighboring  
25 states to be there and many of the people here have

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2 visited Pennsylvania, they have seen the damage that  
3 was done, people had their fresh water taken from  
4 them without permission by a form of eminent domain  
5 so it's our responsibility to not only not continue  
6 this but to do whatever we can to help make repairs  
7 with the damage is done.

8 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.  
9 Thank you all for your testimony, I, I appreciate all  
10 of your advocacy, thank you. Next up we have  
11 Commissioner Jainey Bavishi, I pronounced... with a  
12 name like Constantinides I apologize for saying your  
13 name wrong Commissioner, thank you for being here  
14 today, from... the Director of the Mayor's Office of  
15 Resiliency and Recovery. And Commissioner since you  
16 are a city official, I do have to have... swear you...  
17 sworn in.

18 [off mic dialogue]

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: Can you please raise  
20 your right hand? Do you swear or affirm to tell the  
21 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth  
22 today?

23 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Always good  
24 to see you Commissioner.

25 JAINEY BAVISHI: Nice to see you too.

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2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you  
3 for being here.

4 JAINEY BAVISHI: Good morning. My name  
5 Jainey Bavishi. I am the Director of the Mayor's  
6 Office of Recovery and Resiliency. I want to thank  
7 Speaker Johnson and Chairperson Constantinides as  
8 well as members of the Committee on Environmental  
9 Protection for this opportunity to testify on behalf  
10 of the De Blasio Administration today on the city's  
11 energy need... energy needs, our efforts to move  
12 towards more sustainable and resilient energy sources  
13 and the proposed Williams pipeline. The city's  
14 electricity mix is comprised of nuclear, natural gas  
15 and steam resources; and supports almost every aspect  
16 of life and livelihoods. Natural gas, in particular,  
17 fuels more than 98 percent of in city electricity  
18 production by power plants. Separate from  
19 electricity, the city also relies on natural gas for  
20 more than 75 percent of its heating needs and a  
21 significant percentage of cooking needs in buildings  
22 throughout New York. In 2012, NYC Clean Heat was  
23 created to address the public health hazard presented  
24 by heavy heating oil emissions. Through NYC Clean  
25 Heat, there have been over 6,000 heating oil

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2 conversions from number six or number four oil to  
3 cleaner fuels like natural gas... natural gas. As a  
4 result, the city has achieved the cleanest air  
5 quality in 50 years, preventing approximately 210  
6 premature deaths and 540 hospitalizations annually.

7 We also applaud the City Council's efforts to  
8 accelerate the phase out of the heaviest fuel oils  
9 for power plants. In the absence of cleaner forms of  
10 large-scale energy, especially for the provision of  
11 heating and hot water, natural gas consumption has  
12 been increasing in New York City by three to four  
13 percent annually since 2012, driven in part by the  
14 NYC Clean Heat program. Given this growth, the  
15 utilities are now stating that there is insufficient  
16 gas supply coming into the city to keep up with  
17 growing demand. For example, on March 15<sup>th</sup>, Con  
18 Edison's moratorium on new gas connections went into  
19 effect in Westchester County. National Grid also  
20 signaled that it will not approve new gas connections  
21 for approximately 250 newly planned developments in  
22 New York City and Long Island unless the Williams  
23 pipeline gets the green light from New York State and  
24 the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Neither Con  
25 Edison nor National Grid has yet issued a formal

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2 moratorium on new gas connections in New York City,  
3 but both have raised concerns about the adequacy of  
4 natural gas supply coming into the city to meet  
5 growing demand. As a result, the New York State  
6 Public Service Commission is currently assessing the  
7 downstate gas supply. We are watching closely and  
8 expect the results in July. Even though the city does  
9 not have permitting or approval authority over the  
10 Williams pipeline, we will do all we can to maintain  
11 the reliability of our energy supply with the  
12 objective of ensuring that New Yorkers have access to  
13 heat during the winter months. We also want to  
14 continue to support affordable economic growth and  
15 development in New York City. More broadly, the city  
16 is working to ensure our residents have access to  
17 reliable, safe and sustainable energy sources. We are  
18 moving fast to increase the efficiency of our  
19 buildings, in addition to transitioning heating from  
20 natural gas boilers to efficient electrified heat.  
21 The administration is working with the Council to  
22 pass Introduction 1253, a major step in reducing  
23 greenhouse gas emissions from our largest buildings.  
24 In New York City, buildings are responsible for  
25 nearly 70 percent of the city's carbon emissions. A

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2 large part of those emissions come from heating the  
3 city's largest buildings with natural gas and oil.

4 Introduction 1253 will require large buildings to  
5 progressively cut their carbon emissions in line with

6 the Paris Agreement, which will mean many of them

7 have... will have to electrify their heating. Reducing

8 building emissions takes a significant step toward a

9 sustainable and reliable future. However, to support

10 large scale beneficial electrification, we also need

11 significantly more renewable energy flowing into our

12 grid. The city's 80 by 50 roadmap lays out the key

13 steps to transitioning our electricity from fossil

14 fuels to a clean energy future. Important elements of

15 that transition include a significant increase in

16 local and large-scale renewable power, new

17 transmission that directly connects New York City to

18 renewable power generated elsewhere and energy

19 storage and a limited amount of fast ramping fossil

20 fuel generation to balance the intermittency of wind

21 and solar. Roughly half of the city's annual

22 electricity consumption comes from 21 in city natural

23 gas fired power plants. Because of the lack of

24 transmission capacity to access power generated in

25 other parts of the state, the New York State

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2 Reliability Council mandates that about 80 percent of  
3 the city's peak electricity demand must be located  
4 within city limits to ensure that the lights stay on.  
5 New York City accounts for over 30 percent of the  
6 state's electricity consumption and 40 percent of the  
7 state's greenhouse gas emissions. To meet the state's  
8 100 percent clean electricity goal by 2040 and  
9 dramatically reduce our reliance on polluting in city  
10 power plants, the state must invest in both new  
11 transmission from up state to down state and offshore  
12 wind. Otherwise New York City and other downstate  
13 communities will be relegated to a future with more  
14 fossil fuels. Achieving the city's climate objectives  
15 is no easy task and will require active participation  
16 by New Yorkers to transforming, transform the  
17 buildings we live in, the places we work, the ways we  
18 travel and the goods and energy we consume. We will  
19 need the State's support in these efforts. Together,  
20 we must prioritize resources, policies and programs  
21 that facilitate this transition. Thank you for the  
22 opportunity to testify and we are happy to take any,  
23 any questions you may have at this time.

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Alright, so  
25 Commissioner what actions would the city take if the



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2 utilities were to declare a moratorium on new gas  
3 connections in New York City?

4 JAINEY BAVISHI: If the city were... the  
5 utilities were, were to declare a moratorium on new  
6 gas connections then what will likely happen is that  
7 there will be an increased reliance on fuel oil to  
8 heat buildings throughout New York City. Another  
9 possibility is that we might see an increase in  
10 interruptible gas customers, these are basically  
11 customers that would, would not be continuous  
12 customers but would use gas for more part... most parts  
13 of the year but, but be required to switch to fuel  
14 oil during the coldest days.

15 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Would we  
16 come up with a contingency plan based on renewables  
17 and, and the city to work to try to bridge that gap  
18 and what is... what is our thoughts?

19 JAINEY BAVISHI: We're absolutely  
20 aggressively trying to bring as much renewable energy  
21 to the city as possible but I... as I said in my  
22 testimony this is also dependent on more transmission  
23 to conduct that... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Right, uh-  
25 huh... [cross-talk]

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2 JAINEY BAVISHI: ..energy.. [cross-talk]

3 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...no, I mean  
4 I, I fully support that as you know we, we're... I  
5 think we've had a good collaboration together on 1253  
6 which I'm looking forward to seeing passed on  
7 Thursday but also 1318 which would have the city come  
8 up with a long term plan to close these gas powered  
9 power plants within our city limits and replace them  
10 with solar and, you know hydropower, wind power,  
11 renewables. I think it... we need... and battery storage,  
12 we need to come up with that long-term plan to start  
13 thinking about how we pull ourselves out of this,  
14 this fossil fuel paradigm that we seem to be stuck  
15 in, right?

16 JAINEY BAVISHI: Absolutely and the city  
17 is aggressively pursuing all those options.

18 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Yep...

19 JAINEY BAVISHI: And working with the  
20 Council to do so.

21 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Yeah... no,  
22 we're, we're, we're doing a lot and I think that, you  
23 know as we look to... you know we... you know my concern  
24 and I had said this before and as... you don't have to  
25 answer this but my, my, my concern was, you know

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2 we've heard this story before from the utilities,  
3 right, it... we've heard this, this story of  
4 reliability and... you know in 2000 when California was  
5 experiencing blackouts that oh, we're going to put  
6 these power plants in environmental justice  
7 communities but don't worry they're only going to be  
8 there for three years and then 19 years later we're  
9 still seeing those turbines burning in environmental  
10 justice neighborhoods, I just... I feel like this  
11 pipeline, this is the same story all over again, they  
12 keep locking us in to this fossil fuel infrastructure  
13 and saying no, no, we need it, we, we... you know the,  
14 the... this... the sky is falling, the sky is falling and  
15 then there's more profits going into these utilities,  
16 their, their stock prices continue to go up, they  
17 continue to do well, the Williams Company continues  
18 to do well if this happens but we're stuck with the  
19 bill, the rate payers are stuck with the bill, the  
20 city is stuck with this, this fossil fuel  
21 infrastructure and we're, we're stuck.

22 JAINEY BAVISHI: Right and the, the  
23 alternative, you know if, if, if the... if more  
24 buildings are... or new buildings that are coming  
25 online were required to become dependent on fuel oil

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2 in the... you know if moratoriums were issued then  
3 we're, we're locking those buildings into a  
4 dependency on fuel oil which is a dirtier form of  
5 energy as you know than natural gas.

6 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I feel like  
7 they're giving us to bad choices and we, we have to  
8 find our way out of... we need to find our way out of  
9 that, you know A and B choice and find... see our way  
10 to a... to, to letter C here and, and get us into a  
11 better place and I look forward to partnering with  
12 you on that Commissioner.

13 JAINEY BAVISHI: Certainly, looking  
14 forward to partnering with you and, and the buildings  
15 mandate is a really important step in that direction.

16 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Yep, any  
17 question? Alright, well thank you very much.

18 JAINEY BAVISHI: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Alright,  
20 next panel would be Jean Belford; Lillian Belford;  
21 Lee, I... it's from the... Lee from the Sane Energy  
22 Project, I don't want to mess up your name, I  
23 apologize, with Constantinides I do my best not to  
24 screw up names; Sara Gronim from 350 Brooklyn, Jackie  
25 Weisberg, 350 Brooklyn and then Bridget Klapinski,

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2 again I apologize for... I apologize. And... and the next  
3 panel after that just so you can be ready and make  
4 sure you're in the room so if you're going for a  
5 bathroom break now is that moment, would be Vinnie...  
6 Vincent Albanese from the Laborers; Lisa Harrison;  
7 Alvaro Alcocer; Jacqueline Sailer and Wendy Scher and  
8 Ken so, so just be ready next, okay, make sure you're  
9 here next. Okay.

10 [off mic dialogue]

11 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Right there,  
12 right here on the end.

13 JEAN BELFORD: Thank you for having us.  
14 I'm... my name is Jean Belford, I'm from Rockaway Women  
15 for Progress, we are a group of left leaning women  
16 about 500 strong formed after the presidential  
17 election of 2016. We spent most of 2018 working hard  
18 to get some people into elected positions and the  
19 three areas that we have chosen to take on going  
20 forward as far as initiatives are the environment,  
21 health and bias and, and we believe that the Williams  
22 pipeline, fighting the Williams pipeline addresses  
23 all three of those areas. Rockaway Women for Progress  
24 is calling on City Council to oppose the Williams  
25 pipeline. To accept this would be counter to New York

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2 City's goal of reducing carbon by 80 percent by two...  
3 2050. It is because of legislation, environmental  
4 legislation that sediment now sits atop toxins in our  
5 waters making them cleaner and healthier. As a no  
6 fracking state it is counter to our position on  
7 health and welfare to have this come into our waters.  
8 There are so many economic opportunities within the  
9 renewable energy, Rockaway Women for Progress in  
10 conjunction with Sane Energy has worked to send  
11 messages to local elected officials and Governor  
12 Cuomo through letter writing and postcards to the  
13 tune of hundreds. We take this very seriously as a  
14 group. We don't want to increase our reliance on this  
15 form of energy, and I'd like to also speak from a, a  
16 resident, a lifetime resident of Rockaway. So, people  
17 from Rockaway are a very greedy and we have had in  
18 the last 20 years our, our very fair share of fights.  
19 I come from a long line of firemen, my stepfather had  
20 been recently retired from... as an ironworker and New  
21 York City fireman on the day of 9/11, he spent months  
22 down there on the pile digging through the debris as  
23 a fireman by day and cutting through steel at night  
24 and so I, I address this part of it because I sat in  
25 the DEC forum at Beach Chanel high school where union

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2 workers felt very strongly about having this job, the  
3 jobs that would come with the Williams pipeline and  
4 so that's a really hard thing for someone from  
5 Rockaway to hear because we are very, very union  
6 proud and my stepfather was told by the EPA at the  
7 time that the air was safe to breath and he has since  
8 passed from cancer related to 9/11 and so it's really  
9 important to understand that Rockaway in particular,  
10 New York City in particular takes being in unions and  
11 unions having jobs very, very, very seriously but  
12 these jobs that would come from this pipeline are so  
13 very temporary that we encourage two things that,  
14 that there are jobs that come from renewables and its  
15 dangerous to kind of prey upon our vulnerability or  
16 our strength as union members in Rockaway to, to, to  
17 feel that we should be pressured into wanting this  
18 pipeline because of that and this is really an  
19 environmental issue and shouldn't just be an economic  
20 issue. Hurricane Sandy brought on another whole sense  
21 of resiliency and fighting that we were required to,  
22 to undergo and when we as a Rockaway Women for  
23 Progress started becoming pretty political it was  
24 very clear that conflicting bureaucracies are leading  
25 to nothing and, and we're fighting for storm

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2 protection so to now have this thrust upon us as a  
3 city and literally the barrier to one of the most  
4 important cities in the world, we are a barrier  
5 island peninsula it... at this... at this point this  
6 should not be a fight that we have to fight.

7 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I, I  
8 appreciate that, thank you. Thank you. Alright.

9 LILLIAN BELFORD: Hi, I didn't take off  
10 from school today. I'm here because of a serious  
11 threat directed at my school on social media last  
12 night. Being a kid today is really chaotic... is  
13 already chaotic enough. I have lived in Rockaway my  
14 entire life and opposing the Williams pipeline will  
15 make my future a lot less scary, thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: How old are  
17 you?

18 LILLIAN BELFORD: 12.

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: You're 12,  
20 I, I, I commend you for being here today and your  
21 bravery to speak in front of everybody. When I was  
22 12, I didn't do that so thank you so much for being  
23 here and.. [cross-talk]

24 LILLIAN BELFORD: Thank you... [cross-talk]

25



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2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...lending  
3 your voice.

4 LEE ZIESCHE: Hi, my name is Lee Ziesche,  
5 I am an Organizer with Sane Energy Project, I am also  
6 a documentary filmmaker who has spent a lot of time  
7 traveling this country interviewing people who have  
8 been harmed by fracking and frack gas infrastructure.  
9 I wrote a lot of testimony that focused on the  
10 climate impacts, but I think Noelle covered a lot of  
11 those and what I want to talk about is kind of  
12 something that you brought up and thank you so much  
13 for your leadership Councilman. Why are we continuing  
14 to be presented with this false decision that we need  
15 fracked gas, you know to hear Con Edison say that  
16 they're doing all they can, well Con Edison has  
17 absolutely advocated for.. against a, a policy called  
18 VDER that's actually prevented us from building  
19 renewable energy, 800 million dollars of community  
20 owned projects were not built last year because of  
21 VDER. What they want is to own solar and what this..  
22 what... the opportunity that we have is to own our own  
23 energy and produce our own heating. The fact that the  
24 city is pushing for more gas over oil, yes, oil is  
25 very dirty and harmful to our communities, but the

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2 fracked gas is just as bad. I have met people who  
3 cannot bathe their kids, who cannot drink their water  
4 in Pennsylvania, I've met people whose pipelines have  
5 destroyed their water and their land, what about  
6 those people? We cannot pretend that this is clean  
7 gas. Recently John Bruckner, the head of National  
8 Grid put out a video saying that this pipeline is  
9 going to be transporting renewable gas. There is no  
10 such thing as renewable gas, this is a fossil fuel  
11 that will greatly contribute to climate change. Also,  
12 the Marcellus Shale is incredibly radioactive, is  
13 anybody testing to make sure that this gas is not  
14 just as bad for local pollution as, as oil? It's just  
15 insane that we are continuing to be presented with  
16 this, this, this false choice as you're saying  
17 between A and B, that does not exist and the only  
18 reason it exists is because we're allowing markets as  
19 Con Ed was saying to solve this problem, you know the  
20 only thing that should be determining the path  
21 forward for our city and our state is climate  
22 science, that is the only thing, it should not be  
23 markets, it should not be Con Ed's bottom line, it  
24 should not be Nation Grid's bottom line, it should  
25 not be Williams' bottom line, you know I'm 29 years

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2 old, I'm going to be 30 next month and you know  
3 there's a good chance that I cannot live out my  
4 entire life in Brooklyn because of what climate  
5 science is telling us, you know we have 11 years to  
6 move off fossil fuels and fracked gas is a part of  
7 that problem, you know as people said, this is 86 to  
8 106 times more potent than CO2 in the short term,  
9 that is all we have and if more than three percent  
10 leaks it is worse than coal and what independent  
11 researchers from Cornell are finding is between five  
12 and 12 percent leakage rates. The leakage rates that  
13 the government talks about those are all fossil fuel  
14 industry reported. When independent researchers go  
15 out there with FLIR cameras that show leaking methane  
16 we're seeing leaking from the well head, we're seeing  
17 leaking all along the pipeline route, we're seeing  
18 leaking from compressor stations and we also have  
19 extremely high leakage rates here in New York City.  
20 So, the only thing that Con Ed should be spending any  
21 money on as far as more fossil fuels is to fix some  
22 of these big leaks and we, we know that this... the  
23 technology exists, we can do this with geothermal, we  
24 can do this with air source heat pump and I'm  
25 personally disgusted to see that the city of New York

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2 is continuing to say that we need more gas, I mean  
3 that testimony just like broke my heart really to see  
4 that we don't have that political leadership that's  
5 going to take us where we need to go because New  
6 Yorkers are ready, you know I've been out on Rockaway  
7 all last summer and when I tell people hey, do you  
8 want to fracked gas pipeline out there I got 90  
9 petition signatures in an hour on the beach. New  
10 Yorkers are vehemently against fracking, we're  
11 vehemently against fracked gas and thank you for your  
12 leadership in, in pointing all this out, I appreciate  
13 it a lot.

14 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.  
15 Thank you.

16 JACKIE WEISBERG: Yes, what she said.

17 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: That was  
18 pretty quick.

19 JACKIE WEISBERG: I'm just going to cite  
20 some of the violations from the Williams Company over  
21 the past few years, but my testimony has all of them  
22 there.

23 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay.

24 JACKIE WEISBERG: 2018, the state of  
25 Mississippi levied a 40,000 dollar fine against

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2 Williams for violations of the Clean Air Act. 2017,  
3 the EPA fined Williams 35,000 dollars for unsafe  
4 discharges of pollutants into the air at the Fort  
5 Beeler Station at... in West Virginia. 2016, a Williams  
6 facility in Clarke County, Mississippi inadvertently  
7 released 3.2 million cubic feet of methane, it was  
8 cited for poor procedures by the PHMSA. 2016, PHMSA  
9 notified Williams that its procedures for replacing  
10 natural gas pipeline in Maryland violated pipeline  
11 safety standards. 2015, the PHMSA levied a civil  
12 penalty of 56,000 dollars on Williams for failing to  
13 adequately inspect transmission pipeline valves in  
14 New Jersey and New York City. 2015, the rupture of  
15 the Williams pipeline in Lycoming, Pennsylvania  
16 released approximately 96,379,900 cubic feet of  
17 methane. 2015, explosion and a fire at a natural gas  
18 plant owned by Williams in Gibson, Louisiana. Three  
19 workers were killed, and two others were seriously  
20 injured. 2014, explosion and fire at a Williams  
21 natural gas processing facility and major national  
22 pipeline hub in Opal, Wyoming, entire town evacuated.  
23 2014, a natural gas pipeline failed, leading to an  
24 explosion and fire at a Williams owned facility in  
25 Moundsville, West Virginia. 2014, pipeline explosion

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2 and fire at a Williams LNG facility in Plymouth,  
3 Washington. Five people were injured. 2013, an  
4 explosion and fire at the Williams Olefins, Inc plant  
5 in Geismar, Louisiana, killed two people and injured  
6 114. A US Chemical Safety Board investigation  
7 concluded that safety management at the plant was  
8 deficient for years prior to the explosion. 2013, an  
9 explosion at a Williams compressor station in  
10 Branchburg, New Jersey, injured 13 people, two  
11 seriously. The PHMSA investigations found Williams to  
12 have followed inadequate procedures in place for  
13 ensuring safety. 2013, a fire broke out in a Williams  
14 compressor station in Brooklyn Township,  
15 Pennsylvania. While Williams officials denied there  
16 was a fire, DEP officials said they found visual  
17 evidence that an explosion may have occurred. One ton  
18 of methane was released during the event. 2013,  
19 Williams natural gas plant leaked benzene into  
20 groundwater near Parachute, Colorado. Benzene is a  
21 carcinogen; in some place's benzene level was 36  
22 times greater than safe drinking level. 2012,  
23 personnel at a Williams owned compressor station in  
24 Windsor, New York, were venting methane gas during a  
25 lightning storm, this resulted in a big fire ball and

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2 the release of remaining gas into the atmosphere.  
3 2011, the massive explosion of a Williams Transco  
4 pipeline at Sweet Water, Alabama was attributed to  
5 pipeline corrosion, the blast was heard 30 miles away  
6 and ignited a fire that burned eight acres of pine  
7 forest. And lastly, a Williams Transco natural gas  
8 pipeline exploded in Appomattox, Virginia in  
9 September, five people were hospitalized and two new...  
10 nearby homes were destroyed and that's only a small  
11 portion of the many safety violations that are in my  
12 transcript.

13 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.

14 SARA GRONIM: Is this on? Hi, my name is  
15 Sara Gronim, I'm from 350 Brooklyn and I thank you  
16 very much for allowing me to speak today. I speak in  
17 support of the proposed New York City Council  
18 resolution calling upon New York State DEC to deny a  
19 water quality permit for the proposed NESE pipeline.  
20 There are many reasons as we've said today why this  
21 pipeline shouldn't be built, but a major reason is  
22 that we simply do not need it. The claims that  
23 Williams and National Grid make that we need this  
24 pipeline are false. I hold here a report written by  
25 Suzanne Mattie, a former DEC assistant commissioner

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2 on the claims that, that there is a need for this  
3 pipeline. She shows the facts and the figures that  
4 show that it is in fact not necessary. For example,  
5 just one of many, they, they... Williams and National  
6 Grid claim that more gas is needed because of the NYC  
7 mandate discontinuing number six heating oil but in  
8 fact all of those buildings with number six converted  
9 by the end of 2015. Another, Williams has indicated  
10 to NYCHA residents that their heating woes would be  
11 over if the NESE pipeline is built but we all know  
12 the problems in NYCHA buildings is that inadequate  
13 investment and management. NYCHA in fact converted to  
14 gas ten years ago, only two percent of NYCHA boilers  
15 still burn fuel oil. There's nothing in current  
16 circumstances in New York that call for a current...  
17 for an increase in gas supply. National Grid also  
18 argues that it needs new supplies of gas to support  
19 new construction in the future. It claims that  
20 demands for its gas will increase by ten percent over  
21 the next ten years. But this is not a fact, this is  
22 an aspiration, a business plan, right, the health of  
23 New York, indeed the future of the planet requires  
24 that we steadily decrease our use of fossil fuels.  
25 And we will do that. NYCHA... New York City... and New



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2 York City is making significant, indeed world  
3 leading, strides on energy efficiency. City Council  
4 legislation 1253, which we enthusiastically support,  
5 means a steep decline in energy use in big buildings,  
6 hopefully to be followed by similar programs in  
7 smaller ones. Solar and then in the very near future,  
8 offshore wind, will push down the demand for burning  
9 gas in power plants. NYSERDA is ramping up support  
10 for renewable heat sources that we've heard referred  
11 to. And all of this will indeed lead to a fall in  
12 demand for gas. Gas companies claim that so-called  
13 natural gas is a clean fuel, it is not. It is  
14 primarily methane as we've heard over and over again  
15 methane is 86 times more powerful a greenhouse gas  
16 than is CO2 in the first 20 years after its release.  
17 They claim that it is a bridge fuel to renewables. If  
18 so, this is a bridge we got on in the 90s and its  
19 time to head for the off ramp. We've got the  
20 technology to shift to renewables right now. We  
21 should not be building a pipeline to last another 50  
22 years and we very much appreciate your support in  
23 this matter. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.

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2 BRIDGET KLAPINSKI: Okay, is that  
3 adequate?

4 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Yep, you're  
5 good.

6 BRIDGET KLAPINSKI: Okay, good afternoon  
7 and thank you for this opportunity to address the  
8 Committee regarding the Williams Northeast Supply  
9 Enhancement pipeline. My name is Bridget Klapinski  
10 and I'm here as Co-Vice President of the Rockaway  
11 Beach Civic Association and a resident of the  
12 Rockaways to voice opposition to this pipeline. Our  
13 civic has followed this proposed project, examining  
14 issues of safety, impacts to marine life and water  
15 quality, who will profit, who will bear the risks and  
16 costs, and if the gas the pipeline is to transport is  
17 even needed at all. With all of this considered, at  
18 our monthly meeting in May 2018, the Rockaway Beach  
19 Civic voiced.. voted unanimously in opposition to the  
20 proposed Williams pipeline. In the Rockaways, we  
21 learn so much through direct observation of the  
22 water, the weather, wildlife, conditions on the  
23 shoreline and more. Seasons are signaled by the  
24 return of the ospreys to their nests around Jamaica  
25 Bay, hearing oystercatchers over the ocean, seeing

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2 horseshoe crabs spawning at high tide, seals resting  
3 on the beach, or humpback whales lunge feeding on  
4 menhaden, visible from the shore. I mention these  
5 because our waters are so alive, and many species  
6 rely on this healthy marine environment as habitat or  
7 feeding grounds along a migratory route and we rely  
8 on them. The species in the vicinity of the proposed  
9 pipeline are ecologically and commercially  
10 significant. They are also vulnerable to the activity  
11 and effects that this pipeline would bring; increased  
12 turbidity, disturbance of the sea floor, boat traffic  
13 and construction noise, representing a few. None of  
14 us are apart from this nature; we are dependent upon  
15 clean water and vital eco systems, economically and  
16 in countless other ways. The other environmental  
17 topic that must be considered as it pertains to this  
18 pipeline is climate change. I was in my home in  
19 Rockaway during superstorm Sandy and remained there  
20 in the weeks following to begin clean up, while  
21 trying to process the devastation. But in that  
22 aftermath, and presently, the rebuild is still  
23 incomplete and ongoing, we were glad to be with our  
24 neighbors doing what we could to help each other and  
25 the New York Community that's home. In the almost

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2 seven years since Sandy we've witnessed extreme  
3 weather events occurring with frequency around the  
4 country and around the world. We know climate change  
5 is a factor. And we know fossil fuels and greenhouse  
6 gases contribute to climate change, dramatically. The  
7 Williams pipeline would carry fracked gas, largely  
8 methane, moving New York away from goals to reduce  
9 emissions city and statewide. I'm not a climate  
10 scientist, but had the opportunity to hear one speak  
11 recently, and was so struck when Dr. Kate Marvel  
12 noted as the options in addressing this climate  
13 crisis quote, "you either need to take those gases  
14 out of the air, or not put them there", end quote.  
15 So, with that in mind, it seems New York has a  
16 sensible choice... can make a sensible choice by saying  
17 no to this pipeline, avoiding adding greenhouse gas  
18 into the atmosphere and taking crucial steps towards  
19 renewable energy. Wind, solar, geothermal, those  
20 resources and technologies exist. We have the  
21 information on climate change, we have the technology  
22 to employ sources of energy that are less damaging,  
23 and I am asking for your leadership to set us on a  
24 safer and more sustainable path by opposing this  
25 pipeline and continuing to place... protect the places

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2 we live, work, visit and entirely depend on. With  
3 that, thank you to the Committee and the New York  
4 City Council for your leadership.

5 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you, I  
6 want to... as... so we have Queens and we have Brooklyn  
7 here represented on the committee so as a lifelong  
8 Queens resident myself, you know and... yeah, I know  
9 that Kalman has lived in Brooklyn...

10 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: Lifelong...

11 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...lifelong,  
12 lifelong, we... you know I, I understand the, the  
13 plights of, of both our boroughs and, and the role  
14 that climate change is playing, you know we've seen  
15 models that place the Rockaways in sunny day flooding  
16 and uninhabitable within 50 years, we take that very  
17 seriously that's why we're working on the legislation  
18 that we are is to protect the communities that we all  
19 grew up in and to ensure their vitality into the next  
20 century in the face of what will be as, you know  
21 President Obama said the greatest challenge of our  
22 lifetimes. So, I appreciate you all being here today  
23 and lending your voice as we look to seek our way out  
24 of fossil fuels and get those emissions moving in the  
25 right directions. So, Lillian, right? Thank you for

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2 being here today, I am... again I will... I will say how  
3 impressed I am that... you know I, I, I will actually  
4 clap but you guys can all do this but I appreciate  
5 you being here today and, and lending your voice and  
6 I look forward to continuing our conversation on how  
7 we can better make our neighborhoods more resilient  
8 and more sustainable and you know as we move forward  
9 together. So, thank you very much for your time and  
10 your... all of your advocacy and all that you're doing  
11 in your neighborhoods, thank you very much. Alright,  
12 next up we have Vinnie Albanese from the Laborers, I  
13 have you listed twice, I know you really wanted to  
14 testify; Lisa Harrison, Alvero Alcocer; Jacqueline  
15 Sailer; Wendy Scher and Ken Schles and then the next  
16 panel after that so if you want to make sure that  
17 you're ready Rachel Rivera from New York Communities...

18 [off mic dialogue]

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay, so  
20 you're what... Ken... okay, so I'll put you on another  
21 panel then, okay.

22 [off mic dialogue]

23 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay.  
24 Alright, so the next panel it'll be... after this would  
25 be Rachel Rivera; Patrick Houston; Robert Wood,

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2 Nikita Scott; Jeremy Jones; Ariana Hernandez and  
3 Josette Grippo so if you guys can all make sure you  
4 stay in the room for the next panel. Alright, Vinnie  
5 good to see you. Make sure you push your button.

6 VINCENT ALBANESE: Mr. Chairman, thank  
7 you for having me here today to testify on behalf of  
8 the Laborers. My name is Vincent Albanese and I'm  
9 here to testify on behalf of New York State Laborers  
10 Organizing Fund. The New York State, State Laborers  
11 Fund are affiliates of the Laborers' International  
12 Union of North America with 25 Laborers' locals  
13 statewide, representing over 44,000 members. I'm here  
14 today to voice our full support for the approval of  
15 the Northeast Supply Enhancement project. While I'd  
16 like to make some comments on the environmental  
17 merits of this project that I believe are being  
18 ignored, I want to focus my remarks on a larger issue  
19 becoming all too commonplace in our energy policy  
20 debates. That issue is, the continued omission of the  
21 real impacts that some energy policy positions would  
22 actually have on working men and women. It is that  
23 issue specifically that our union can no longer stay  
24 silent on. Regarding the merits of this project, I  
25 would like to reference current New York City policy,

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2 I believe this was alluded to before in testimony by  
3 the Mayor's Office. According to the New York City  
4 clean heat initiative launched in 2012, the use of  
5 number six oil as a primary heating fuel was phased  
6 out in New York City on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015. To date, the  
7 city has achieved 99.8 percent compliance with the  
8 regulations eliminating the use of number six heating  
9 oil. That has only been possible through the... through  
10 natural gas conversions. The deadline for the phase  
11 out of all number four heating oil is January 1<sup>st</sup>,  
12 2030. The Laborers believe that this is sound public  
13 policy, but they will not be... it will not be possible  
14 to achieve the phase out of number four heating oil  
15 without the use of natural gas as a replacement. In  
16 fact, Northeast Supply Enhancement will displace the  
17 equivalent of 900,000 barrels of heating oil,  
18 reducing CO2 emissions by up to 200,000 tons in the  
19 first year. That makes this project wholly consistent  
20 with advancing the New York City clean heat, heat  
21 initiative, which is the city's current policy.  
22 National Grid is currently converting roughly 8,000  
23 customers per year from heating oil to natural gas.  
24 These conversions will cease without the additional  
25 capacity of NESE. A denial of this project would



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2 indefinitely perpetuate the continued use of the  
3 dirtiest burning heating sources and I reiterate, be  
4 in direct contradiction to New York City's current  
5 energy policy. I'm going to skip over some of my  
6 testimony, so I stay under time here. I just want to  
7 make this point, when the Laborers leadership makes a  
8 decision to support any project initiative that  
9 decision is not made in a vacuum. The only  
10 consideration is not whether it would simply create  
11 jobs for our members but how that project will impact  
12 our members' families, their quality of life, and if  
13 that project is consistent with our values and good  
14 public policy. On all of these measures, this project  
15 meets those criteria. Our members live and work in  
16 the communities serviced by this pipeline and the  
17 suggestion that we are simply ignoring environmental  
18 realities, which we believe are a net benefit, is  
19 both dismissive and condescending. We are not climate  
20 deniers and while we support and advocate for  
21 renewable projects all across this state, we believe  
22 that it is the only informed position for us to take  
23 to include natural gas as part of the energy mix to  
24 address our climate challenges. I would like to quote  
25 the Environmental Defense Fund's recent testimony

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2 given to the New York State PSC to best explain our  
3 position and they stated, our data suggest that  
4 opposing or preventing all new pipeline capacity  
5 expansion projects into New York is not an effective  
6 climate policy, particularly if that proposed  
7 capacity is right sized. I said let me repeat,  
8 opposing or preventing all pipeline capacity  
9 expansion into New York is not effective climate  
10 policy. Like I said I'm going to skip over here to  
11 close out...

12 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Uh-huh...

13 VINCENT ALBANESE: Today our voice is  
14 here to say, that the denial of this project will  
15 have irreversible and long-lasting negative impacts  
16 on our members. We hope today that our voice is loud  
17 enough and that some of our elected officials are  
18 finally listening. It is our sincere hope that in the  
19 future, this chamber will do that. The hard-working  
20 men and women of this city and our union deserve it.  
21 Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Vinnie look  
23 I, I have always been a strong supporter of labor,  
24 the hard working men and women of the Laborers that  
25 are members of union throughout New York City have

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2 always had my strong support and, you know whether  
3 it's been in the campaign or in other instances, you  
4 know we have always stood arm and arm with one  
5 another and our... I have not... I am no way... in no way  
6 accusing the Laborers of being climate deniers, I  
7 understand that you're taking a, a position that you  
8 believe is principled and I appreciate that, that..  
9 you know we want the, the men and women of the, the  
10 Laborers to have good union jobs for now and into the  
11 foreseeable future and we want you building renewable  
12 projects throughout the city of New York, we want  
13 you... we want the energy revolution when we bring  
14 renewable energy to New York City those solar panels,  
15 those, you know wind turbines we want you... we want it  
16 to be labor and we want it to be, you know union  
17 labor that does it so our quarrel today is with what  
18 we feel is, is, is a... you know a... locking us into  
19 technology that is, is, is not the future and I  
20 understand your position but I hope you understand  
21 ours as well... [cross-talk]

22 VINCENT ALBANESE: Absolutely...

23 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...and I think  
24 that, you know we... but we don't differ on is that the  
25 hard working... hard, hard working men and women of

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2 this city especially when it comes to, to... in union  
3 labor to perform an important service and we  
4 appreciate it and we will continue to appreciate  
5 union laborers, we know it's a window into the middle  
6 class but we are going to continue to disagree on  
7 this particular issue from all of the reasons I've  
8 laid out today that I don't think you want me to lay  
9 out all... [cross-talk]

10 VINCENT ALBANESE: No and I... and I... and,  
11 and Council Member... Chairman I, I very much  
12 appreciate you saying that and I wasn't accusing you  
13 directly of being a... accusing us of being climate  
14 deniers, I was just saying more broadly that's  
15 sometimes how we are in this debate interpreted and I  
16 was just clarifying that. I did leave out a lot of  
17 comments in here which I'm sure you'll read later..  
18 [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I, I, I can...  
20 I'll... all of the testimony... I mean I, I read all of  
21 it as you can see... [cross-talk]

22 VINCENT ALBANESE: And... but again I, I  
23 appreciate that and I would just clarify one thing,  
24 it, it is not the temporary jobs that we are  
25 concerned about in this, the temporary jobs of

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2 building the actual pipeline we're actually not going  
3 to be part of that, it's, it's... our biggest concern  
4 is the moratorium issues and what that would do to  
5 continued other developments so that, that is... that  
6 is our... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I mean I, I  
8 still believe to this day that it's a false choice,  
9 right, that they... we've heard this from the utilities  
10 before about the issues of moratoriums and how we're  
11 going... not going to have reliability, you know and  
12 affordability, you know our, our Con Edison bills  
13 continue to go up month after month after month, I'm  
14 paying more than I've ever paid before with a lack of  
15 a moratorium and you know they're continuing to tell  
16 me that its, its affordable when it's not so I, I  
17 have these concerns around these claims that the only  
18 way forward here is a moratorium or this pipeline, I  
19 think there's another way that we can find together  
20 that's renewable, that invests in our communities,  
21 that has good union labor, I think there's a... there's  
22 a third way here that if we all got together and  
23 figured it out I think that, that union labor has a  
24 large role to play in that and I hope to find those

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2 solutions where we can build that renewable New York  
3 City together.

4 VINCENT ALBANESE: We, we hope so too.

5 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Great, thank  
6 you... [cross-talk]

7 VINCENT ALBANESE: Thank you.

8 LISA HARRISON: Hi. The Williams... the  
9 Williams pipeline would bring fracked gas into New  
10 York emitting methane, radon and fracking toxins  
11 along the entire route from drilling to burning. It  
12 will require trench at least six feet deep and 23 and  
13 a half miles long under the Raritan Bay and lower New  
14 York Harbor. The trenching will release long buried  
15 industrial waste all along the proposed route  
16 including PCBs, DDT, arsenic, lead and mercury.  
17 Undoubtedly, the work will be sloppy, and the  
18 pipeline will not be monitored and will leak into the  
19 water undetected. Why do I say this, because Williams  
20 has a long history of violations over many years and  
21 many projects in many states? The same violations  
22 have been repeated over and over for at least a  
23 decade; failure to monitor, failure to follow safety  
24 procedures, we heard some examples of the results of  
25 this in, in the last group of speakers. If you get

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2 caught... if they get caught, they pay a fine and move  
3 on and government agencies continue to hand them more  
4 high-risk projects in spite of their dismal safety  
5 record. National Grid claims that we need the gas,  
6 but they have no data to support this claim. In fact,  
7 the data showed that city and state efficiency  
8 programs and renewable energy has lowered the need  
9 for gas. Continuing to develop renewables will reduce  
10 not increase the demand. Transitioning from oil and  
11 gas burning furnaces to geothermal or air source heat  
12 pumps will drastically reduce the demand for gas,  
13 Williams and National Grid will not like that but a  
14 drastic reduction in fossil fuel is exactly what we  
15 need and we should not be deceived or bullied by the  
16 misinformation and scare tactics. We've spent the  
17 past decade bickering about whether climate change is  
18 real and whether its caused by fossil fuels. We've  
19 wasted time with marketing slogans like clean coal  
20 and bridge fuel. Now we're out of time. We're in a  
21 climate crisis and the only way forward is to stop  
22 all fossil fuel development, increases efficiency and  
23 transition to 100 percent renewable energy.

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.

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2 ALVARO ALCOCER: Hello, my name is Alvaro  
3 Alcocer, I'm here as a New York City resident,  
4 business owner and an environmental advocate. I have  
5 spent a lot of time in the water surfing, kayaking,  
6 spending time with my family and friends in  
7 Rockaways, Jamaica Bay, Long island, New Jersey and  
8 I've seen whales, I've seen dolphins, I've seen a lot  
9 of marine life right... a, a couple of feet from me and  
10 it's incredible to experience that in a city like  
11 this and we should be proud and protect this. The  
12 ocean brings me joy, food and excitement, it's an  
13 area that is crucial. Marine life, healthy oceans are  
14 important for our existence. I have spent two and  
15 half years informing my fellow citizens and community  
16 members about the dangerous and unnecessary gas  
17 pipeline off our coast. I do not want to spend more  
18 of my free time telling people about the dangers of  
19 pipelines and global warming, I want to be able to  
20 tell them that we have come up with a solution and  
21 that together with authority and energy companies we  
22 are moving forward to clean energy. I am pleased to  
23 hear today that the committee opposes the NESE  
24 project and are willing to protect our waters. Con  
25 Edison and National Grid say they cannot meet the



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2 demand for fracked gas but do not mention real  
3 solutions to create cleaner, efficient and affordable  
4 energy. It is absurd to not have real goals as we  
5 heard today, to work on solutions to provide clean  
6 energy. All energy providers are responsible for  
7 global warming which increases our demand on energy  
8 for cooling and heating our communities. It is clear  
9 that climate change is real and somehow its  
10 profitable for these companies but the destruction of  
11 our planet and profit of a few is not okay and your  
12 actions are despicable. I am a hard worker and I know  
13 that jobs are important but there are jobs in clean  
14 energy, and we should move forward to that. Thank you  
15 for your time.

16 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you,  
17 next up.

18 WENDY SCHER: Hello there, I'm Wendy  
19 Scher. Thank you all to who are still sticking it out  
20 here, thank you for your patience. This, this is my  
21 last hard hat as a member of IBEW Local three. Until,  
22 until a couple of months ago I was also working in  
23 filthy construction sites, I worked alongside the  
24 laborers, the operating engineers and all the other  
25 building trades and.. you know and so that was my life

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2 until I came to realize that working to, to help our  
3 society in, in the broader... in the broader world was  
4 too important to ignore and, and it's a higher  
5 priority than serving our corporate clients. But I  
6 still... I still love our union movement. I love the  
7 solidarity its capable of, the, the accountability  
8 that comes from proper training from the high level  
9 of work standards and from the standards of safety  
10 that... it's, it's unparalleled. The job security, the,  
11 the unions long being the, the backbone of the middle  
12 class and how... and how vile it is to preserve that  
13 but most importantly the unions have the power to  
14 transform our economy. Historically unions have been  
15 a critical component of broad social movements from  
16 our basic labor laws, to security of a pension and  
17 social security and retirement to even low-income  
18 housing. However, most of our union movement... with  
19 most of our union movement continuing to loose power  
20 from the prevalence of online retail to the  
21 prevalence of unsafe, non-union construction our  
22 building trades new... need new strategies to improve  
23 their situation long term and the best way to do that  
24 is to make real efforts to build solidarity with  
25 effected communities. This means occasionally being

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2 willing to say no. There are some projects that will  
3 really improve our city and some that are just a bad  
4 idea. If we want to build true long-lasting  
5 solidarity to help build our union movement, we have  
6 to be willing to understand this distinction and  
7 stand with those who have real legitimate concerns  
8 about this proposed project. Your support will not be  
9 forgotten. When it comes to protecting our ecosystem  
10 and building a clean energy future, count me in.

11 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Alright,  
12 great. Well guys thank you all for your testimony and  
13 your points of view and all being here today to take  
14 time out of your schedule to testify, I appreciate  
15 everyone being here and being part of this  
16 conversation, thank you.

17 VINCENT ALBANESE: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Alright, so  
19 next up we have Rachel Rivera, New York Communities  
20 for Change; Patrick Houston, New York Communities for  
21 Change; Robert Wood, 350 Brooklyn; Nikita Scott,  
22 Surfrider Foundation; Jeremy Jones, Rockaway Beach  
23 Civic Association. How many is that so far? One, two,  
24 three, four, five, I can only take one more and then...

25 [off mic dialogue]

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2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And then Mr...  
3 go ahead... yep, go on that panel, yes. I already  
4 called you so... and that will be six. I'm going to  
5 call... I'm going to have to split up the panel, Laura  
6 Shindell from Food and Water Watch you're going to be  
7 up in the next panel; Ariana Hernandez; Josette  
8 Grippo, I'm going to have you guys on the next panel  
9 because there's too many seats up there right now.  
10 Alright, so... four, five...

11 [off mic dialogue]

12 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay, so  
13 then I will take Laura Shindell, you can come  
14 forward, Food and Water Watch. And... so we got how  
15 many up there, six already, we got... okay, so yeah...  
16 alright, let's begin here on the left.

17 RACHEL RIVERA: Good afternoon. My name  
18 is Rachel Rivera. I am a Board Member of New York  
19 Communities for Change. We are a community organize,  
20 organization which promotes economic, realist and  
21 climate justice. Thank you for holding this important  
22 hearing on the proposed Williams pipe, pipeline. The  
23 fracked gas deliveries by the pipeline would cause  
24 about eight million tons of climate pollution each  
25 year. This is... I'm sorry, that's from the report of

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2 the PSE health energy. New York cannot allow this to  
3 happen. Unless we slash climate pollution, New York  
4 City will heat up while slipping under water. The  
5 city will drown while we get hit by extreme weather  
6 such as hurricanes, heat waves, intense rains and  
7 flooding. It is not fair for corporations to continue  
8 to build out fossil fuel infrastructure. It directly  
9 threatens our futures as New York City residents. It  
10 directly threatens my... the families that we have  
11 beyond our borders like my family in the territory of  
12 Puerto Rico. To be clear, the climate crisis isn't  
13 the future, its here, it costs homes, money, health  
14 and lives. Me and my daughter Marisol, who is in the...  
15 who is in the hospital right now because of climate  
16 change, you can tell the kind... we could tell you the  
17 consequences firsthand. We were in the apartment in  
18 Brooklyn when hurricane Sandy hit. Marisol was  
19 sleeping at the time when I heard a cracking noise  
20 coming from my ceiling. As I take her out of the bed  
21 my ceiling collapsed onto her bed. I ran out... we ran  
22 out with nothing but what we had on our backs. We  
23 spent time in the emergency shelter where we... where,  
24 where we were homeless. My daughter still has  
25 nightmares, night terrors to this day and she has

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2 serious PSD due to what happened in those shelters  
3 and a lot of families went through it also. For an  
4 example, my daughter was taken from me by a resident  
5 in those homeless shelters that I had to fight for  
6 her to get brought back to me and she was gone for  
7 more than two hours and we couldn't find her and she  
8 suffers PSD to this day if she does not see me and  
9 it, it's raining really hard and... I'm sorry, she  
10 often becomes upset during extreme rainstorms as what  
11 happened last night. It's been... she's been in and out  
12 of the hospital since hurricane Sandy for PSD. During  
13 hurricane Maria, my mother and aunt's and family  
14 members in Puerto Rico were flooded out and we also  
15 lost a very close family friend. Sandy and Maria, of  
16 course were worse because of fossil fuel pollution  
17 from companies like Williams, Con Ed and National  
18 Grid. More climate disasters will be fossil fueled by  
19 Williams pipeline. While Williams and the National  
20 Grid would make millions of dollars off the project,  
21 me and many of other New Yorkers will pay the cost.  
22 I'm sorry, the rest of my testimony is there, I'm  
23 sorry, I have to go, please excuse me... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Miss Rivera,

25 I, I... we're praying for your daughter and always

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2 thank you for being here and testifying and, and our  
3 hearts are with you and your family, thank you very  
4 much...

5 RACHEL RIVERA: Thank you... [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: ...thank you  
7 very, very much for being here.

8 RACHEL RIVERA: Thank you...

9 PATRICK HOUSTON: Thank you for holding  
10 this testimony... or for holding this important hearing  
11 so that we can give testimony about our concerns on  
12 the Williams pipeline. My name is Patrick Houston and  
13 I'm an Organizer with New York Communities for  
14 Change. New York Communities for Change we're  
15 predominately made up of low-income communities and  
16 communities of color in the city and Long Island. So,  
17 as you all know here today as if it needs to be  
18 restated, we are facing a crisis of unprecedented  
19 proportions. The planet is warming, the seas are  
20 rising, it's getting hotter, and it's because we're  
21 burning fossil fuels. We have a closing window to  
22 avoid catastrophic, runaway climate change, 11 years  
23 according to UN scientists. New York City must reject  
24 fossil fuel infrastructure, the product... the product  
25 that is threatening the very existence of our city.

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2 Instead we must prioritize the health and wellbeing  
3 of the city's residents. All New Yorkers are  
4 threatened by the climate crisis. Communities of  
5 color and low-income communities are extremely  
6 vulnerable. After hurricane Sandy, 400 buildings in  
7 33 NYCHA developments were in some way damaged. Low  
8 income tenants, some of which are our members, lost  
9 power, medicine, food, pets, wages for missed hours  
10 at work. Hundreds of the people that I spoke with  
11 when canvassing in Red Fern houses in the Rockaways  
12 and in Carlton Manor in the Rockaways spoke about  
13 their concerns about this project right off of the  
14 coast from where they live. Many of our members in  
15 the Rockaways beyond the NYCHA developments were also  
16 badly impacted. Miss Phipps, a childcare provider  
17 from the Peninsula, had to relocate from her home  
18 after hurricane Sandy badly damaged it. She has spent  
19 the last five years fighting tooth and nail to cover  
20 the cost of the repairs while trying to maintain the  
21 cost of the mortgage payments. Her home has been  
22 marked for, for pre-foreclosure. The battle is not  
23 over, she just moved back in her home at the end of  
24 last year, 2018 and as it stands it's still unclear  
25 if she and her son will manage to make up the



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2 payments to get the home off of pre-foreclosure.

3 Another member of New York Communities for Change and

4 Rockaway resident, Ms. Bowman deals with flooding on

5 her block almost every time it rains. She has spent

6 hundreds of dollars on pumps to lessen the flooding

7 when it rains but still her basement floods. The

8 Williams pipeline if built will account for about 15

9 percent of New York City's greenhouse gas emissions.

10 The project is incompatible with the city's own

11 climate goals and as has been mentioned, locked..

12 locks us into decades more of, of dependence on this

13 fossil fuel. While Williams is guaranteed a solid

14 return, which falls around 14 percent, the Rockaways

15 are projected to be underwater by 2100 if we continue

16 business as usual. At that point it won't matter

17 whether or not Miss, Miss Phipps or her son were able

18 to pay off the mortgage on their home. New York City

19 is estimated to experience more than double the

20 number of extreme heat waves by the end of the

21 century or extreme heat days, that's 90 degrees or

22 above, we're about at 18 now that's projected to be

23 between 39 and 52 by 2050. Sea level rise is

24 projected to be at 22 inches by 2050 if we continue

25 business as usual. The Williams pipeline is business

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2 as usual. The city is planning to spend ten billion  
3 dollars to protect the financial district, much of  
4 which is responsible for the climate crisis. It is  
5 immoral and nonsensical to simultaneously endanger  
6 New Yorkers on Staten Island, Coney Island, Rockaway  
7 Island... Rockaway Peninsula by supporting the  
8 construction of the Williams project. We urge the  
9 City council to pass the resolution to reject the  
10 Williams pipeline and we stand behind your leadership  
11 Council Member Constantinides and the leadership of  
12 Corey Johnson at addressing the climate crisis and  
13 prioritizing every day New Yorkers over the fossil  
14 fuel industry.

15 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you,  
16 thank you Patrick and I... just for the record I... you  
17 know I strongly believe in a five borough resiliency  
18 plan not just spending ten million dollars in one  
19 borough but coming up with a long term plan for all  
20 five boroughs.

21 PATRICK HOUSTON: That's understood and  
22 that's clear in all the legislation that you've been  
23 pushing forward.

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Alright,  
25 next up.

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2 NIKITA SCOTT: My name is Nikita Scott  
3 and I'm the volunteer Chairperson of the Surfrider  
4 Foundation New York City Chapter. We are an  
5 environmental nonprofit organization of grassroots  
6 activists who advocate for the protection and  
7 enjoyment of our ocean, waves and beaches. We are 100  
8 percent volunteer run in New York City and are  
9 largely made up of surfers and recreational ocean  
10 users. I am here representing our 700 plus official  
11 members of the New York City Chapter and several  
12 hundred thousand supporters who dedicate their lives  
13 to protecting our ocean and coastline and I thank you  
14 for this opportunity to testify. As an environmental  
15 organization we are of course extremely concerned and  
16 our allies against the pipeline here today have done  
17 an incredible job at depicting the environmental  
18 threats of this pipeline. And what I hope to do today  
19 is to continue on from these points and paint a  
20 picture of what the environmental impact means for  
21 New Yorkers in a broader sense, how it will impact  
22 their life each and every day in ways that you might  
23 not immediately be considering. New York City's  
24 efforts to clean up and care for our waters has been  
25 successful so far but is a constant work in progress.

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2 We are now seeing a resurgence of wildlife and higher  
3 instances of safe water quality, all of which have  
4 enabled New Yorkers to enjoy their natural resources  
5 without risk to our health. Our waters and now so  
6 clean that they are the backbone of a booming and  
7 vibrant ocean economy. New York is the nation's third  
8 largest ocean economy, overall it generates 11  
9 billion in wages and 23 billion in GDP. Jeopardizing  
10 our water jeopardizes an estimated 300,000 jobs at  
11 the very least. The port of New York and New Jersey  
12 itself is the largest on the Atlantic seaboard,  
13 supporting 400,000 indirect jobs and 229,000 direct  
14 jobs generating 90 billion in combined personal and  
15 business income and 8.5 billion dollars in federal,  
16 state and local taxes. This is all because of our  
17 clean water. A study carried out by the Surfrider  
18 Foundation found that when New Yorkers visit, visit  
19 the beach in New York they spend on average 56  
20 dollars per person per visit including transport,  
21 food and shopping at local businesses. Considering  
22 that the Rockaways attracts millions of beach goers  
23 and ocean users each year, with five billion visitors  
24 recorded in the summer of 2018 alone, it's yet  
25 another indicator of the significance of clean water

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2 for the economic prosperity of our city. The  
3 environmental impacts of this proposed pipeline are  
4 not just going to impact the environment and the  
5 state of the waters, the quality of our water and the  
6 use of our coastline is so intrinsically linked to  
7 our economy that the environmental impacts are  
8 economic impacts for New Yorkers. As the City Council  
9 considers establishing an office of the waterfront, a  
10 coordinating body in the Mayor's Office to create and  
11 manage an overall vision for our 520 miles of  
12 waterfront, this further signifies the substantial  
13 investment in our waterfront by the city government  
14 and the critical role our waters play in the fabric  
15 of our city. Such investment and future planning must  
16 be matched by efforts to protect our waters that  
17 contribute so much to this city from an economic,  
18 social and cultural perspective. To secure the future  
19 of the blue economy of New York City and the health  
20 and safety of our waters, I urge you to stop the  
21 proposed Williams pipeline from threatening one of  
22 New York's most valuable assets, our water and our  
23 people.

24 ROBERT WOOD: Hi, my name is Robert Wood,  
25 I'm an Organizer with the Climate Justice Group 350

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2 Brooklyn and I'm here today to urge the Council to  
3 pass this resolution against the Williams pipeline  
4 and I thank you for holding this hearing. Others  
5 today have spoken about the fact that we don't need  
6 this pipeline, they've talked about converted boilers  
7 and recently added gas capacity and growth decoupled  
8 from demand and they've all been 100 percent right.  
9 What I want to talk about today instead is the  
10 complete insanity of having to have this conversation  
11 in the first place. It is not our job as citizens to  
12 have to prove the lack of need for contentious  
13 billion-dollar infrastructure projects in this city  
14 and it speaks to how accustomed we've become to a  
15 broken regulatory process that our doing so might  
16 seem strange. But this is where we are; forced to  
17 intervene because a profit seeking utility is  
18 capitalizing on a complete failure of state and  
19 federal regulators to do their jobs. FERC, the  
20 federal agency whose permit Williams must have to go  
21 forward, hasn't assessed the need for this pipeline  
22 at all. Instead, it has merely assumed the need for  
23 it based on National Grid's contractual promises to  
24 buy the pipeline's gas. This says something about gas  
25 markets, but it says nothing about local gas need. On

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2 the state level, the Public Service Commission seems  
3 to have similarly turned a blind eye, remaining  
4 silent on the question of need when it could have  
5 spoken up and said something to ease public tension.  
6 And as for state level permitting, despite the  
7 vaunted authority New York has to block pipelines, it  
8 has no legal ability to do so based on a lack of  
9 need. It has only the 401-water quality certification  
10 meant to protect fish. This is the regulatory blind  
11 spot that National Grid is taking advantage of to  
12 push more gas on New Yorkers and it is important that  
13 the Council see it as such. It is what is enabling a  
14 monopoly utility to say anything it wants, including  
15 making threats of a gas moratorium, moratorium to  
16 scare the public into approving destructive gas  
17 infrastructure that it doesn't need. And yet as  
18 further proof of how accustomed we've become to a  
19 backwards system, politicians have welcomed National  
20 Grid into their offices, studied their charts and  
21 graphs with furrowed brows and listened intently as  
22 the company that stands to profit handsomely off of  
23 this pipeline makes the sole case that it is needed.  
24 This is taking advice from the fox about the  
25 henhouse. Lest it be forgotten, National Grid is a

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2 private corporation beholden to shareholders and not  
3 the public good. That is why, when asked to provide  
4 us with information on market need, they responded  
5 that it was proprietary information. But the truth is  
6 that the information that it has is information they  
7 wouldn't want us to see. We need you, the City  
8 Council, to step in and stand up for New Yorkers  
9 where the regulatory apparatus has failed, we need  
10 you to be suspicious of the fact that no actual data  
11 beyond tired PR points has actually been presented by  
12 National Grid to make its case and certainly no data  
13 that responds to our detailed 30 page report refuting  
14 its claims. We need you to be bold and pass a  
15 resolution against this pipeline. In a few days,  
16 you'll vote on legislation that would set a new world  
17 standard in regulating emissions from buildings and  
18 it would only be fitting for you to also address the  
19 gas that causes those emissions in the first place.  
20 Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.

22 JEREMY JONES: Hi, my name is Jeremy  
23 Jones and I'm here today to express my great concern  
24 and staunch opposition to the proposed Williams NESE  
25 pipeline. As the Co-Vice President of the Rockaway



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2 Beach Civic Association, I'd like to state for the  
3 record that our group unanimously voted against the  
4 Williams pipeline and have been working with our  
5 partner groups to build opposition to it and it's  
6 nice to see many of you here. As an avid water  
7 person, I spend a great deal of time swimming,  
8 surfing, paddling and fishing in the waters around  
9 Rockaway beach where I've been a resident and  
10 homeowner for the last 15 years. In that time, I've  
11 witnessed the incredible population growth of aquatic  
12 mammals, fish and other sea life. Barely a day will  
13 go by in the summer when you won't see a pod of  
14 dolphins swimming near shore. We often see whales of  
15 different varieties breaching just offshore of our  
16 beaches. This is in doubt because our waters are  
17 getting cleaner than they have been in the last 100  
18 years. There has also been a dramatic increase in  
19 Atlantic Menhaden, which is a primary food source for  
20 numerous species of sea life. In addition to that  
21 there have also been great resurgence of the benthic  
22 habitat below the waves too. And despite the DEC  
23 raising the impact on the benthic habitat and its  
24 notice of denial, Williams failed to adequately  
25 address these concerns and in fact has produced

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2 absolutely no mitigation strategy to preserve the  
3 existing population in New York Harbor. My wife and I  
4 lost our home as a result of the national... natural  
5 disaster known as superstorm Sandy. While we have  
6 since rebuilt and things are getting back to normal  
7 sort of, we are now faced with a potential manmade  
8 disaster that is entirely avoidable. I urge the  
9 members of this body to unite in opposition to the  
10 proposed pipeline and... as Williams' safety record has  
11 been less than stellar and by this, I'm being  
12 generous. Williams has also stated that this pipeline  
13 is needed to bring natural gas to NYCHA residents who  
14 need it due to a lack of heat and hot water in many  
15 areas of the city. The problems that exist in NYCHA  
16 have nothing to do with gas supply. The lack of new  
17 boilers, mechanical systems and overall mismanagement  
18 are the problems in this case. Williams has offered  
19 no solutions to these issues, and to use this issue  
20 to coerce support is disingenuous at best and  
21 shameful at worst. The impact of a leak or explosion  
22 would be a catastrophic blow to the New York City's  
23 coastal communities still recovering from Sandy. We  
24 are still working with various state and federal  
25 agencies to build a more resilient coastline and

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2 there is no need to use 20<sup>th</sup> century infrastructure  
3 to solve a 21<sup>st</sup> century problem. As New York State  
4 works on becoming a leader in renewable energy  
5 sources, such as wind, solar, and geothermal. In  
6 fact, New York has banned the process of fracking in  
7 our state. Why on earth would we allow the residents  
8 of Pennsylvania to suffer the adverse effects of gas  
9 extraction and the multitude of environmental  
10 consequences that accompany it? Why on earth would we  
11 allow our neighbors in New Jersey to deal with the  
12 proven hazard of housing transfer stations? It seems  
13 crazy to me that we would think it's okay to allow  
14 fracked gas into our state while we ourselves won't  
15 permit its extraction here. In closing, I urge the  
16 City Council to stand with the residents of the  
17 Rockaways and the rest of New York City to protect  
18 our environment and to reject any new investments in  
19 fossil fuel economy. We are really lucky to live  
20 here, and we want to see this community continue to  
21 thrive for many years to come. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.

23 KEN SCHLES: Hello, I want to thank you  
24 for, for allowing me to speak and I just want to  
25 reiterate that I'm... as, as so many people here I'm,

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2 I'm, I'm not a scientist but, but we know from all  
3 the scientific data and all the testimony that we've  
4 heard here how we, we don't need another pipeline.  
5 I'm, I'm here as a... as a New York City Brownstone  
6 owner. I just want to talk about the, the, the  
7 passive aggressive tactics by the utility companies  
8 and how they, they are not helping us to get past the  
9 climate crisis, they put utility users in positions  
10 where they are forced to continue using gas this  
11 winter. A day before the, the polar vortex hit New  
12 York City National Grid came to my house inspecting  
13 because they're, they're switching over to an  
14 automated system and they came and inspected my house  
15 and found a gas leak and a day before the  
16 temperatures dropped to zero degrees in New York City  
17 I was left without heat or hot water in my brownstone  
18 and forced to make a decision on, on how I would move  
19 forward. I've always wanted to, to try and transition  
20 towards sustainable energy use in my house, I've had  
21 solar power for 11 years in my brownstone but I find  
22 there's been a real lack, the, the, the market forces  
23 are not there, they're not... the market forces that,  
24 that the utility companies have a monopoly on are,  
25 are structured so that they reinforce use of their

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2 product. I find that its, its... it was incredibly  
3 difficult for me to transition when I was forced in  
4 position where I had no heat or hot water in the  
5 depths of the winter, there were no choices for me  
6 out there and I just want to sort of add that to the  
7 mix. I wasn't planning to testify today, I have no  
8 written testimony but after hearing representatives  
9 from, from the fossil fuel industries I was really  
10 pissed off and just had to say I was given no  
11 choices, I don't... and, and I totally agree with you,  
12 I don't think it should be A or B, there should be a  
13 C and I'm really pissed off that there isn't that  
14 option as a homeowner and I was forced to spend tens  
15 of thousands of dollars to re-pipe my house when I  
16 really didn't want to.

17 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Well I think  
18 its incumbent upon us as a city to find that third  
19 way, right, I think we need to start this  
20 conversation that's why I appreciate each and every  
21 one of you testifying here today, that we're all  
22 searching for that third way that's a renewable New  
23 York City, right, that has us in a place where we're  
24 bringing renewable energy into our city that creates  
25 good jobs, that creates a healthier city, that has a

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2 resilient and a green city so that's why I appreciate  
3 all of you being here today to be part of that  
4 conversation and you know I'm not taking the  
5 utilities, you know testimony at face value, I have  
6 not seen that one number in this testimony, there  
7 wasn't any... no data in this testimony, there was no  
8 substantiation of their claims here today, there's  
9 just what they are, their, their, their statements  
10 from their point of view without data to back that  
11 up. So, I've asked them for that and I look forward  
12 to seeing that real hard data because, you know  
13 numbers don't lie, right, so I, I want to see real  
14 numbers and real data and not a continued claim  
15 because we've heard the... as I've said before we've  
16 heard these claims over and over and over again about  
17 reliability, about affordability and all that  
18 continues to do is lock us into infrastructure that  
19 we keep promising it's, it's... we're going to move in  
20 a different direction but we haven't, we have to  
21 start moving in a better direction so I appreciate  
22 the advocacy of residents like yourself to do that  
23 work so, I thank you very much.

24 KEN SCHLES: Thank you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Our last  
3 panel so it's a little bit of a, a... it's Laura  
4 Shindell from Food and Water Watch; Ariana Hernandez  
5 from NYPIRG; Barbara Hertel, it doesn't say if  
6 there's a group; Ira Macner, I'm... again apologize if  
7 I pronounce anyone's name wrong; Carl Johnson from  
8 Local One and Darlene Allette from NYCHA. Alright, so  
9 I started on the left last time so I'm going to go to  
10 the right this time and.. well that's a really thick  
11 book, alright.

12 CARL JOHNSON: Good afternoon Speaker  
13 Constantinides.. I'm sorry, Chairman Constantinides,  
14 it's my pleasure to be here.. [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Well don't  
16 get in trouble with the Speaker now.

17 CARL JOHNSON: Absolutely. My name is  
18 Carl Johnson, I am a business agent with Plumbers  
19 Local Union Number One, the plumbers of New York  
20 City.

21 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Uh-huh...

22 CARL JOHNSON: And I'm here to submit my  
23 testimony in support of the Williams pipeline. As one  
24 of the oldest trade unions in the nation our members  
25 have more.. for more than 100 years developed the

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2 skills and met the challenges created by new  
3 technologies and techniques. Our nearly 6,000 members  
4 today are prepared to meet any and all new  
5 challenges. This doesn't mean we don't continue to  
6 maximize our existing technology. We would all like  
7 to live in a world where we can bring warmth and  
8 light into our homes by harnessing the sun and the  
9 wind, we know that days coming. Unfortunately, it  
10 isn't coming next week. We must not only meet the  
11 existing demands; we must also meet the new demands  
12 of expansion and development. We've come a long way  
13 from burning trees and coals. Over the course of the  
14 last century we've nearly eliminated the need for  
15 coal and thanks to natural gas we have dramatically  
16 reduced the use of oil. From house to house and block  
17 to block... [coughs] excuse me, landlords and  
18 homeowners have weaned themselves away from number  
19 two and number four oil and invested in cleaner, more  
20 efficient burners, burners which are fueled by  
21 natural gas. As a result, we have reduced greenhouse,  
22 house gases, improved our air quality and improved  
23 the quality of life for everyone. These positive  
24 developments only increased the demand throughout the  
25 region, it's a demand that can no longer be met with



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2 the existing infrastructure. Con Ed which supplies  
3 gas into Westchester has already announced they can  
4 no longer meet the demand and stopped adding new  
5 customers. We're here today because National Grid,  
6 which supplies natural gas to Staten Island,  
7 Brooklyn, Queens and parts of Long Island cannot meet  
8 the demands east of the Rockaways without a new  
9 pipeline. The Williams pipeline is the lifeline for  
10 homeowners and businesses large and small, it is the  
11 fuel for expansion and job creation throughout our  
12 region. There are currently some 300 billion dollars  
13 of development projects on the drawing board for the  
14 region. Think of the thousands of jobs which would be  
15 created in the planning, construction and beyond.  
16 Today we'll hear that there are better, cleaner, more  
17 efficient ways to power and heat our homes. We hear  
18 about wind, it sounds great, where do we put these  
19 giant windmills? Where is there open land or do we  
20 put them in the ocean? What's the impact that it will  
21 have on ocean life? If not wind, then maybe its the  
22 sun. We can take a look at solar power. How many  
23 solar panels can we place on the roof to heat and  
24 power our homes? Where is the land for solar panel  
25 farms? We can look at greenhouse energy. Where are we

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2 going to dig a practical geothermal well in the city  
3 of New York? Yes, we all want a clean environment and  
4 perhaps in 30 or 40 years these technologies will  
5 certainly be the answer, right now unfortunately  
6 these technologies are in their infancy. The families  
7 and businesses on Long Island need to meet these  
8 energy needs today and for that they'll need to  
9 access to natural gas. To do that we need to provide  
10 the Williams pipeline. Chairman thank you for your  
11 time and committee members.

12 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Next.

13 ARIANA HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Good  
14 afternoon. My name is Ariana Hernandez, I'm a student  
15 with NYPIRG at the college of Staten Island. I'd like  
16 to thank you all for your time to listen and allowing  
17 me to testify on behalf of NYPIRG. If New York  
18 expands fossil fuel infrastructure like the Northeast  
19 Supply Enhancement project it will lock us into  
20 decades of, of greenhouse gas pollution. The methane  
21 pollution will further ignite climate change,  
22 devastate our public health and the proposal will,  
23 will jeopardize the long-term local economy and the  
24 safety of residents. This is an opportunity to  
25 displace greenhouse gas emissions on Long Island and

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2 in New York City. Transcontinental gas pipeline  
3 company's proposal to expand fossil fuel  
4 infrastructure needs to be rejected. According to 4-  
5 366 of the draft environmental impact statements that  
6 federal energy regulatory commission submitted on  
7 NESE last year, construction and operation emissions  
8 from the NESE project would increase the atmospheric  
9 concentration of GHGs in combination with past and  
10 future emissions from all other sources and  
11 contribute incrementally to future climate change  
12 impacts. The New York City Council should acknowledge  
13 this and use it as reasoning alone to oppose NESE.  
14 The DEIS goes on to say that aside from being a  
15 contributor to climate change, the environmental  
16 impacts would be minimal. Although this is doubtful,  
17 climate change is already wreaking havoc on our  
18 planet and expanding the sources of energy that are  
19 leading to global catastrophe is unwise both the  
20 long-term economic impacts of Long Island and New  
21 York City residents and more importantly, the fate of  
22 humanity. Methane is a much more potent greenhouse  
23 gas than carbon dioxide. The methane that is emitted  
24 and leaks through the whole life cycle of natural gas  
25 extraction, distribution and burning will exacerbate

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2 the global climate crisis, at a time when we must  
3 fully commit to keeping fossil fuels in the ground  
4 and transition to, towards 100 percent renewable  
5 energy. Unfortunately, progress with the state's  
6 energy efficiency measures and renewable energy  
7 production has stagnated, while new construction and  
8 expansion of fossil fuel-based energy sources  
9 continues. We recommend that any and all new  
10 development proposals for Long Island and the five  
11 boroughs includes plans for generating fossil fuel  
12 free energy. Any new gas deal does not fall in line  
13 with the ideal green new deal. Climate change is the  
14 biggest threat to humanity and expanding fossil fuel  
15 infrastructure only contributes to that threat. We  
16 need to get New York off of fossil fuels and move to  
17 a 100 percent clean, green renewable energy future.  
18 NYPIRG strongly supports the New York City Council in  
19 doing everything in their power to prevent NESE.  
20 National Grid needs to meet the asserted energy needs  
21 of Long Island and New York City through efficiency  
22 measures, demand management, electrification and  
23 renewable energy production. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And thank  
25 you, I, I remember being a member of NYPIRG, you know

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2 more years than I want to count when I was in Queens  
3 College myself so thank you for being here today and,  
4 and being a strong advocate.

5 ARIANA HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

6 IRA MACNER: Hello, my name is Ira and  
7 I'm a New Yorker but more important I am an earthling  
8 and like all of us here, I rely on earth to support  
9 my life. I speak today of my climate concerns.

10 Natural gas pipelines are hazardous and far more  
11 expensive than, for instance, solar power. We have  
12 much cheaper and sustainable options to meet our  
13 energy needs. Use of solar power alone could reduce  
14 and ultimately eliminate our need for natural gas.

15 For more information on practical, economic  
16 solutions, I recommend Paul Hawken's book entitled  
17 Drawdown and I gave you a copy. Natural gas produces  
18 carbon dioxide when burned. Carbon dioxide traps  
19 heat. With more heat, water evaporation increases.

20 This leads to devastating and unpredictable weather  
21 patterns, ocean rising, flooding, animal extinction,  
22 plant extinction, rainstorms, droughts and heat  
23 waves. Carbon dioxide is acidifying our oceans. Too  
24 much acidity will literally kill the marine life.

25 Water in near urban areas such as ours already

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2 possess levels of CO2. We care about the preservation  
3 of plants and wildlife because we need biodiversity  
4 to survive. Biodiversity is already threatened  
5 because of habitat conversion, over exploitation of  
6 natural resources and mass extinction. To further  
7 harm plants and animals with construction vehicles,  
8 damaging or fatal underwater construction noise, the  
9 placement of polyurethane foam which will ultimately  
10 shred, the dredging of heavy metals from the ocean  
11 floor, the spewing of drilling fluids considered  
12 harmful to humans, including bentonite clay which can  
13 suffocate fish by clogging their gills, and over  
14 three million gallons of suctioned water which will  
15 kill fish captured in its vortex, are not acceptable.  
16 To increase natural gas when we should be eliminating  
17 fossil fuels is not acceptable. To jeopardize the  
18 safety of our already vulnerable water with more  
19 volatile pipelines is not acceptable. Those in charge  
20 of this endeavor and the officials who approve this  
21 project are addled and deranged by greed. It is up to  
22 us, ordinary people and employees working under these  
23 kleptocrats and their enablers, to block, once and  
24 for all, the onslaught of these myopic, mercenary and  
25 destructive decisions. Thank you so much for your

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2 time and thank you for listening and for all of your  
3 efforts and thank you earth for providing us all with  
4 bodies, food, water and air to sustain our lives, may  
5 we be worthy of your gifts.

6 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Hi, how are  
7 you? Next up.

8 BARBARA HERTEL: Hi... [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Make sure  
10 you push the button, let everybody hear you.

11 BARBARA HERTEL: Oh, okay there we go..

12 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Alright,  
13 thank you..

14 BARBARA HERTEL: Hi, I'm Barbara, I live  
15 in Southside Williamsburg and I thank you for having  
16 this hearing let us... letting us speak. I also... I  
17 appreciate that this... I appreciate this resolution  
18 that is coming forth. Before I came here, I had this...  
19 I have this medallion it's clean air, land, water; I  
20 got this in the 70s, the... this had broken and I fixed  
21 it so I could wear today because we've all been  
22 fighting this for a long time getting clean air and  
23 water and so this is so perfect that we are having  
24 this hearing. I'm getting tired of all this and I'm  
25 hoping in ten years we don't have to do this anymore.

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2 So, with the green new deal it's, it's... it just does,  
3 doesn't work at all, it's fossil fuels, we don't want  
4 that. Con Ed should see this as an opportunity to  
5 bring in fossil... to bring in renewable energy, to do  
6 geothermal in new buildings, to make those new  
7 buildings in Rochester... in, in Westchester, I wish it  
8 was Rochester too but to bring... to have them do that  
9 instead, have them put a... you know a, a windmill on  
10 their... on their roof, you know solar panels on their  
11 roofs, do a geothermal thing, you know in the  
12 building before they build it so that they can do the  
13 piping and the plumbers can do the piping for the  
14 geothermal things, they can do the piping for the...  
15 for the solar or heat and for everything else that we  
16 need. I plan it... I tried to do it... I... there are  
17 people that are willing to do it, I looked into  
18 geothermal where I live but they couldn't get the  
19 equipment in to build it so I couldn't have it but  
20 there's lots of land, empty land where they're  
21 building these big buildings why can't they do it  
22 there? So, and I think National Grid should become a,  
23 a donation to different companies to build things  
24 like build parks in New York City. I want a park over  
25 the BQE, why can't they give their billion dollars



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2 there and we can build this beautiful park over the  
3 BQE in Southside Williamsburg, they could invest in  
4 people having clean air, clean water and then one  
5 more thing I had, well... and that's just... and then... oh  
6 and Con Ed too, you know as... I already said that, so  
7 I think I'm done. Thank you so much.

8 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you,  
9 thank you Barbara.

10 LAURA SHINDELL: Thank you very much...  
11 [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Make sure  
13 you hit your button, alright, there you go.

14 LAURA SHINDELL: Thank you very much for  
15 holding this hearing today. My name is Laura  
16 Shindell, I'm an Organizer with Food and Water Watch,  
17 a national nonprofit advocacy organization with over  
18 120,000 supporters in New York. We urge you to pass a  
19 resolution calling on the New York State Department  
20 of Environmental Conservation to deny the water  
21 quality certificate for the Williams NESE pipeline.  
22 I've prepared remarks but I do just first want to say  
23 to our union brothers and sisters, our city has many  
24 drinking water infrastructure woes, we would love to  
25 build more water pipelines rather than gas pipelines.

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2 But I... my remarks today will focus on the water  
3 quality and marine life impacts of the NESE pipeline.

4 If built the NESE project would be a giant leap

5 backwards for New Yorkers in the state's water

6 resources. Any pipeline that is primarily built

7 through water resources will result in negative

8 impacts to the water body especially during

9 construction phase. Water resources need to be

10 protected and the public's best interest should be

11 put before the interest of corporations. Water

12 belongs to the public and should be protected and

13 preserved for the public. overall a whopping 26 on

14 shore water bodies would be affected by the pipeline,

15 the pipeline would be constructed below the sea floor

16 where it would dredge up toxic sediment that lays

17 dormant from the industrial era. These toxic

18 sediments include PCBs, arsenic, and lead and would

19 disrupt 14,000 acres of aquamarine habitats including

20 clams, crabs, fish and more. FERCs environmental

21 impact statement tries to justify construction in the

22 Raritan Bay by stating that the waters are already

23 subjected to pollutants. If anything, this highlights

24 the exact reason why the pipeline must not be

25 constructed. Environmental regulators should make

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2 decisions that enhance water quality rather than  
3 subjecting waters to further degradation.

4 Construction would also disrupt fishing, boating and  
5 other recreational and commercial activities and  
6 disseminate disruptive noise pollution to wildlife.

7 Noise pollution would be harmful to aquatic life  
8 including various seal species, dolphins, whales and  
9 harbor porpoise. Endangered species including the

10 right whale, fin whale and Atlantic sturgeon would

11 also be impacted. The organisms living on or near the

12 sea floor would be faced with sediment disturbance,

13 increased turbidity and noise leading to the marine

14 life being injured, disturbed or displaced during

15 construction or death. Buildings pipelines threatens

16 human health, wildlife habitats and the environment

17 by compromising soil quality, impacting vegetation,

18 releasing air pollutants and contaminating surface

19 waters in aquifers. The risks to New York's waters,

20 Raritan Bay and its ecosystems are greater than the

21 purported benefits of the NESE project. The Williams

22 pipeline would threaten Raritan Bay, the climate and

23 communities surrounding the pipeline. We ask that New

24 York City Council calls on the DEC to deny the 401-

25 sea water quality certificate that Williams needs for

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2 construction of the pipeline. Water belongs to the  
3 public and should be protected and preserved for the  
4 public. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you,  
6 thank you all, I, I appreciate all of your testimony  
7 here today and I appreciate all of the different  
8 points of view and look at, at the end of the day I  
9 think we're having several different conversations at  
10 once, right, we're having a conversation about what's  
11 right for our communities and our environment, we're  
12 having a conversation on how we build good union jobs  
13 into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and, and renewable  
14 infrastructure and I think that is an important part  
15 of a component as we... and we need to seek out that  
16 third way today. I've said that before already, I'm  
17 going to say it again, it cannot be a choice between  
18 a moratorium and this pipeline which locks us into  
19 fossil fuel infrastructure for the next 50 years, it,  
20 it... there, there is a third way here that we find  
21 where we can build a renewable New York City and  
22 bring renewable energy here to our city and make sure  
23 its environmental sound, that it is protective of our  
24 natural resources in, including Jamaica Bay and  
25 around the Rockaways where, you know we're seeing

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2 wildlife come back that has not been there for  
3 decades, we can do all that, we can make those  
4 investments that are investments in the future of our  
5 neighborhoods, they're investments against the  
6 impacts of climate change, they're resilient, we can  
7 do that, that is good for all of us and still create  
8 good union jobs and make sure that the men and women  
9 in our... that do such a great service to our community  
10 and are the backbone of middle class can continue to  
11 be that backbone of the middle class, we can do all  
12 of that but not... us to threats from utility  
13 companies. We can do all that simultaneously and I  
14 believe that we can because we are invested in doing  
15 that. So, I, I thank you all for being here today and  
16 being part of this conversation and I look forward to  
17 continuing to work with each and every one of you.

18 LAURA SHINDELL: Thank you so much for  
19 your leadership.

20 BARBARA HERTEL: Can we clap now?

21 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Yeah, well  
22 let me actually... wait, wait, wait I got to do the,  
23 the... I got to bang the gavel, you know bang the gavel  
24 and then we can... then we can... then we can clap so I  
25 want to make sure I thank our Speaker, Corey Johnson

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2 and my Co-sponsor on this piece of legislation,  
3 Donovan Richards; our Staff Attorney, Samara  
4 Swanston, who was a Rockstar in her own right; Nadia  
5 Johnson, our Policy Analyst; Ricky Chawa [sp?] our  
6 other Policy Analyst who is also wonderful and  
7 amazing and John Seltzer our Financial Analyst, we  
8 have a really great team on this committee; my  
9 Legislative Counsel Nick Widzowski as well and with  
10 that I will gavel this... and of course the Sergeant at  
11 Arms who helped keep... do all this, thank you and  
12 welcome Keith to the team, glad to have you here sir  
13 and with that I will gavel this Committee hearing of  
14 the Environmental Protection Committee closed. Now we  
15 can clap.

16 [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date

May 18, 2019