

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION AND WATERFRONTS

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April 15, 2026
Start: 11:05 a.m.
Recess: 11:12 a.m.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - 8TH FLOOR - HEARING
ROOM 2

B E F O R E: James F. Gennaro, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Harvey D. Epstein
Kamillah M. Hanks
Lincoln Restler
Justin E. Sanchez

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2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Mic check, mic check for the
3 vote for the Committee on Environmental Protection
4 and Waterfronts. Today's date is April 15, 2026,
5 recorded by Kim Smith in Hearing Room 2.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning, and
6 welcome to today's New York City Council vote for the
7 Committee on Environmental Protection and
8 Waterfronts.

9 At this time, I'd like to remind everyone
10 to silence all electronic devices.

11 Also, at this point and going forward, no
12 one is to approach the dais.

12 Chair, we're ready to begin.

13 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Thank you. I'm
14 silencing my phone now that you just mentioned that.

14 [GAVEL] Good morning. I'm Council Member
15 Jim Gennaro, Chair of the Committee on Environmental
16 Protection and Waterfronts. Today, we will vote on
17 Intro. 730-B sponsored by myself in relation to
18 requiring water quality testing and the posting of
19 water quality testing results online, and Resolution
20 351 sponsored by Council Member Epstein to my right
21 which would recognize the contributions that the
federal Endangered Species Act to the natural

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2 environment of New York City. The Committee first
3 heard these bills on April 6th of this year.

4 First, a few words about the Council
5 Member Epstein's Resolution. He's sitting right here,
6 but I'm saying it. We had this discussion. Resolution
7 351 would acknowledge the important efforts of the
8 Endangered Species Act towards supporting New York
9 City's endangered and threatened species including
10 the American burying beetle, the bog turtle, multiple
11 whale species, and several shore bird species. These
12 species contribute to New York City's diverse and
13 beautiful natural environment, and I thank Council
14 Member Epstein for sponsoring this important
15 resolution.

16 Now, to Intro 730-B. While New York
17 Harbor is cleaner than it has been in 100 years, the
18 realities of climate change pose a continual risk to
19 New York City's ecosystems and residents. More
20 frequent and severe flooding increases exposure to
21 contaminants from combined sewer overflow events,
what we call CSO events, not going to get into a
whole discussion of what those are but a lot of
people know what they are and it's problematic so,
and rising temperatures facilitate the growth and

2 spread of harmful bacterial pathogens. Fortunately,
3 the City already conducts some water quality testing.
4 The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene tests
5 with various bacteria, floatable debris, and other
6 harmful waste around beaches mainly, and the
7 Department of Environmental Protection tests for
8 bacteria, chlorophyll A according to the statement --
9 okay, help me out here -- Secchi transparency, that's
10 a contaminant, and dissolve oxygen and nitrogen to
11 track long-term trends and aquatic ecosystem health.
12 However, one notable gap, and that's what this bill
13 is about, filling some testing gaps, in the City's
14 existing testing is near shore testing. That's where
15 the rubber meets the road because that's where
16 people, you know, who use, you know, secondary uses
17 of water bodies like, you know, kayaking and that
18 kind of thing, you know, would be exposed. Near
19 shore testing. This is important because near shore
20 sites where boaters and other recreational users are
21 most likely come into contact with water that would
be contaminated by combined sewer overflows. This
bill would fill that gap by acquiring DEP to conduct
water quality testing at no fewer than 15 sites
across the city that reflect the real uses and

2 conditions of the city's water bodies. The 15 sites
3 must be in areas that are 1) used for secondary
4 contact recreation like boating and fishing, 2)
5 within 1,000 feet of a combined sewer overflow, and
6 3) within 5 to 20 feet of the water body shore or
7 other access point. DEP would be required to test
8 monthly between November and April and weekly between
9 May and October. The bill would require DEP to post
10 the testing results online to ensure that members of
11 the public have access to this critical environmental
12 and health data and can make informed decisions about
13 how to enjoy New York City waterways without
14 compromising their health.

15 I would like to thank the Committee
16 Staff, Legislative Counsels Natasha Bynum right here
17 to my right, and Sierra Townsend; Senior Policy
18 Analyst Ricky Chawla who was a Council Member for a
19 couple of minutes, but he's now back as Policy
20 Analyst; Financial Analyst Tanveer Singh; and my
21 Legislative Director, Josh Gachette for all their
work on these bills.

I would also like to recognize the
following Council Members who have joined us. We've
got a full house here. We got Council Member Sanchez,

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2 Epstein, Hanks, Restler. We should take a class
3 picture I think and, you know, have a, you know, do
4 sort of like an acapella, you know, EPW Committee
5 fight song, which we -- do you guys know the
6 Committee fight song or whatever? I think Lincoln
7 knows because he's always fighting. So, it's just
8 like, fighting in a good way, fighting for the truth,
9 truth, justice in the American way, that's Lincoln's
10 motto and so, sure, yeah, and nothing I have to do
11 except have Billy in his spring festive shirt call
12 the roll. Okay, that's it. Okay. All right. And so
13 the items are coupled. I urge a yes vote. I now ask
14 Billy to call the roll.

13 COUNCIL CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank you.
14 Good morning. William Martin, Committee Clerk. Roll
15 call vote, Committee on Environmental Protection and
16 Waterfronts. Like the Chair said, items are coupled.

16 Chair Gennaro.

17 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Aye.

18 COUNCIL CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Hanks.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: I vote aye.

20 COUNCIL CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Restler.
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2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I vote aye, and
3 I'd like to congratulate the Chair on this great
4 legislation.

5 COUNCIL CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank you.
6 Epstein.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER EPSTEIN: Yes.

8 COUNCIL CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Sanchez.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER JUSTIN SANCHEZ: Aye.

10 COUNCIL CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank you.
11 With a vote of five in the affirmative, zero in the
12 negative, and no abstentions, both items have been
13 adopted by the Committee.

14 Mr. Chair, that is a full Committee.

15 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Thank you, Billy.
16 Thank you to all the Members, Harvey for his
17 Resolution, and all the Members of the Committee for
18 their diligence and hard work and tolerance of me.

19 And with that, this vote is adjourned. [GAVEL]
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4 C E R T I F I C A T E

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



18 Date June 15, 2026