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SENATOR, 27TH DISTRICT

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**Testimony by New York State Senator Brad Hoylman
and Assembly Member Richard N. Gottfried
Before the New York City Council Committee on Public Housing
Oversight Hearing on Emergency Planning and Management
During and After the Storm:
NYCHA Emergency Planning and Response
January 17, 2013**

Our names are Brad Hoylman and Richard Gottfried and we represent New York State's 27th Senate District and 75th Assembly District, respectively, in which Fulton Houses and Chelsea-Elliot are located. In addition, the 27th Senate District includes Campos Plaza I and II, Riis I and Riis II, Harborview Terrace, 344 East 28th Street, Lower East Side III and Lower East Side Rehab (Group V).

As the State Senator and Assembly Member representing the residents of these New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments, we are particularly concerned about NYCHA's failure to properly plan for and respond to Superstorm Sandy, leaving tens of thousands of residents without heat, water, electricity, food, means of egress, medical attention, or clear information for days on end. We applaud the New York City Council Committee on Public Housing and Chair Rosie Mendez for holding this hearing to shine a light on deficiencies in NYCHA's emergency planning and management so that New York City's public housing residents never again face such disproportionate hardship in a disaster's wake.

We know that you will hear from many other elected officials, advocates and public housing residents who will detail a wide range of shortcomings in the agency's efforts. We wish to focus on only a handful of the myriad concerns.

Much has been made of the fact many residents of NYCHA's Zone A buildings chose to ignore the City's mandatory evacuation order. We understand the Authority moved assiduously in the days leading up to the storm to encourage residents to leave, but much more must be done in the future to ensure and facilitate evacuation, especially for frail, elderly and disabled residents. We are particularly struck and deeply troubled by the Authority's failure to check in on the most vulnerable residents of NYCHA buildings both in and outside Zone A that were left without power, heat or water in the first days after the storm had passed.

NYCHA has stated that the Authority compiles and maintains a list of vulnerable residents, including seniors, mobility-impaired residents, and residents on life support or who require critical care. However, we have heard from a number of residents in affected developments that no one from NYCHA knocked on their door in the aftermath of the storm to see if they were

there and/or needed assistance. Rather, residents of varying ages, mobility and health status had to rely upon visits from elected officials, advocacy organizations and grassroots volunteers to see if they needed food, blankets, medication, etc. And because those who mobilized to help in the storm's aftermath did not have access to the lists of vulnerable residents NYCHA says it maintains, they were not able to triage and first visit those apartments with residents most likely to need help.

We applaud all those who volunteered in the aftermath of the storm to canvass and bring aid to their fellow New Yorkers. Such voluntary efforts were essential in light of the widespread devastation the storm wreaked, but we want to stress that the coordination of efforts in NYCHA developments should have come from the Authority. In a number of other high-rise developments in the 27th Senate District, including Waterside Plaza and Westbeth Artists' Housing, management solicited help from elected officials and neighborhood volunteers and facilitated their efforts on-the-ground. That was also the case in some public housing developments but it should have been the case in all of them.

It is also notable that in the immediate aftermath of the storm, a coalition of Lower Manhattan elected officials coordinated by Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, of which we were a part, was unable to get detailed information from NYCHA on conditions and recovery efforts underway at affected development in our districts. In fact, it is our understanding that the first written report NYCHA emailed to elected officials, which included aggregate numbers but not information about individual developments, did not come until a full week after the storm hit.

As you know, many NYCHA buildings faced delays in having power, heat and water restored even after these services were returned to the surrounding area. While a number of privately owned buildings likewise experienced delays in restoring their systems, NYCHA's difficulties appear to be rooted in both a lack of urgency and chronic problems that the Authority has had managing its vast portfolio of properties. For example, as was reported in the December 10, 2012 *New York Times*, the City did not seek Army Corps of Engineers' assistance in restoring power at NYCHA buildings until five days after the storm. Then the Authority was unable to provide an up-to-date list of generator requirements for each building, forcing the corps to do its own survey of 100 NYCHA buildings to identify the type of generator each needed before the corps could even think about installing them.

The same *Times* report cited NYCHA's failure to have "standby contracts" for boilers, pumps and generators as recommended by a report drafted by the City in response to Hurricane Katrina. It notes that even when NYCHA was able to obtain temporary boiler rentals, which were ordered by the City four days after the storm and took up to a week to arrive, it took longer than it should have to install them because the City first tried to reuse motors damaged by flood waters.

Certainly Sandy posed extraordinary challenges for hundreds of thousands of property owners and residents within New York's floodplain, but the disproportionate suffering of NYCHA residents underscores the need for additional resources to make up for years of chronic underfunding as well as systemic reforms, like those proposed last August by Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, to increase the Authority's efficiency and accountability.

We are confident that many cogent recommendations for improving NYCHA's emergency planning and management will result from this oversight hearing and we again applaud Councilmember Mendez and the Committee on Public Housing for taking this initiative. Thank you for giving us this opportunity to submit testimony.



Testimony of

Caroline Nagy
Policy Associate for Housing and Homelessness
Citizens' Committee for Children

Before the

New York City Council
Committee on
Public Housing

Oversight Hearing:
Emergency Planning and Management During and After the Storm:
NYCHA Emergency Planning and Response.

January 17, 2013

Good afternoon. My name is Caroline Nagy and I am the Policy Associate for Housing and Homelessness at Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC). CCC is a 69-year-old independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that every New York child is healthy, housed, educated and safe. I would like to thank Chair Mendez as well as the members of the Committee on Public Housing for holding today's hearing on NYCHA's emergency planning and response to Hurricane Sandy.

Hurricane Sandy caused unprecedented devastation in New York City, costing the lives and homes of too many New Yorkers and affecting the well-being and economic livelihood of millions. In the preparation for and response to the storm, countless New Yorkers made heroic efforts to ensure the health and safety of our residents. City, State, and Federal officials, front-line staff, and first responders worked tirelessly to keep New Yorkers safe while providing essential services, while many others volunteered time and other resources to address devastation caused by Sandy. Included in this effort were the many NYCHA staff and officials who worked prior to the storm to evacuate public housing residents in flood-prone areas of the City, and post-storm to address the needs of NYCHA public housing tenants affected by Sandy.

Prior to the storm, NYCHA staff worked to evacuate the 45,000 public housing residents living in 26 NYCHA properties located in the mandatory evacuation zone. NYCHA officials called on residents to evacuate, and staff went door to door announcing the evacuation and leaving fliers, with special efforts made for some mobility-disabled residents and those requiring life-sustaining equipment. Additionally, buses were made available to transport residents to shelters, though only 325 residents used them.¹ Ultimately, it is estimated that half of NYCHA tenants in the mandatory evacuation zone, including 70% of the special needs population, evacuated.² It is unclear exactly how many children remained in NYCHA public housing units in the mandatory evacuation zone during Hurricane Sandy. However, on the whole minors under the age of 18 comprise 28% of the total NYCHA public housing population.³

Unfortunately, those who remained in NYCHA public housing units in the mandatory evacuation zone after Sandy faced extremely unsafe living conditions, including a lack of electricity for up to 17 days, and a lack of heat and hot water for up to 21 days in near-freezing temperatures. Additionally, many NYCHA residents who lived outside the mandatory evacuation zone were affected by power outages and a resulting lack of water and elevator service. Both within and outside the mandatory evacuation zone, some residents, particularly the disabled and elderly, were stranded in high floor apartments without access to adequate food, water, medicine, or medical care. Even more troubling, many residents reported not being contacted or assisted by NYCHA staff for many days.

The conditions in NYCHA public housing units were unacceptably dangerous for those residents who lived in affected areas, both in the immediate aftermath of the storms, and in the weeks following. While units today all have access to at least generators and portable boilers, unsafe conditions such as mold have

¹ New York Times, Timeline of the New York City Housing Authority's Response, Dec. 9, 2012. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/10/nyregion/timeline-of-the-new-york-city-housing-authoritys-response.html?ref=nyregion>

² *Id.*

³ NYCHA, Resident Data Summary. www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/downloads/pdf/res_data.pdf

the development of childhood asthma.⁸ While NYCHA and the City Council have made efforts to address the repairs backlog, greater efforts are needed to ensure that both Sandy-related and other needed repairs are completed within a timely manner.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. We appreciate the City Council's interest in this very critical issue.

⁸ Tiina Reponen et al, Infant Origins of Childhood Asthma Associated with Specific Molds, American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, 2012.

FTR

**New York City Council
Committee on Public Housing**

Public Testimony by

**Anthony J. Rosario, Team Coordinator, Project Hope at University Settlement
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January 17, 2013

Good morning. My name is Anthony Rosario and I am a Team Coordinator with University Settlement's Project Hope. I would like to thank the city council for the opportunity to address this Committee on Public Housing to discuss the New York City Housing Authority's preparedness in dealing with Hurricane Sandy and it's response in the aftermath. Project Hope is a FEMA funded crisis counseling program, deployed as a longer-term response to disasters, and embedded in various community based organizations around New York City. University Settlement is grateful to have been awarded a Project Hope contract so that we can continue our Sandy relief efforts on a deeper level with a focus on community building. I oversee a team of crisis counselors that have been hired to reach out to residents of the Lower East Side, Chinatown, and the East Village in an effort to link affected households, families, and individuals to mental health services as well as centers for support as the community rebuilds after the massive destruction left in Hurricane Sandy's wake. Part of that work leads our 4 teams of crisis counselors, into various NYCHA complexes. Since December 2012, we have conducted outreach in over 90 NYCHA buildings and to approximately over 5,000 people. While I just started doing this work with Project Hope, I am no stranger to working with residents of NYCHA. Prior to this, I worked for three years at University Settlement's Project Home doing eviction prevention case management, crisis counseling, and other housing counseling.

I want to start off today by emphasizing that NYCHA is incredibly important to the fabric of New York City (especially the Lower East Side and Chinatown). It has remained home to many long-term low-income, often immigrant residents, who would otherwise have been pushed out of their communities due to the rapid gentrification which has changed the composition and feel of so many lower Manhattan neighborhoods in the last ten to 15 years. NYCHA is an invaluable NYC resource which helps to maintain diversity and affordability for many neighborhoods.

In addition, we have found NYCHA to be a good community partner. We have found upper level NYCHA staff to be hard working, smart, and committed to bettering the lives of NYCHA residents and to preserving NYCHA apartments. University Settlement currently collaborates with NYCHA on two projects; the first is a referral process to increase food stamp applications in Lower Manhattan and the second is a more comprehensive agreement which allows

University Settlement to provide preventive eviction prevention and housing counseling services in an attempt to avoid housing court and termination of tenancy hearings.

There are areas of improvement, however, and some of these were made very obvious by Hurricane Sandy. For example, prior to the storm NYCHA residents did not have any idea about emergency policy or planning. Going forward many residents still do not know what procedures NYCHA has in place for when the next disaster strikes. It would be helpful to have a community discussion and plan in place about what to do the next time the lights, heat, and electricity goes out.

In the months following the storm, many residents we speak to have many repairs issues that were either caused by the storm or were exacerbated by Sandy and are still unresolved. NYCHA repairs MUST happen quicker. Our crisis counselors have met with residents that are still struggling with damage to their apartments such as broken windows and water damage to walls, floors, and ceilings at places like Campos Plaza, Gompers, and Baruch Houses. Residents have called the emergency call center to report electrical, heat, and other types of issues and find that they are left waiting long periods of time before there is any response, if any response at all. Access dates are scheduled months in the future. Many tenants are frustrated and feel they are not being taken seriously.

And a lack of repairs can lead to emergency health concerns which MUST also be addressed more quickly. Many NYCHA residents have illnesses and health conditions that predate the storm but find themselves with complications after. Residents have respiratory issues further affected by mold from flooding cause by the storm surge. My team recently visited Campos Plaza where a resident's apartment was completely covered in mold. Our crisis counselors immediately went to the management office and within hours NYCHA responded to this health risk. I applaud them for their response, but this is one tenant out of hundreds. There needs to be the same quick response for all.

Finally, there needs to be a way to identify those most in need within specific buildings. A list of the most vulnerable residents would make it easier for NYCHA (and social services agencies) to do immediate targeted relief work after a disaster. At Meltzer Towers (A NYCHA senior housing building), many residents complained that NYCHA did not make any contact with them for days after the Hurricane. If there is a good idea of who is the most vulnerable, and a plan in place with other neighborhood institutions, this type of neglect can be mitigated.

In closing, NYCHA has been working hard on improving its connection with other community agencies and residents. From our outreach at Project Hope we get a sense that the housing authority made an effort to prepare for an emergency like Sandy but it is still inadequate in communicating with community organizations and residents. Based on feedback from residents, there is still a lag in addressing ongoing issues within the complexes and that has only become

worse now that they have all these issues after the storm. NYCHA needs further support to accomplish the task of rebuilding with the community.

GOOD AFTERNOON. MY NAME IS FLORENCE DENT-HUNTER AND I AM THE PRESIDENT OF THE TENANTS ASSOCIATION AT THE ELLIOTT-CHELSEA HOUSES IN MANHATTAN.

OCTOBER WAS A DIFFICULT MONTH FOR ME, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE SUPERSTORM SANDY BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF THE PASSING OF MY HUSBAND. WHILE MY FAMILY WAS GOING TO THIS PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, THE LIGHTS WENT OUT ON OCTOBER 29TH AT THE ELLIOTT-CHELSEA HOUSES. FORTUNATELY FOR ME MY CHILDREN CAME AND GOT ME OUT OF THE AREA. I DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE BUT HAVING JUST BURIED MY HUSBAND THEY DIDN'T WANT ME TO STAY HOME ALONE.

I WAS NOT AT THE DEVELOPMENT DURING THE DAYS AFTER THE STORM BUT KEPT MYSELF ABREAST OF EVERYTHING THAT WAS HAPPENING IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IN CHELSEA BY PHONE CALLS FROM AND TO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION THAT WERE IN THEIR APARTMENTS. THROUGH THEM I LEARNED OF THE HARD WORK OF THE NYCHA WORKERS, THE COMMUNITY CENTER AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT THE TENANTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT. AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION IT WAS HARD FOR ME NOT TO BE HELPING OTHER TENANTS.

THE DEVELOPMENT DID NOT HAVE POWER FOR 5 DAYS AND IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR MANY SENIORS AND FRAIL TENANTS TO GET OUT OF THEIR APARTMENTS. NYCHA, HUDSON GUILD AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS COORDINATED EFFORTS TO PROVIDE ALL TENANTS WITH FOOD, WATER, BLANKETS AND OTHER ITEMS. ALTHOUGH IT WAS A DIFFICULT TIME FOR ALL, THE COMMUNITY WAS ABLE TO

WORK TOGETHER AND PROVIDE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE TO EACH OTHER.

IT IS CLEAR MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO DEAL WITH SITUATIONS LIKE THIS IN THE FUTURE. BETTER COMMUNICATION AND PREPARATION FOR FUTURE EVENTS IS NECESSARY. AT THE TENANTS ASSOCIATION WE STARTED A PROCESS TO INFORM TENANTS AND TO KEEP A LOG OF TENANTS IN NEED.

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK NYCHA FOR THEIR EFFORTS. WE KNOW THERE WERE DIFFICULT TIMES AND WORKING TOGETHER WE CAN MOVE FORWARD. THANKS.

FTR



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**Testimony of United Neighborhood Houses
Before the New York City Council
Honorable Rosie Mendez, Chair
Committee on Public Housing
Concerning NYCHA's Response to and Preparation for Superstorm
Sandy**

January 16, 2013

UNH member agencies operate in more than 90 program sites in NYCHA facilities including some of those hardest hit by the storm where they serve public housing residents and others. UNH members provide a broad array of services such as early childhood education, after-school programs, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, legal services, GED classes, job training, tutoring, recreation, meals and supportive services for the elderly, mental health counseling, drug prevention, and arts. We are partners with NYCHA residents and with NYCHA itself in providing core services to NYCHA residents and their neighboring communities.

Human services organizations that operate in public housing foster strong communities in NYCHA developments. Superstorm Sandy has shown that those organizations are even more crucial when disaster strikes. We appreciate that NYCHA has a vision for public housing that goes beyond bricks and mortar and includes a commitment to programs and services that foster and maintain strong communities within public housing developments. We believe that this commitment is partially responsible for the success NYCHA has had in preserving much of its housing stock while many other cities are dismantling public housing.

NYCHA reached out to human service providers for help in the aftermath of Sandy. They knew, for example, that the people who delivered Meals on Wheels know how to locate vulnerable older adults. Throughout the storm, NYCHA staff worked day and night and often in partnership with human service providers to meet the unprecedented challenge of a large portion of their housing stock going without power, heat or water. For example, At Lavanburg Houses, on the Lower East Side, NYCHA facilities staff

were on the ground with staff from Henry Street Settlement to make sure that Henry Street Settlement's Urban Family Center could bring families back into shelter who had been displaced as a result of the storm. In addition, senior management from NYCHA monitored progress and secured resources on a regular and consistent basis to help ensure progress.

In the aftermath of the storm, volunteers and staff from settlement houses and other community based organizations in and around the impacted NYCHA developments worked to locate those residents in distress and provide them with support and essentials such as food or water which had become scarce. Many staff and volunteers walked up and down stairs in multi-story towers to reach vulnerable seniors and others who were trapped in buildings that lacked heat and electricity following the storm. Settlement houses coordinated volunteers in the impacted areas and handled the flood of donations ensuring that donations went to residents in need, especially when they were isolated in buildings that lacked heat, water or electricity and other difficult situations.

The "on the ground" perspective also allowed many human service providers to see the dangerous and tragic inadequacy of the response to the storm experienced by NYCHA residents. Despite the dedication of NYCHA staff, many of the most harshly impacted homes were in large NYCHA developments in which hundreds if not thousands of vulnerable older adults or young children resided. Many of New York City's most vulnerable communities before the storm had the fewest resources in its aftermath.

Superstorm Sandy did not target NYCHA developments in particular. It affected many people including some of the city's wealthiest. Nothing would have made every home safe. But NYCHA faced additional challenges because NYCHA has been coping with another disaster- the abandonment of public housing, particularly from the Federal government since well before Sandy made landfall. NYCHA faces constant budget shortfalls and the impact of these shortfalls directly affects NYCHA residents and the city as a whole. We can witness the impact of this underfunding in the backlog of repair requests. In many cases, apartments have mold as a result of the Superstorm Sandy and weeks later NYCHA has still been unable to address these issues.

Superstorm Sandy should serve as a reminder that strong communities are best able to meet challenges whether they are hurricanes or economic downturns. NYCHA has shown a viable model for providing housing in a setting that fosters strong communities. We must commit to supporting NYCHA and its mutually respectful and supportive relationship with community based organizations not just in its recovery from the storm but as a crucial part of our city.

As the Executive Director of Grand Street Settlement, I witnessed first-hand the importance and unique strength of settlement houses as first responders in crises such as Superstorm Sandy. Because we are a part of the fabric of the community we serve—because we are a daily part of our constituents' lives—we were the first people they looked to in the face of this crisis, before responders from FEMA, the National Guard, and NYCHA were able to reach these residents. We were able to check on the seniors at our NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community) in the Baruch Houses, and others. At the Baruch Houses, our Registered Nurse visited homebound seniors and, as a result, we ensured that an 82 year old resident was able to get to the hospital for the care she needed, and we notified her family.

Grand Street Settlement runs multi-service community centers in three NYCHA developments on both sides of the Williamsburg Bridge—in the Lower East Side, Williamsburg, and Bushwick. We are proud to work closely with NYCHA to serve our most vulnerable neighbors, and there is an opportunity now to deepen that partnership. Superstorm Sandy has thrown into stark relief challenges at our NYCHA facilities—including heating and cooling issues that impede our ability to provide the communities we serve with the level of services we want to provide, and which our constituents need and deserve. We look forward to continue to partner with NYCHA to act as first responders in our communities.

Ann Valdez – Community Voices Heard

January 17th. 2013

My name is Ann Valdez and I am a member of Community Voices Heard. I live in Gravesend Houses and am a 3rd generation resident of Coney Island Houses.

- **Hurricane Sandy tore up the community that I have called home for over 40 years and the community that my family has called home for over 3 generations. What I am here to talk about today is the devastation that Sandy brought on to my community and what we can do moving forward. Today in Coney Island we are still suffering from inconsistent heat and hot water, and of course Mold, Mold and Even more MOLD to the MOLD that was already there. The compactor in my building after two months just got fixed yesterday. There are still mounds of sand near all the developments and in the parking lots of all of our buildings. There are still fallen trees and the need for mulch removal. This of course goes without saying is making life more difficult for all public housing residents that already have been waiting for more than 2 years to get other basic apartment repairs.**
- **Community Voices Heard recommends an oversight body to monitor NYCHA's repair and recovery work-both recent and longer term (every time NYCHA says something is done, it is most likely not functioning or is only partially working (including putting back heat, hot water, and electricity).**

Transparency

- **Make sure that recovery and rebuilding jobs available are widely publicized and there are enough jobs allocated to public housing residents**

-Establish a centralized job training and hiring center in each affected zone and one city-wide. We would like to see long-term unemployed individuals and public assistance recipients to also be eligible for jobs.

Participatory Budgeting Process

Post-Sandy recovery funds should be planned and budgeted in a participatory budgeting process as a way to have public housing residents have a seat at the table and let local effected communities decide what spending priorities are in our communiites and truly make our COMMUNITY VOICES HEARD!



Keeping people in their homes and community, since 1977!

Testimony to New York City Council Public Housing Committee
On "Emergency Planning and Management During and After the Storm:
NYCHA Emergency Planning and Response"
Thursday, January 17, 2013

by Gilbert Alicea, GOLES member

My name is Gilbert Alicea. I'm a resident of Jacob Riis Houses on the Lower East Side, and I'm a member of GOLES, Good Old Lower East Side. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today on NYCHA's response to Hurricane Sandy, which I experienced directly as a resident of a building that is located immediately next to the East River.

NYCHA came through the buildings and told people to evacuate, and they provided shelters for people like at Seward Park High school, but most people chose not to evacuate. They did a pretty good job at making provisions for people who did want to evacuate.

NYCHA did not provide supplies and medical care. My neighbor next door, for example, is a diabetic, like many others who live in the development, and no one from NYCHA came to check on her. The people who did come to provide supplies and medical care were from community organizations like GOLES.

Like all of downtown, my building was without power from Monday through the Friday after the storm, due to the blow out at the Con Ed plant, which is so close to where I live that I heard it happen. The power was restored on Friday, and the water came back on at the same time, but we were still without heat for several days after that. Heating is still inconsistent – some lines have heat, while others do not.

After the storm, NYCHA workers came door to door to check if people had mold. I commend NYCHA for at least taking the step to take an inventory of who has mold in their apartment, but the fact remains that the mold is still an issue. The health implications of mold can be very severe and long-lasting, and if more steps aren't taken to remove all of the mold from the apartments, from inside the walls, and from the basement where utilities are stored, we may have a serious health crisis on our hands.

Thank you again for holding this hearing and for your time and consideration.

FTR

January 17, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

The week prior to Sandy housing was out checking the buildings, windows, making sure that they were sturdy and that gates installed were sturdy. After Sandy passed Housing was still on the premises, Ms. Cross and Patrick were checking all of the buildings.

Elliott/Chelsea Houses were well taken care of again by New York Housing Authority. Meals were being distributed by churches, volunteers, community centers, etc.

Tenants of Elliott/Chelsea Houses will like to have a captain on each floor to check on tenants and make sure everyone is okay in the event that this happens again.

Sincerely,

Darlene Waters

Darlene Waters
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Testimony to the NYC Council Committee on Public Housing
By Alvin Bartolomey, FUREE Co-Chair
January 17, 2013

Good Afternoon Members of the New York City Council and to everyone who is here today.

My name is Alvin Bartolomey, a Red Hook West resident, Hurricane Sandy Survivor and Co-Chair of Families United for Racial & Economic Equality (FUREE).

I have to say that I honestly was not expecting the storm to hit us so hard but after it did, I never thought that the city and NYCHA would take so long to respond to those of us who were hit hard.

According to the Office of Emergency Management, Redhook was a Zone A. Yet, we were treated as if we were Zone "Not Important." Like many New Yorkers, I get that there were so many needs throughout the city but the utter disrespect public housing residents received has shown me, as a human being, that the lives of low-income people are not truly valued. The proof of this is evident if you were to go take a look in my and other residents' apartments.

Before the super storm, members of FUREE and other groups throughout the city pointed out the need for timely repairs. The more than six to seven billion dollars worth of repairs would only get worse and more expensive as time goes on. I personally have had mold and crumbling walls already for years yet NYCHA has done nothing but gave me a repair ticket dated for June 2013.

I'm an asthmatic and in the past 2 years, I have gotten sick just about every single month to the point that the nurses and front desk know me personally. The flooding to my first floor apartment from Hurricane Sandy made both the mold and my asthma worse. I had to leave my home in Red Hook West not only because there wasn't going to be any heat & electricity, but my own doctor told me to stay out my neighborhood because most of her Red Hook patients, who never had respiratory problems, now do.

Despite all of this, Mayor Bloomberg and NYCHA Officials had the nerve to say that NYCHA residents who are suffering were at fault because we stayed. As usual, those of us who have the least resources, who are the most disempowered are somehow to blame for the lack of proactive planning by authorities mandated to do so.

No, it is not our fault that we didn't have any plans on how to keep our homes safe from looters if we chose to leave. No, it is not our fault that many of us still remembered how little Hurricane Irene hit us the year before. No, it is not our fault that the New York City Housing Authority did not have emergency relief and recovery plans in place to help residents before the super storm landed. It's not residents' fault that for years, NYCHA has allowed the city's largest affordable housing stock to

be under-maintained and did not adequately utilize opportunities to train and hire residents to make such repairs.

Many of us here today are still hurting. We are angry. But, we're also open to coming up with real solutions to help residents who are suffering now, solutions for recovery that includes and honors resident input and solutions that will help to hire unemployed residents to rebuild NYCHA so that we all can have quality homes to live in.

Moving forward, I would like NYCHA to consider the following and ask our City Council Members to help us hold them accountable to:

1. Address mold abatement and other environmental harms in affected public housing developments immediately and thoroughly. Mold is growing back in many apartments. The short term health impacts are real and the long-term health impacts are yet to be discovered.
2. Ensure that there is equity in relief and recovery efforts in public housing developments.
3. Use Section 3 to adequately train and hire residents to make necessary repairs within their own developments. We know that some of this is happening but we're concerned that as usual, funding is flowing out of housing as opposed to helping residents to give back to NYCHA in service and rent income.
4. Be transparent with residents. If you do not have a plan in place, be honest about it and let us know when you will. If you do not have enough funding to cover all of this work, be honest about that. You'd be surprised how many residents go to bat with state and federal authorities to make sure that NYCHA gets the funding it deserves.
5. Stop treating residents as tenants and start treating us as human beings. Talk to us. Not at us.

Although we are all here to hold NYCHA accountable to its response after Sandy, we are also here to publicly challenge everyone in this room, every single person in this city to acknowledge that public housing is home to hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. Public housing is our home.

People forget that many NYCHA residents built this city and this country. We would be having a different kind of hearing if resident engagement, transparency and the preservation of public housing was a true priority for NYCHA.

Thank you all for your time and for the opportunity to share my story and my thoughts.



Shore Soup Project

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In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, as residents of Rockaway and small business owners, we formed the Rockaway Rescue Alliance to offer support to our neighbors. The boardwalk, which was the previous location of our concession and mobile food businesses had been destroyed and many homes were flooded, structurally compromised and covered in black mold. Residents were without power, heat and hot water, a situation which for many continues to this day. Immediately, it became clear that in the absence of a large scale initial institutional response, what was needed was for neighbors to begin helping neighbors. We took to the streets on a mobile food tricycle cart and started giving out hot food and drinks to those who were without food and refrigeration, individuals who were walking the streets, finding no stores open and looking for aid. We noticed that equally important to warm and nourishing food and drink, was the chance to have someone to talk to. Our neighbors were traumatized, and deserved be listened to and checked up on.

After initially distributing food from one tricycle cart, we set up and maintained a hot food and distribution center on 59th St and Beach Channel Drive for several more days. There many volunteers joined our efforts. Then, we decided that the best way to equitably reach a large amount of people with hot food, was for teams of deliverers to come to them. We established a kitchen in Rockaway and started feeding 600-1500 meals a day, delivered door to door to people living in public housing and in private homes. This work involved going up and down dark stairwells and hallways and carrying delivery bags filled with heavy soups. Our team of generous volunteers, from a pool of over 400 total, have helped us to reach many residents. Our outreach, through delivery, is also the way in which we have been able to connect the people that we deliver to with other much needed services. We have been able to refer them to medical and legal assistance, temporary housing and to teams of volunteers that have come to gut and de-mold their homes.

Here are two testimonials from volunteers about their experience delivering in NYCHA buildings.

Christine Wexler, a volunteer from Westchester, wrote: "My first day down in Rockaway was life changing. The destruction and damage was overwhelming. Watching residents pull shopping carts to and from, wandering with no real place to go. It was obvious that everyone needed help. Expecting to see official disaster relief, I looked around at the people helping, they were just like me. A person who



**Testimony to the NYC Council Committee on Public Housing
By Valery Jean, Executive Director, FUREE
January 17, 2013**

Good Afternoon Members of the New York City Council and to all who are here today.

My name is Valery Jean, director of Families United for Racial & Economic Equality (FUREE). We are a member-led social justice organization founded 11 years ago by women living on public assistance to fight for and win systemic changes to policies and practices that negatively impact low income and working class youth and families of color in Brooklyn.

Since our founding, the more than 15,000 that we have engaged in our organizing work are largely public housing residents. All but one member of our constituent-led Board are public housing residents. Our public housing campaign, which now organizes six Brooklyn developments, is centered on holding NYCHA and HUD accountable to human rights principles of preserving and protecting public housing, increasing opportunities to build the sustainability of residents and bringing residents to decision making tables that impact their lives as tenants of NYCHA.

We led relief efforts at Gowanus Houses after learning on the Friday night following the landing of Sandy that five buildings, some of which were 14 stories high, were without heat, hot water and electricity since the day the storm hit.

FUREE is not a service-based organization. However, we are an organization that pivots based on the needs of those who are the most vulnerable. We coordinated a rapid response team by the following morning of other community based, and faith based organizations, volunteers, private donors and funders as well as FUREE members to provide relief to the hundreds of residents impacted by the storm. The days during relief efforts, we used it as an opportunity to train Gowanus residents to coordinate canvassing teams, food delivery, medical and psycho-social follow ups and to coordinate logistics necessary to make all of this happen. And, as Beverly Corbin told you, these were long, long days starting at 9 a.m. and ending at 12 a.m. or 1 a.m. in the morning.

What was the most apparent and frustrating to residents was the visible absence of NYCHA representatives, the lack of any information, the abundance of erroneous information and simply the lack of proactive planning for a weather system that was predicted by forecasters to be a three-storm system, with wide ranging impacts. Many residents told us, first-hand that they would be OK if NYCHA simply said that they did not know what they were doing but that they were working on figuring it out.

It was very clear to me, a person who lost five family members and all but one home built family that natural disasters unearth the gross deficiencies of services and support to the most vulnerable.

For years, groups like FUREE have been fighting to preserve and protect public housing. We co-released the city's first ever resident report card on public housing that not only pointed out deficiencies in repairs, maintenance and the lack of transparency and accountability by NYCHA. For years, we fought to make improvements with an administration that treats NYCHA as real estate as opposed to homes where people raise their families and live out their sunset years.

We believe strongly that the impacts to communities such as Red Hook, Coney Island, Staten Island and the Rockaways may have been mitigated had NYCHA had the wherewithal to be innovative in preserving the city's largest affordable housing stock. However, we also understand that there is a larger fight being hidden by post-Sandy efforts to address the increasing and blatant lack of transparency by NYCHA by way of gag orders and termination of staff who went out of their way to work with residents and community groups. We also understand that as in the case of New Orleans and Haiti that natural disasters pave the way to redevelop communities as a way of so-called deconcentration of poverty.

In the meantime and for the purposes of this hearing, we put forth the following revised recommendations to Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez's amendment to Sandy relief pack passed by the House earlier this week. These are recommendations by the members of FUREE's public housing campaign:

IMMEDIATE RELIEF

Prioritize funds to mitigate health hazards and environmental harm including:

- mold removal
- replacement/repair of corroded heating systems
- replacement/repair of electrical panels and/or systems
- replacement/repair of generators
- increase extermination methods due to increased rodent and insect infestation
- (if possible) increased access to testing for mold and lead exposure
- replacement of water-damaged walls and flooring
- extend the moratorium on evictions of public housing residents in affected developments

LONG TERM RECOVERY

- (if possible) increased testing of residents impacted by Gowanus Canal flooding (a Super Fund site)
- Replace damaged garbage compactors
- Replace outdated/inefficient generators
- Increase inspections of damaged apartments for additional/continuing mold growth
- Renovate/repair damaged and inhabitable units
- Use TPA funds to support resident-led first response teams
- increase solar-powered generators to mitigate the carbon footprint associated with disaster recovery

In closing, We are especially grateful for the leadership of City Council Member Steven Levin and NYS Assembly Member Joan Millman and their staff for pressuring NYCHA to make the repairs necessary to restore heat, electricity and hot water.

And, Ms. Corbin was absolutely right that we heard nothing from NYCHA officials following their visit but I will say that some from within NYCHA were in fact responsive to some needs at the Center.

We do not want NYCHA to go back to the way it was. We want it to be better than it was.

**TESTIMONY FROM NYCHA GENERAL MANAGER CECIL HOUSE
NYCHA'S PLANNING AND RESPONSE FOR SUPERSTORM SANDY
CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HOUSING COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, JANUARY 17, 2013 -1PM**

Chairwoman Rosie Mendez, members of the Public Housing Committee, and other distinguished members of the City Council, thank you for this opportunity to discuss the New York City Housing Authority's (NYCHA) preparation for, response to, and continuing recovery from Hurricane Sandy. I am Cecil House, General Manager of the New York City Housing Authority. Joining me this afternoon are Carlos Laboy-Diaz, NYCHA's Executive Vice President for Operations, and Raymond Ribeiro, Executive Vice President for Capital Projects.

As the members of this Committee well know, the New York City Housing Authority serves over 600,000 New Yorkers in neighborhoods across the City, many of which are in vulnerable, low-lying areas in proximity to the rivers, bays and oceans that surround our city. Twenty-six (26) NYCHA developments – home to over 45,000 residents – are in the City-designated Flood Zone A, however 80,000 NYCHA residents were directly impacted by the storm. In the months since Hurricane Sandy hit, many have noted the unlikely convergence of exceptional circumstances that Hurricane Sandy presented – and, indeed, the devastation that resulted across the City and in NYCHA developments. The days and weeks after Hurricane Sandy were no doubt a trying time for thousands of NYCHA residents. NYCHA addressed the storm's devastation systematically, according to an established emergency plan, and met unexpected challenges with flexibility and innovation. We believe the actions we took brought back essential services to NYCHA residents as quickly as possible given the unprecedented challenges we faced.

Collaborating purposefully with a host of partners at all levels of government, in the private and non-profit sectors, and within local communities, NYCHA staff worked around the clock, surpassing the efforts of most other landlords in these communities – restoring services, making repairs, and connecting residents to resources and supplies. We received constant support from Mayor Bloomberg, as well as Deputy Mayors Steel, Holloway, and Gibbs, and we are grateful for the work of elected officials like

Chairwoman Mendez and other members of the Council. In many cases, these public servants and their staffs climbed stairs, knocked on doors, distributed meals, provided language services, and took on other tasks, alongside the NYCHA staff members and community volunteers who worked around the clock during this time of need to serve the families in public housing.

Today, I will give you an overview of our efforts to prepare for the Hurricane and to respond to its unprecedented devastation and our ongoing recovery efforts.

A Record of Preparedness

NYCHA's storm awareness and preparedness efforts far predate Hurricane Sandy, and even Hurricane Irene, which hit New York in August 2011. NYCHA has had a hurricane procedure since September 1964, has exercised that procedure as necessary and has updated it regularly, most recently in 2012.

Supporting the Bloomberg Administration's focus on mitigating the effects of climate change, NYCHA employees began to systematically engage residents and staff from developments in low-lying neighborhoods. Realizing that we could begin to see bigger, more frequent storms, we urged these residents to partner with us by participating in education efforts. Eight months before Hurricane Irene, we initiated an emergency preparedness program under the leadership of NYCHA Commissioner Margarita Lopez. Over 800 residents and 150 NYCHA employees participated in this program. The program was focused on the Far Rockaways, given their unique vulnerability to coastal storms and remoteness from the rest of the City. We engaged all residents, including seniors, the mobility-impaired, and residents depending on life-sustaining equipment. During this outreach effort, we emphasized that residents should evacuate well before the storm hit if they could, and not wait until transportation was provided by NYCHA or any other governmental entity. We noted that evacuation was important not simply because of flooding, but also because of the possibility of prolonged electrical, heat, or hot water outages.

In the lead-up to Sandy, we implemented many measures based on lessons learned from Irene. These measures included having a broader base of NYCHA Departments at our Emergency Operations Center; developing pre-approved templates for flyers and other communications in various languages to facilitate sharing evacuation information; establishing pre-determined fallback sites for evacuated staff; more effectively coordinate our pre- and post-storm transportation and evacuation efforts with DOE, the MTA, NYPD, and other partners; and de-energizing elevators and other critical equipment in advance of the storm's impact. In 2011, many people – including residents – considered taking the elevators off-line extreme. We now know that doing so significantly enhanced our recovery efforts.

Initial Outreach

NYCHA's communication with OEM began as early as Tuesday, October 23rd, and continued until OEM's situation room closed. NYCHA was one of the first to staff a desk at OEM and one of the last to depart on November 30th. On Thursday, October 25th, the City activated its Coastal Storm Plan. NYCHA immediately began to implement its Hurricane preparedness procedures. We activated our Emergency Operations Center on Friday and it remained staffed around the clock throughout our response. NYCHA's Chairman, John Rhea, was at OEM, and was actively engaged in daily briefings with the Mayor, Deputy Mayors, and fellow agency heads, along with myself and other senior staff. When the Mayor issued his voluntary evacuation order, we launched a multifaceted outreach campaign to NYCHA residents and other partners that lasted throughout the weekend and until Sandy hit land.

While our outreach efforts included all NYCHA residents in Zone A, we prioritized outreach to the almost 3,300 residents in those areas who are mobility impaired and the 140 who depend on life-sustaining equipment. This process is a completely voluntary process. These individuals have identified themselves to us through our Annual Review process as potentially needing special assistance. As NYCHA is not permitted to require residents to identify any special needs, there may have been others potentially in this category. Using our database of contact information for these residents, NYCHA

employees knocked on each of their doors over the weekend, as well as the doors of seniors in Zone A. We offered these residents special transportation options for evacuation, and reminded those who insisted on sheltering-in-place to have food, water, and other important supplies. We also deployed an additional round of direct calls to the residents who use life-sustaining equipment, encouraging them to evacuate – we noted that flooding was not the only peril of the storm, that prolonged electrical or heat outages were also possible.

We began our broader outreach by contacting Resident Association Leaders for the developments in Zone A flood areas. NYCHA Board Members led a team of NYCHA employees to hold meetings with local elected officials and resident leaders. Over the weekend, we deployed three rounds of automated calls – 33,000 in total – in order to reach each of the 19,000 families in Zone A. We also posted multi-language flyers in building lobbies, hallways, and elevators and posted messages on our website. We also coordinated with City Hall to broadly spread the same information through OEM contacts, 311 and various social media outlets, including Facebook and Twitter.

On Sunday, the 28th, we redoubled our efforts, as the Mayor changed the City's evacuation order from voluntary to mandatory. By this time, we had deployed 3,900 employees on the ground, 1,700 more staff than would usually be deployed on a Sunday. We made more calls to resident and we knocked on more resident doors. We coordinated with the NYPD, who made announcements over loud speakers in most developments, reaching thousands more residents. We coordinated with elected officials and the Mayor's staff to reach even more residents. We also partnered with the Department of Education to provide more buses for evacuation. And finally, despite the Sunday evacuation deadline, as an added measure, we worked with the NYPD Housing Bureau Chief Joanne Jaffe to make additional buses available through Monday. Our employees worked to make residents aware of this final evacuation option until 2:30pm that day, six hours before the worst of the storm. At this point, the last willing residents evacuated vulnerable developments, along with any remaining NYCHA staff.

Despite sustained outreach from NYCHA, the work of the Mayor and his staff at City Hall, the efforts of local elected officials, the encouragement of the NYPD and various other City agencies, many residents chose not to evacuate.

Systems and Operational Preparedness

While conducting this broad engagement effort, NYCHA also moved proactively to secure and prepare our buildings, construction sites, and critical systems in the most vulnerable areas.

While our preparation efforts began before the storm, we started executing this plan on Friday and continued throughout the weekend. In Zone A developments, we removed 397 elevators from service in 201 buildings, positioning them on upper floors. We de-energized other related relevant equipment. Where we could, we turned off the boilers and related equipment. These steps were taken not only to protect equipment from flooding, but also to ensure that it could readily be restored after the storm. Our employees checked for debris on the grounds and roofs of our 2,600 buildings. They also make sure that hundreds of drains were cleaned and clear of potential blockage. We moved NYCHA vehicles from Zone A developments to safer areas. We secured 55 construction sites. And finally, we inspected over 22 miles of sidewalk shedding to ensure their continued safety.

With as many residents evacuated as possible, with the developments secure, and with our staff evacuated from Zone A, we turned to our planned response to the impending storm. We recognized the need for teams on the ground immediately following the storm. Over 1800 employees volunteered to spend Monday night at nearby developments, despite their responsibilities to their own families during this trying time.

Impact and Service Restoration

Sandy reached the City on the evening of Monday, October 29th, causing massive damage. Not one of our buildings collapsed or sustained material structural damage due to the storm.

However, as we now know, the storm's reach was much wider than Zone A, affecting developments in Zone B and beyond. We discovered after an immediate review that over 400 buildings in Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan, housing roughly 80,000 residents, were affected significantly by Sandy. Of those 423 buildings, 402 lost power – and with it, elevator and compactor service. 386 buildings lost heat and hot water.

When combined with the storm's impact to the infrastructure of Con Ed and LIPA, the storm's impacts to NYCHA facilities in the Rockaways, Coney Island, and Red Hook, was especially severe. In Coney Island, 42 buildings – home to 8,882 residents – were impacted. In the Rockaways, 60 buildings – home to 10,100 residents – were impacted, and in Red Hook, 32 buildings – home to 6,173 residents – were impacted. It should be noted that the recovery in Coney Island was especially difficult because those buildings sustained substantial sand and saltwater infiltration. The systems damage in other communities was due mostly to flooding. In addition, electricity was down at our headquarters offices in Lower Manhattan. Due to good planning, our emergency operations center was located in Long Island City.

Given our primary mission as a landlord, we focused on assessing the damage to our buildings and building systems and determining what was needed to restore services to our residents. On Tuesday, October 30th, NYCHA began the structural, mechanical, and electrical assessment process. Over three days, an average of 150 employees determined whether each building was structurally sound, and confirmed the extent of any damage. The assessments began with all developments with known outages and flooding and ultimately extended to all of our buildings.

We found sand piled against basements doors up to 4 feet high, basement flooded with salt water, in some cases up to 20 feet deep, boilers and electrical panels completely submerged in corrosive salt water, 30 foot long external trash compactor lifted and placed into new locations. Hundreds of trees uprooted and lying on their side. Thousands of broken branches beside them. Vehicles piled in corners in parking lots. And in the evening, complete darkness.

It was immediately clear, that in order to restore electrical power, heat, and hot water to these buildings, we needed to de-water millions of cubic feet of space. We immediately began to pump tens of millions of gallons of water from electric meters room, gas meter rooms, boiler rooms, hot water tank rooms, storage rooms, elevator pits, vaults, trades shops, maintenance areas, locker rooms, lunch rooms, bathrooms, compactor rooms and other basement spaces. We used hundreds of pumps of various capacities. In some cases, we completely emptied a room of water and readied it for electrical or boiler work, only to return later and find the room full of water again. Ultimately, we supplemented our pumping capability with equipment and manpower from our heroes in Onondaga County, NY, and emergency contractors, Army Corps of Engineers and the Navy.

[IMAGES]

While we were pumping water, we were working to secure temporary boilers and generators, focusing locally first then extending our search to more distant locations. We also had to ensure that the mobile boiler would work with NYCHA's infrastructure: low pressure vs. high pressure or be appropriately sized – the right horsepower. In the end, we utilized 24 temporary boilers (both high and low pressure) and approximately 100 generators – to restore heat and electricity to NYCHA facilities. We worked with a range of partners to secure this equipment, including OEM, the Army Corps of Engineers, HUD, FEMA, the National Guard, LIPA and private companies. The generators came from around the country and the mobile boilers came from Texas, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Ohio, Tennessee, Georgia, and Virginia. Due to permitting issues, weight restrictions, and trouble navigating the recently devastated Tri-State Area, the deliveries faced numerous obstacles.

Even before the boilers arrived, we deployed numerous electricians, plumbers, welders, and steamfitters to install the necessary connections to the buildings: the steam lines to the headers, electric lines, gas lines, oil lines, feedwater lines, all to shorten the installation time, basically building an outside boiler room. Once the boilers arrived, the installation process was much quicker.

Thanks to these persistent, around-the-clock efforts, we had restored heat, hot water, and electricity to 44,000 affected residents by November 7th, the end of the first week after the storm, and 65,000 by November 14th, the end of the second week. By November 18th, before many other landlords in the City, electrical, heat and hot water services were restored to all NYCHA buildings. Driving through the Rockaways one night on Rockaway Beach Boulevard, I looked back at our developments and it hit me, the only light I saw was the light coming from Hammel Houses.

I must acknowledge the work of our NYCHA employees, our City, state and federal colleagues, and our contractors for making this happen.

Post-Storm Outreach and Partnerships

This sense of dedication and common purpose also fueled our post-storm resident outreach efforts, which were occurring at the same time as the service restorations I've described. We knew, drawing on our past experience with Irene, that this would require a collaborative effort with a wide range of partners from the public, private, and non-profit sectors, not to mention the informal neighbor-to-neighbor bonds that have always made our communities strong. Beginning on Tuesday evening, October 30th, Chairman Rhea, together with City Hall and our fellow City agencies, began to roll-out plans to provide critical services to residents who had decided to shelter in place. At the same time, Vice Chair Emily Youssouf played an instrumental role in coordinating resource efforts with FEMA and other partners. She together with Board Member Lopez and Board Member Victor Gonzalez also led multiple briefings with NYCHA resident

leaders. Additionally, NYCHA employees convened a series of post-storm conference calls with local elected officials.

We continued our robust outreach effort to residents with special needs, during the two days immediately following the storm and periodically thereafter. Additionally, we posted security guards at our senior developments that had lost power.

On the ground, staff coordinated and organized our collaborations with a range of partners and volunteers. Through these efforts, and in concert with many local elected officials, we began distributing food and water to residents on Thursday, November 1st. Collaborators in this effort included Bed, Bath and Beyond, Target, Walmart, New York Cares, GOYA, Jet Blue, Red Hook Initiative, Fairway, Robin Hood, Shake Shack, and others.

Critical to this effort was our coordination of several large-scale door-knocking campaigns in Coney Island, the Rockaways, and the Red Hook area, sending teams of NYCHA staff from across the Authority – along with partners from the Visiting Nurse Service of New York, Medical Mobile Vans, Community Solutions, East River Development Alliance, and home aide and health attendant agencies – to distribute food, water, and blankets, and connect residents to critical health services.

NYCHA also opened our facilities to respond to immediate community needs, opening community centers to house a displaced school, warming centers, medical clinics, and distribution sites for food and water. On the Lower East Side, along with a host of elected officials, and the Legal Aid Society, we set up legal clinics at Rutgers Houses and Campos Plaza to help residents secure FEMA aid.

The engagement of members of this body were especially helpful:

Speaker Quinn and her office – along with Congresswoman Nydia Velasquez and State Senator Velmanette Montgomery – helped to connect us with community groups, especially in Red Hook, that coordinated efforts more swiftly than government is often

able to. Chairwoman Mendez lent NYCHA several capable members of her staff and was tireless in her efforts on behalf of residents with special needs on the Lower East Side. Councilmember Margaret Chin and her staff canvassed Smith Houses and other developments to ensure that residents were safe. Councilmember Dominic Recchia was instrumental in helping us secure access to doctors, ambulances, and other resources. Councilmember Steve Levin and his staff worked practically full-time out of Gowanus Houses after the storm to distribute meals and clothing, staying in constant contact with both residents and NYCHA staff. Councilmember Sara Gonzalez personally knocked on doors in the developments in her district after the storm to check in on residents. Assembly Member Felix Ortiz organized an extensive health clinic at the Miccio Center. These are just examples of their contributions.

Moving Forward

We know that despite this work and partnership, Sandy's aftermath will be with us for a long time to come. Having restored critical services and power, NYCHA has set about inspecting, cleaning, and remediating individual apartments and public spaces such as community centers and offices. We have also knocked on the doors of nearly 24,000 apartments to check for Sandy-related mold. We did not locate significant Sandy-related mold, however, where we encountered any mold conditions, we removed it. Even where the mold conditions were the result of housekeeping issues, we removed it. We are continuing our in-depth assessment of those apartments and public areas directly affected by storm waters. We are especially committed to working with residents displaced by the storm to identify temporary housing solutions while their apartments are cleaned and repaired. In some cases, we have offered a temporary or permanent transfer to residents in impacted apartments. NYCHA's staff is providing crucial support services as part of our work to coordinate relocations for residents.

Our Board approved and has begun over \$5 million in rent abatements to residents in households in impacted areas who lost electrical, hot water, heat, and elevator services. For every day without any of those services, residents received a full credit. We also

aggressively pursued and won a \$7.3 million grant from the U.S. Labor Department to hire close to 400 temporary workers from affected communities assist with our outreach and cleanup efforts. Additionally, vendors contracted to clean and rehabilitate common spaces have hired an estimated 200 NYCHA residents.

NYCHA has begun a large-scale assessment of our infrastructure to determine the full cost of the storm to NYCHA – and, more importantly, to make decisions about how, in light of New York City’s growing vulnerability to tropical storms and other extreme weather events, we can more strategically procure, locate, and protect important equipment.

We have also increased our communication to residents in affected communities, based on feedback we have received. We know that there is much room for improvement in this area, and will continue to assess and make adjustments.

We know, however, that there is much more that needs to be done. We can only be successful with the help of partners from across the city, state, and country, including our friends in the City Council. We continue to work with Washington, Albany, and City Hall to obtain funding to address our most pressing challenges, and have worked with many members of this body on behalf of affected New Yorkers. We began 2012 by releasing *Plan NYCHA*, highlighting the need for citizens from every walk of life to invest in preserving the great promise of public housing – that need has never been more evident than it is today. We are confident that with the continued benefit of your ideas and assistance we can go forward and finish the work that remains.

I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.

**Testimony by New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)
Before the New York City Council,
Committee on Public Housing:**

NYCHA's Response to Hurricane Sandy

January 17, 2013

Chairwoman Mendez, Council Members and staff, good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to testify about NYCHA's response to superstorm Sandy. My name is Ann Dibble and I am the Director of the Storm Response Unit at the New York Legal Assistance Group. I am here with my colleague, Julia Russell, a Senior Staff Attorney in NYLAG's Special Litigation Unit. We thank our colleague Sunny Noh, currently a Supervising Attorney in the Storm Response Unit and formerly a member of NYLAG's Housing Unit, for her help in preparing these remarks. NYLAG is a nonprofit law firm dedicated to providing free legal services in civil law matters to low-income New Yorkers. NYLAG serves immigrants, seniors, the homebound, families facing foreclosure, renters facing eviction, low-income consumers, those in need of government assistance, children in need of special education, domestic violence victims, people with disabilities patients with chronic illness or disease, low-wage workers, low-income members of the LGBT community, Holocaust survivors, as well as others in need of free legal services.

As we all know, on October 29-30, 2012, the City of New York was hit by superstorm Sandy, devastating much of lower Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island. The New York Legal Assistance Group responded promptly, dedicating legal staff, setting up a legal hotline, and sending lawyers directly to impacted neighborhoods through partnerships with community-based organizations and the use of our Mobile Legal Help Center. While some have reported that this storm revealed a city of haves and have nots, for vulnerable New Yorkers and the organizations that serve them, this was already all too obvious. The storm merely brought to the forefront the challenges faced daily by those with limited resources, limited support and/or language and mobility barriers.

For residents of NYCHA Public Housing, the storm reinforced the familiar experience of being deprived of the legal rights to which they are entitled and of receiving worse treatment than that accorded to private tenants. It is well known in this room that NYCHA residents have had serious complaints about NYCHA's management since long before the storm. NYLAG filed a class action suit against NYCHA in 2009, on behalf of residents with mobility impairments, challenging NYCHA's failure to adequately maintain its elevators. That case has been settled, and we hope that under normal conditions, when the waters are not pouring into the buildings, elevator service will improve.

But we know that over the last few years, NYCHA has been falling further and further behind in making repairs to remove unsafe and hazardous conditions in residents' apartments, in many cases scheduling repairs 1 to 2 years out. While NYCHA excuses this delay by citing funding problems, it has not been deterred from seeking to evict residents in Nonpayment and Chronic Rent Delinquency (CRD) cases, despite tenants' legal right to withhold rent for a landlord's failure to make necessary repairs. While there are many issues that should be addressed regarding NYCHA's preparation leading up to and during the storm, we would like to focus on NYCHA's response after the storm, in both failing to timely restore services and make repairs; and failing to providing adequate economic relief for the period of time residents were without essential services, a situation which, for some NYCHA tenants, continues to this day, more than 2 ½ months later.

It is estimated that some 77,000 NYCHA residents were impacted by the storm.¹ Residents in affected areas lost electricity and/or went without heat and hot water for days to weeks. During the first two weeks after the storm, NYCHA did not have a strong presence. Residents relied on community organizations and volunteers to check on the disabled and/or elderly and provide food, warm blankets, etc. Many clients complained to NYLAG that they felt abandoned by building management and received little to no information about the conditions of their building. What little information they did receive was often confusing and conflicting, including information about whether they should evacuate or not. In later November, one Red Hook tenant reported that she had not seen a NYCHA employee since the days of the storm and that NYCHA had made no effort to evacuate her family or their neighbors. Another man reported that NYCHA had made no effort to assist his elderly, disabled mother in her Red Hook development, forcing him to find placement for her in a nursing home. We also met elderly NYCHA tenants in Brighton who were left in their apartments with no contact from NYCHA, living for weeks with no heat or hot water and no way to fill prescriptions.

Some apartments sustained severe water damage and many apartments are now dealing with a growing mold nuisance. For apartments that were already awaiting repairs for preexisting

1 See NY Customer Service Newsletter, Volume 1, Issue 1 (October 2008), NYCHA: Improving the Customer Experience, available at, http://www.nyc.gov/html/ops/downloads/pdf/nyc_cusomter+service_newsletter_volume_. NYCHA Ignored Recommendations To Prepare for Hurricanes like Sandy, Gothamist, 12/10/2012.

2. See Just Days After Hurricane Sandy, NYCHA Tenants with no Heat, Hot Water or Power get Eviction Notices, Greg B. Smith, New York Daily News 12/23/2012.

3. NYCHA head tells tenants who are still without power that they'll get a credit for their troubles - in January, Greg B. Smith, New York Daily News, 11/12/2012.

conditions, those conditions have become more hazardous, aggravated by sewage back up, water soaked infrastructure and mold. One NYCHA tenant in Red Hook reported that a NYCHA employee first came to his apartment a full month after Sandy. By that time, his kitchen was rapidly developing mold due to water that had backed up through his kitchen sink and broken tiles in the floor, the garbage in his building had not been picked up since before the storm and the hallways were unbearable because of the stench. While it is estimated that all developments have restored electricity, heat and hot water, many apartments are still uninhabitable due to water damage and mold conditions.

To make matters worse for suffering NYCHA residents, during the first two weeks after the storm, NYCHA continued to serve court summons and eviction notices on residents in developments that were without heat, hot water and/or electricity.² NYCHA required all residents, including tenants of uninhabitable apartments, to continue paying rent without making any accommodation for those who had to use rent money for emergency supplies to stay warm and dry. Thus, on November 12, 2012, when NYCHA Chairman Rhea announced that affected residents would be getting a rent abatement, but not until January 2013, what Chairman Rhea described as a “nice little Christmas gift,”³ provided little relief to residents.

Consequently, on November 16, 2012, NYLAG’s Special Litigation Unit sent a Demand Letter to NYCHA asking that NYCHA: (1) immediately provide a blanket one month rent abatement to all affected residents; (2) institute a policy that no late payments or failures to make payments would be cited for future Nonpayment or CRD cases for any period that developments are without all essential services; and (3) stay commencement of any new and any pending eviction proceedings until all essential services are restored. NYCHA responded on November 23, 2012, stating only that it would stay commencement of new eviction proceedings for residents in Evacuation Zone A from November 15, 2012 through January 1, 2013, but failed to sufficiently address our other concerns.

We have spoken to and/or met numerous displaced NYCHA residents who have had to expend their limited resources to pay for alternative temporary housing because FEMA hotels were at capacity, to pay for food and dry clothing and/or to pay for transportation to their apartments to check on the status of conditions and deter theft. We spoke to residents in Red Hook in November, including a single 81-year-old woman who expected to default on her next rent bill due to the costs expended on temporarily evacuating her water damaged apartment. We spoke with a woman from Far Rockaway who was unable to pay her November rent because she was also forced to pay for her own temporary housing due to the unavailability of FEMA hotels. She also incurred costs traveling to and from her apartment to monitor the conditions of her building, which was necessary because she could not get a clear answer from NYCHA about when her building would be open again. We spoke last week to a NYCHA resident in Rockaway who finally received her rent credit, which was a mere \$80, for her apartment from which she is *still* displaced due to mold conditions. This client has

a 16-month-old child who became severely ill when they tried to reenter the apartment due to the unabated mold condition.

While we understand the tremendous burden on NYCHA, especially in these unprecedented circumstances, as a landlord NYCHA is not entitled to rent payments when it fails to maintain its properties in a habitable condition. NYCHA's failure to promptly restore services, and to repair water damaged and mold-ridden apartments, perpetuates the idea that residents of public housing are second class citizens. However, NYCHA is not exempt from the law; it is not exempt from the housing maintenance code. This agency cannot be absolved of its legal duties to its residents, particularly when they constitute some of the most vulnerable members of our City.

As NYLAG laid out in its November letter to NYCHA, there are specific steps NYCHA should take in the wake of the storm. NYCHA should provide at least a one month blanket rent abatement to all residents in affected developments and institute a policy that no late payments or failures to make payments during any period that the developments were (or are) without all essential services be cited for future Nonpayment or CRD cases. Additionally, NYCHA must establish a transparent and easily navigated system through which residents can seek emergency repairs for apartments with water damage and mold nuisance, and must respond promptly to requests for repairs.

We welcome the opportunity to further discuss or comment on these matters in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Respectfully submitted,

The New York Legal Assistance Group, by:
Ann Dibble, Director, Storm Response
Julia Russell, Senior Staff Attorney, Special Litigation
Sunny Noh, Supervising Attorney, Storm Response



YISROEL SCHULMAN, ESQ.
President & Attorney-in-Charge

By E-mail

November 16, 2012

Chairman John B. Rhea
New York City Housing Authority
250 Broadway, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Re: Rent Obligations of NYCHA Residents Affected by Sandy

Dear Chairman Rhea:

The New York Legal Assistance Group is a non-profit organization that provides free legal services to low-income New Yorkers. We represent a class of disabled NYCHA tenants in *Brito v. NYCHA*, involving the chronic disrepair of NYCHA elevators. Today we write on behalf of all NYCHA residents living in developments severely affected by Sandy, whose homes were without electricity, heat, water, elevator service, and other essential services for days and weeks following the storm. As of this date, thousands of NYCHA residents are living without heat, hot water, functioning elevators, and/or fully restored electricity.

We are aware of NYCHA's decision, announced earlier this week, to provide tenants rent credits for days in which they lacked essential services. However, we join with New York City Advocate Bill de Blasio in calling for NYCHA to make these credits effective immediately, rather than waiting until next year. In the words of the Public Advocate, "It is unacceptable to charge full rent up front for tenants who in many cases are still living in the dark. . . . No tenant in public housing should be forced to pay the City for rent they do not actually owe." We believe that NYCHA should give a minimum of a month's credit to all tenants who have lived without essential services for so long, and more if the disruptions continue.

Additionally, we urge NYCHA to issue a clear statement immediately to tenants in affected developments that because the rent credits will be effective immediately, rent withheld for the period without essential services will not be considered delinquent and will not be used as a basis for any adverse legal action against them.

To do otherwise would be unjust. The very conditions that have made apartments uninhabitable for many NYCHA tenants have also made it near impossible for some of them to

pay their rent. We here provide some examples of the hardships suffered by residents of Red Hook West.

Ms. Vera Esannason has never been late paying her rent in the past, but fears that she will be unable to pay her next rent bill because she had to spend significant portions of her SSD check to pay \$500 for alternate housing for more than two weeks after the storm, and for cabfare back and forth between her temporary housing and her NYCHA apartment. NYCHA instructed Ms. Esannason to evacuate her apartment at 135 Richards Street in NYCHA's Red Hook West development on Monday, October 29, 2012, before NYCHA shut down the building's electrical systems and elevators prior to the storm. Ms. Esannason remained Monday night, but left early on Tuesday morning, October 30th to stay with a friend whose apartment had electricity and heat. Ms. Esannason was displaced from her apartment for more than 2 weeks; she was unable to return until electricity and heat were restored on Wednesday, November 14th. Hot water was not restored to her building until Thursday, November 15th.

Ms. Julia Perry, an 81-year-old diabetic resident of the Red Hook West development, is also unable to pay her next rent bill because she was forced to spend significant amounts of her SSD check on alternate housing and to replace her clothing, which was all destroyed in the storm. Ms. Perry evacuated her apartment, Unit 1C, at 17 Lorraine Street at NYCHA's direction, and paid \$100 per week to stay with her sister elsewhere in Brooklyn. Although electricity was restored to Ms. Perry's building on Sunday, November 11th, Ms. Perry had to return to stay with her sister because her apartment was simply too cold without heat, which was not restored until Thursday, November 15th. The walls and floors in her first floor apartment were covered in rust-colored water when Ms. Perry returned to her apartment, and her clothes and furniture were all wet.

Under conditions like these, residents are entitled to withhold rent from NYCHA immediately, instead of waiting until January to receive their credits. NYCHA's Resident Lease obligates NYCHA to "maintain the common areas of [each tenant's] Development in a decent, safe and sanitary condition," NYCHA Resident Lease ¶ 13(a), and to promptly repair premises where "conditions are created which are hazardous to life, health, or safety of the occupants," *id.* ¶ 14(b). The Lease further provides for abatement of rent for "the period exceeding a reasonable time for repairs in which such repairs were not made. *Id.* ¶ 14(d). Because of the extraordinary degree of suffering endured by these tenants, a full month's credit should be extended.

To protect the rights of NYCHA tenants affected by Sandy, we urge NYCHA to declare that rent credits are effective immediately. Though it may take time to calculate credits, no NYCHA resident of an affected development should be penalized in any manner, including in any future nonpayment or delinquency proceeding, for withholding rent. Further, NYCHA must

provide notice of the same, including the manner of calculating rent credits, to all its residents, so that they may have clarity in this time of difficulty.

Please provide a prompt response so that we can advise our clients appropriately. We are available for a meeting or call regarding these issues at your convenience.

Sincerely,



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Kamilla Sjödin
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cc: Senator Charles Schumer
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
Mayor Michael Bloomberg
Public Advocate Bill de Blasio
Steven Rappaport, Esq.

FTR



Testimony by The Legal Aid Society

Before the New York City Council Committee on Public Housing Emergency Planning and Management During and After the Storm: NYCHA Emergency Planning and Response January 17, 2013

Introduction

The Legal Aid Society, the nation's oldest and largest not-for-profit legal services organization, is an integral part of our City's emergency response efforts. It is more than a law firm for clients who cannot afford to pay for counsel. The Legal Aid Society is an indispensable component of the legal, social and economic fabric of New York City – passionately advocating for low-income individuals and families across a variety of civil, criminal and juvenile rights matters, while also fighting for legal reform. The Legal Aid Society has performed this role in City, State and federal courts since 1876. It does so by capitalizing on the diverse expertise, experience, and capabilities of 1,000 of the brightest legal minds. These 1,000 Legal Aid Society lawyers work with nearly 700 social workers, investigators, paralegals and support and administrative staff. Through a network of borough, neighborhood, and courthouse offices in 25 locations in New York City, the Society provides comprehensive legal services in all five boroughs of New York City for clients who cannot afford to pay for private counsel. The Society's legal program operates three major practices — Civil, Criminal and Juvenile Rights — and receives volunteer help from law firms, corporate law departments and expert consultants that is coordinated by the Society's Pro Bono program. With its annual caseload of more than 300,000 legal matters, The Legal Aid Society takes on more cases for more clients than any other

legal services organization in the United States. And it brings a depth and breadth of perspective that is unmatched in the legal profession.

Our Civil Practice has offices in every borough of the City, and worked on more than 43,000 individual legal matters last year winning over 90 percent of the cases that go to court or an administrative hearing. An additional two million low-income children and adults benefit from the Civil Practice's pending class action litigation. The Civil Practice works to improve the lives of needy New Yorkers by helping vulnerable families and individuals on issues ranging from health care, housing, homelessness prevention, employment law, education, foreclosure prevention, consumer law, community economic development, public assistance, immigration, family law and domestic violence and disability-related issues.

The Society is counsel on numerous class-action cases concerning the rights of public housing residents and Section 8 tenants and is a member of the New York City Alliance to Preserve Public Housing, a local collaboration of New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) resident leaders, advocates and concerned elected officials.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify before the City Council's Public Housing Committee concerning NYCHA's preparations for and response to Hurricane Sandy. We greatly appreciate the leadership of Chair Rosie Mendez and her commitment to public housing and Section 8 residents.

The Legal Aid Society- Summary of Efforts as Legal Services "First Responder"

Beginning in the immediate aftermath of the storm, staff members of the Society have been providing comprehensive disaster relief legal assistance at disaster centers, community-based organizations, through the Society's Mobile Justice Unit and at the shelters for homeless and displaced New Yorkers.

The Legal Aid Society has targeted disaster relief services in the most affected communities in Far Rockaway, Coney Island, Red Hook, Staten Island as well as in parts of Lower Manhattan. New Yorkers in need of disaster relief legal assistance can also call The Legal Aid Society's toll-free disaster relief helpline at (888) 663-6880. Beginning immediately after the storm receded, Society staff members have been assisting affected New Yorkers with

FEMA and Disaster Unemployment Insurance claims; replacing medications and access to health care; obtaining Food Stamps and public assistance; public housing, Section 8 matters; landlord-tenant; homeowner/foreclosure help; assistance with loans and other small business matters; school transfers and transportation issues; and family law and immigration matters.

Sandy's Impact on NYCHA Public Housing Residents and Section 8 Tenants

- NYCHA shut down all elevators in public housing developments throughout Zone A and ordered evacuation of all residents in those buildings as of 7 p.m. on October 28, 2012.
- Immediately after Sandy hit on October 29, 2012, 79,000 NYCHA residents were left without electricity and elevator service and 77,000 had no heat or hot water.
- It was not until November 14, 2012, that NYCHA announced that it had restored services to 100% of its buildings.
- Nevertheless, in the most heavily impacted areas of Red Hook, Coney Island and the Rockaways, most residents have been experiencing problems with intermittent power, heat and hot water and elevator service because temporary generators and boilers are unable to power full usage by buildings.
- Sandy caused damage to many NYCHA apartments – some residents report problems with leaks in their apartments post Sandy, mold or mildew, problems with plastering and damp walls.
- In the most heavily impacted areas, Sandy caused damage to many private apartments leased by Section 8 tenants, forcing those tenants to evacuate their apartments and rendering their homes uninhabitable.
- Thousands of NYCHA residents were forced to spend money on flash lights, batteries, bottled water, prepared food, space heaters and emergency supplies in order to survive during this time.

The Legal Aid Society's Immediate Response to Help NYCHA Residents and Section 8 Tenants In Need

- By Friday November 2, 2012, Society staff assisted public housing residents with FEMA and emergency food stamps applications and other legal needs at the Red Hook Initiative,

a community-based organization close to the six public housing developments in Red Hook which were devastated by Hurricane Sandy.

- On Saturday and Sunday, November 3rd and 4th, 2012, Legal Aid used its Mobile Justice Unit to go to Coney Island and assisted public housing residents with FEMA and emergency food stamp applications and other legal needs.
- Since these early days, we have continued to provide disaster relief legal assistance to families and individuals in the most impacted communities. In addition to community outreach, Legal Aid Society attorneys have advocated at NYCHA on behalf of individuals who have Sandy related issues, such as securing Section 8 emergency transfer vouchers, obtaining transfers from public housing apartments damaged by the storm and obtaining urgent repairs to apartments.
- In addition to outreach to individual public housing residents and Section 8 tenants, the Society has held evening clinics in Coney Island and Red Hook for impacted NYCHA residents and two resource and information clinics in Lower Manhattan requested by local elected officials and community leaders.
- During the first three weeks after Sandy hit, The Legal Aid Society met twice with the General Manager of NYCHA and other NYCHA staff members and brought key issues and concerns to NYCHA's attention that we had observed during and learned from our disaster relief outreach efforts in impacted communities, including: the need for a publicly announced plan concerning the status of administrative hearings and eviction proceedings; the need for a moratorium on eviction proceedings through January, 2013; the need for an expedited procedure for obtaining emergency Section 8 transfers for Section 8 tenants displaced by Sandy; the need for a waiver of rent for the month of November in light of the lack of services for residents; and the need for a plan for repairing conditions in NYCHA apartments caused by Sandy.

Problems with NYCHA's Response to the Storm

Lack of Communication, Accountability and Coordination

Hurricane Sandy overwhelmed the natural and man-made barriers that protect New York City and have served city residents so well throughout the City's history. In the days and weeks

that followed, public and private agencies and individuals struggled to restore basic services to many thousands of New Yorkers affected by the storm. NYCHA could not stop Sandy, but it could have stopped its residents from being unduly panicked by Sandy by effectively distributing information that it had in its possession about the restoration of essential services.

After Sandy hit the City, thousands of NYCHA residents were without power for many weeks and were unable to access information using telephones or cellular phones, televisions, radios and computers. Wait times to speak with a NYCHA representative on NYCHA's CCC line were exceedingly long and residents reported not being able to get through. While NYCHA posted information on its website with updates on the restoration of electricity and heat and hot water and information concerning Section 8 emergency transfers, thousands of residents and displaced Section 8 tenants were unable to access this information given the lack of power in their homes. We met with hundreds of NYCHA residents during our relief efforts who repeatedly told us that this lack of communication from NYCHA about efforts to restore services, the timing of clean-up operations and other disaster relief efforts caused stress, confusion and anguish.

Moreover, the limited updates that were being released by NYCHA on its website provided little information addressing the actual needs of residents and did nothing to calm the ever-growing fears of residents trapped in dark, cold apartments. The days immediately after the storm hit were a time when people needed accurate, reliable and timely information. In the days and weeks after Sandy hit, residents, Section 8 tenants, elected officials and advocates were desperate for *real* information from different units within NYCHA about a variety of NYCHA's operations and this was strikingly absent. Instead, the communications issued by NYCHA units focused on the positive things that NYCHA accomplished once results had been achieved.

Throughout the entire post-Sandy process of restoring building operations there was no accountability or transparency regarding NYCHA's organization of efforts and who was in charge of each area of operations on a development and City-wide basis. Indeed, in many cases, it seemed no one was in charge.

In sum, the lack of preparation, coordination and communication on the part of NYCHA resulted in an increasingly chaotic and desperate situation for the most vulnerable of NYCHA's residents and Section 8 tenants in the days and weeks after Sandy hit.

Recommendations:

1) NYCHA needs to work on a comprehensive evacuation and emergency preparedness and response plan and distribute it widely (in a number of different languages) to residents and advocates City-wide in different formats that are accessible to all.

2) Before, during and after any emergency that results in a loss of power, cellular phone service or other essential building services that make it difficult for residents to access information, NYCHA should print flyers containing updates on building services and operations and distribute them both under apartment doors and in building entryways.

3) NYCHA needs to designate one space in each development that can be used as a central “command station” after emergency situations occur to distribute information, address residents’ questions, concerns and needs, and host community meetings. There should be one NYCHA staff member identified in each development who is designated as a point-person and charged with communicating updated information from NYCHA to residents throughout the day concerning emergency relief efforts, restoration of services and other operations as necessary.

4) NYCHA needs to designate a point person for each unit within its public housing and Section 8 departments who is responsible after an emergency occurs for developing and executing NYCHA’s response to the particular emergency, coordinating work with other units within NYCHA and distributing information to residents and the public concerning the unit’s work - and who can ultimately be held accountable for actions.

5) If phone service is uninterrupted, NYCHA should also set up a toll-free information line after an emergency so that residents and Section 8 tenants can access information relevant to the situation. The information on the line should be updated regularly throughout the day as necessary.

NYCHA Residents and Section 8 Tenants with Special Needs

Earlier in 2012, NYCHA publicly confirmed that 30 percent of its households are headed by seniors. NYCHA also recently announced that it has a list of 3,500 residents city-wide who have self-identified as disabled. NYCHA staff at each of its developments who interact on a daily basis with residents of each building have *personal* knowledge of which residents within their development have special needs – persons with disabilities, homebound persons and elderly residents – even though these residents may not have self-identified as disabled or be included on

NYCHA's list. NYCHA also knew how many households in its developments throughout Zone A had evacuated before Sandy hit the City on October 29, 2012. Armed with this information, NYCHA's response to its most vulnerable residents who remained and were trapped in their cold, dark apartments after Sandy hit can only be described as grossly negligent.

NYCHA claims that its staff went door-to-door throughout developments in Zone A both before and after Sandy hit to address the specific needs of the residents whose names appeared on their list of 3,500. The reality is very different from NYCHA's portrayal of events. The Legal Aid Society was in these communities two days after Sandy hit and for weeks afterwards and we have been unable to find *one* resident who received a single visit from a member of NYCHA's staff in the days and even weeks after Sandy hit. Instead, we found many homebound tenants who had been trapped in their apartments, unable to navigate dark stairwells from upper floors and in desperate need of medical assistance, and who had no contact with the outside world until volunteers from community-based organizations doing disaster relief outreach knocked on their doors and got them the help they so badly needed in the days after the storm hit. We also now know that even though NYCHA failed to send members of its staff to check in on its most vulnerable residents, they were able to serve eviction papers on several residents in developments in Coney Island.

Recommendations:

- 1) NYCHA needs to create and regularly update a comprehensive list for each of its developments of those apartments with household members who have special needs – those with disabilities, the elderly and the home-bound.
- 2) The information in those lists should inform NYCHA's planning process as it develops future emergency preparedness and response plans and can then be used by those involved in disaster relief efforts to ensure that the needs of NYCHA's most vulnerable residents are addressed.
- 3) There needs to be greater coordination, both before and after emergencies occur, between NYCHA and other City agencies in order to insure that the needs of the most vulnerable NYCHA residents are addressed.
- 4) Each development should be equipped with a number of small emergency generators that can power a refrigerator or medical devices that require power so that those residents with

equipment such as ventilators and medicine that needs to be refrigerated such as insulin can survive until they access more permanent solutions to the problem.

NYCHA Needs to Address Ongoing Sandy Related Issues

During the storm and in the immediate aftermath, there was an urgent need for relief efforts to be focused on stabilizing households, restoring essential services, and accessing support systems. Two months after the storm has passed, there exist a number of Sandy related issues that pose a serious threat to the health and safety of NYCHA residents and staff and Section 8 tenants displaced by Sandy. These issues include, but are not limited to: dangerous conditions in apartments such as mold and leaks, intermittent building services such as heat, hot water and elevators, the need to locate new apartments for those Section 8 residents displaced by Sandy. NYCHA must immediately turn its attention to addressing these issues.

Recommendations:

- 1) NYCHA needs to create a comprehensive plan for how it is going to fix conditions in buildings and apartments that were caused or are exacerbated by the impact of Sandy. The plan needs to be made publicly available and NYCHA should inform residents about the expected timeline for the completion of repairs.
- 2) NYCHA needs to ensure that all mold remediation work is well planned so that the health of residents and workers is not put at risk.
- 3) NYCHA's Leased Housing Department needs to ensure that it will continue to expedite the processing of all Sandy emergency Section 8 transfer vouchers. This includes ensuring that it expedites the "linking" process, when a displaced Section 8 residents locates a new apartment, so that displaced tenants can move quickly back into homes.
- 4) NYCHA needs to clarify and issue its policy concerning temporary transfers for those NYCHA residents who need to be relocated to another apartment while repair work is completed in their apartment. This policy needs to include guarantees that each relocated household shall have the right to return to their apartment once work is expeditiously completed.

Conclusion

We look forward to continued discussions with NYCHA on ways that we can together address the need for a comprehensive disaster relief response that will address the needs of all its impacted residents and Section 8 tenants and especially the most vulnerable.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before the Committee on Public Housing.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Keeping people in their homes and community, since 1977!

Testimony to New York City Council Public Housing Committee
On "Emergency Planning and Management During and After the Storm:
NYCHA Emergency Planning and Response"
Thursday, January 17, 2013

by Damaris Reyes, Executive Director, Good Old Lower East Side, Inc.

Good afternoon. My name is Damaris Reyes, and I'm the Executive Director of GOLES, Good Old Lower East Side, a 35-year-old membership organization dedicated to tenant rights, economic equality, and community revitalization. As a pioneer and a leading voice in public housing issues both locally and nationally, we reach more than 10,000 people every year with our work.

Hurricane Sandy's impact on our beloved community was swift, immense, and overwhelming. Within hours of the storm's arrival, a storm surge brought the East River cascading through the neighborhood up to Avenue B where the GOLES offices are located. Hundreds of buildings flooded, including my own in Baruch Houses, a NYCHA development immediately adjacent to the East River on the Lower East Side. Then, the power went out in residential and commercial buildings below 39th Street leaving many, including my family, without heat, water, and any means of communication.

GOLES' relief efforts started as soon as the storm hit, with the staff residing in the community assessing needs and providing support to residents. Within the first days after the storm, we developed and implemented a strategy that enabled us to focus on assisting the most vulnerable folks, trapped in their homes without electricity, food, or water. For eleven days straight after Hurricane Sandy hit, GOLES managed a massive relief effort, mobilizing 3,000 volunteers and fielding thousands of donations that reached more than 15,000 residents, approximately 80% of them in NYCHA developments. GOLES' staff and volunteers walked up 20+ flights of stairs in some high-rise buildings to provide residents with the basic necessities and emergency information. We canvassed the neighborhood to assess who needed our help. We delivered thousands of bags of food, bottles of water, blankets, flashlights, batteries, and candles. We brought food and water to residents with limited mobility and helped get other residents medical attention.

Members of my staff living outside the LES traveled for nearly three hours to get to GOLES so that their skills can be utilized. We worked in our offices by candlelight before electricity returned to the neighborhood and, then, for weeks after, without consistent heat, phone service, or internet.

Having lived through these challenges myself on the ground, I want to acknowledge the enormity of the task that the New York City Housing Authority faced as an agency, taking much brunt of the storm's impact on the city's housing stock and tackling challenges that it maybe never imagined it would face. On certain aspects of NYCHA's response, I commend their work. However, that does not negate what thousands of NYCHA residents lived through, without services and consistent communication from the Housing Authority, and many residents facing tremendous financial and personal hardship as a result of the storm. I would like to take the opportunity to touch on a few key points regarding these aspects of NYCHA's response to Hurricane Sandy.

(cont. on reverse)

The first issue I would like to address pertains to communication. I would characterize coordination between NYCHA and groups and agencies providing immediate relief as unclear at best. NYCHA did not communicate at all with many of the community organizations on the ground, providing immediate relief. This, at times, led to a less-than-efficient distribution of donated resources. Everyone knew that, on the Lower East Side, GOLES staff and volunteers were climbing stairs in dark buildings with flashlights and the supplies people needed— and groups just like us around the city were the ones doing it in their own neighborhoods. Thankfully, I'm from the Lower East Side, and so is most of my staff, so we know the neighborhood well enough to know – without power or phones or internet – the addresses of NYCHA's senior buildings and other places where we knew we had to send volunteers to make sure that the most vulnerable people got what they needed. I don't even want to imagine the kinds of tragedies that could've occurred without this expertise. If NYCHA would have communicated with first responders to share important information about where to locate seniors, the disabled, and other vulnerable populations immediately after a storm, this grave risk could've been avoided.

Secondly, NYCHA's communication with residents about the timing for restoration of services also stands to be improved. While the Housing Authority posted some flyers in the developments about Hurricane Sandy, there were none about a timeline for getting back vital services like heat and hot water, and this caused a lot of frustration and outrage from residents. This is especially problematic for seniors and others in vulnerable situations. People who evacuated from NYCHA developments didn't know when it was okay for them to come back. Eventually, NYCHA posted a list on its website detailing the status of different developments' service restoration status, but it was not accurate in all cases. Moreover, Hurricane Sandy deprived many people of their access to phone and internet services for a considerable amount of time even after the power was restored, making checking their website difficult; not to mention that, even in the best of times, many seniors and low-income people don't have consistent access to the internet to begin with.

Lastly, however, I would like to commend NYCHA for recognizing that putting a moratorium on evictions for the months following the hurricane was the right thing to do. Similarly, regarding the rent abatement, while perhaps the timing and communication about its distribution could have been improved, I do commend NYCHA for at least recognizing that providing an abatement was also the right thing to do, especially because of the financial challenges residents endured in losing food and purchasing needed supplies that no one had budgeted for.

Hurricane Sandy was a massive wake-up call that our community is not prepared to handle natural disasters or any other type of crisis that has the impact that Hurricane Sandy had on our community. With the realities of climate change, we realize that this will likely not be the last time that we will have to face a disaster of this scale, particularly for waterfront communities like the Lower East Side. Moving forward, we strongly urge NYCHA to increase its communication with community groups like GOLES who provide the first line of response and, also, to work with residents and community organizations to develop a community disaster preparedness plan for the future to prevent a bad situation from taking a turn for the worst.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



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FTR

Public Hearing
250 Broadway, 16th Floor
New York, New York
January 16, 2013

Urban Justice Center - Community Development Project

Testimony before the Committee on Public Housing

Good morning. My name is Harvey Epstein; I am the Project Director of the Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center. The Urban Justice Center is a project-based umbrella legal services and advocacy organization serving New York City residents. In the past 28 years, the Urban Justice Center has provided direct legal assistance, systemic advocacy and community education to low and moderate income rent regulated tenants in New York City. The Community Development Project (CDP) of the Urban Justice Center formed in September 2001 to provide legal, technical, research and policy assistance to grassroots community groups engaged in a wide range of community development efforts throughout New York City. Our work is informed by the belief that real and lasting change in low-income, urban neighborhoods is often rooted in the empowerment of grassroots, community institutions.

I am here to discuss NYCHA's evacuation and decision-making plans as they relate to Superstorm Sandy. In addition, I plan on commenting on NYCHA's public communications efforts and other aspects of emergency response. I want to thank the City Council for taking the time to allow the public to testify about their experiences before, during, and after the storm. I live in lower Manhattan, and while I do not live in an area that was designated as an evacuation zone, I did lose power with the rest of lower Manhattan. My battery operated radio was extremely helpful to me to get updated information about what was going on around the city and the country. Unfortunately, many of my friends and neighbors did not have access to any reliable sources of information. For most of the week without power, we saw almost no governmental presence in our buildings or on our streets. No one from FEMA, NYCHA, or any other governmental agency was coming around to check in on elderly residents who were stuck in their apartments without electricity, heat, or water. During that critical first week after the storm, there appeared to be no coordinated governmental effort to assist the most vulnerable populations who needed basic necessities such as food and medicine.

First, NYCHA failed to adequately inform tenants of the impending storm and failed to provide any assistance prior to the storm to elderly and disabled tenants who might have needed help moving out of the evacuation zones. Second, NYCHA failed to assist tenants after

Superstorm Sandy to assess their needs and failed to help elderly and disabled tenants obtain adequate services and help with relocation for those tenants in dire situations. Finally, NYCHA was unprepared to deal with the full effects of the storm and to timely respond to power outages. After the major city power systems came back on, NYCHA lacked an adequate plan to get all their developments up and running again. Tenants waited needlessly and for too long without power, heat, hot water or elevator service because NYCHA had no emergency plan in place. In fact, our office is still hearing from tenants in NYCHA developments who lack adequate or consistent heat, hot water, and elevator service. This is in direct contradiction to many private developments which faced the same problems related to the Superstorm, but were able to respond quickly and efficiently to ensure that their residents had power, heat and services restored quickly.

As an organization that has long been representing NYCHA tenants in group litigation against the Housing Authority for repairs and essential services, we also know that many NYCHA tenants had been suffering from terrible housing conditions in many NYCHA developments well before the Superstorm hit our city. We therefore also demand that NYCHA take immediate steps to allocate the resources necessary to ensure that all repair needs (including capital needs such as new elevators) are addressed in all public housing developments without delay.

Another area that NYCHA must address in its future disaster response plans is its relationship to community-based organizations. As the City Council knows, New York is a great city with amazing community-based organizations. Immediately after the storm hit the city, organizations like CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities and Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES) went to work to provide emergency disaster relief. They organized volunteers to go door-to-door in hundreds of buildings in order to distribute the batteries, food, and supplies that were so badly needed throughout the Lower East Side, East Village, and Chinatown, especially in the NYCHA developments. While GOLES did receive substantial support from Councilmember Mendez's office, both GOLES and CAAAVV were operating without any support from NYCHA. In fact, it seemed like while many governmental agencies did not have a structured and coordinated response to the disaster, they wanted to hamper the efforts of community-based organizations. NYCHA was nowhere to be seen and was not providing any meaningful support for the efforts of community-based organizations.

After the storm, New Yorkers from every corner of the city came out to volunteer. Thousands of people, whose only thoughts were to help other New Yorkers, donated and transported food, batteries, flashlights, and other necessary items. People walked through buildings knocking on doors and checking on tenants. These were New Yorkers at their best. However, the community-based organizations coordinating these volunteer efforts needed more assistance (including funding and supplies) from NYCHA. With sufficient support, these CBO's could have reached more NYCHA tenants, provided more help, and reduced the suffering of New York's most vulnerable residents. I would ask NYCHA to compile a list of those organizations and that when another natural disaster occurs, that NYCHA would be required to coordinate relief efforts with the staff at these CBO's who have the best knowledge of their own neighborhoods so that we can efficiently and effectively respond to all of the many consequences of major storms and other disasters.

In conclusion, we support NYCHA's efforts to critically analyze and improve its response to future natural and man-made disasters. While insufficient planning and staffing resulted in unnecessary hardships for many low income and elderly residents in the aftermath of Sandy, we hope the feedback provided today will help NYCHA to correct these problems and to become more effective, equitable, and accountable in its response to future disasters. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on these important issues.

**TESTIMONY OF SONJA SHIELD, LEGAL SERVICES NYC,
ON THE NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY'S
RESPONSE TO HURRICANE SANDY**

**New York City Council
Committee on Public Housing**

January 17, 2013

Legal Services NYC welcomes the opportunity to give testimony before the New York City Committee on Public Housing. Legal Services NYC is one of the largest law firms for low income people in New York City. With 18 community-based offices and numerous outreach sites located throughout each of the city's five boroughs, Legal Services NYC's mission is to provide expert legal assistance that improves the lives and communities of low income New Yorkers. Legal Services NYC annually provides legal assistance to thousands of low income clients throughout New York City. Historically, Legal Services NYC's priority areas have included housing, government benefits and family law; in recent years, Legal Services NYC has vastly expanded services in areas of need critical to our client base, including consumer issues and foreclosure prevention, unemployment, language access, disability, education, immigration, and bankruptcy.

When our offices re-opened their doors after Hurricane Sandy, we encountered widespread devastation across New York's low-income communities. Our clients in public housing were among the most severely affected. All of Lower Manhattan – including thousands of NYCHA units in Baruch Houses, Jacob Riis, Smith Houses and Lillian Wald – had no power and hence no working elevators, lights, heat or running water for days after the storm. In the Rockaways, Staten Island, Coney Island, Gowanus, and Red Hook, the problems persisted for weeks – thousands of public housing residents without power, heat or running water. Hundreds of displaced public and private housing tenants slept side by side in school gyms and classrooms.

Since the hurricane, our staff has spent hundreds of hours in Lower Manhattan, the Rockaways, Staten Island, Coney Island, Red Hook, Gowanus, Sheepshead Bay, Gerritsen Beach and shelters across New York. We've partnered with community based organizations – as they organize food, water and supplies, we provide legal advice and assistance. Across the city, while community activists and attorneys from Legal Services and other organizations did their best to assist NYCHA tenants living in abysmal conditions and trying to recover from Sandy, NYCHA remained silent and unresponsive.

NYCHA's Emergency Planning and Communication is Woefully Inadequate.

The post-Sandy response by NYCHA management and employees demonstrated a massive failure of coordination and communication. In place of NYCHA employees, it fell to NYCHA residents, community members, and groups like Legal Services to go door to door, up and down stairwells, in cold and dark NYCHA developments to help tenants. We have learned that many NYCHA employees did not have access to their work email for a week or more after Sandy hit, and therefore were unable to receive work-related messages or be directed to local developments where they could have been of assistance. Indeed, according to media reports, one of John Rhea's first actions was to issue a "gag order" to all employees, preventing them from disseminating information to NYCHA residents and to the public.

NYCHA appears to have no plan in place to deal with elderly or disabled residents trapped in high-rise buildings. One NYCHA employee told an attorney from Manhattan Legal Services, as that attorney was about to head up the stairs to assist homebound tenants, that it was not NYCHA's job to check on its vulnerable residents.

NYCHA's communications remained incomplete and inaccurate throughout the crisis: the spreadsheets posted on its website allegedly showing where utilities had been restored were often incorrect. For example, NYCHA asserted on November 13th that all electricity had been restored to each and every Queens, Staten Island, Manhattan, and Coney Island development, yet we continued and continue to hear from tenants in these areas that their electricity was not properly fixed and is at best intermittent.

NYCHA's Delay in Restoring Services was Unacceptable

The damage caused by Sandy underscores the pressing need for NYCHA to make repairs faster and better. It took six weeks for NYCHA to restore essential utilities to all developments after Sandy. During that time, the City experienced at least one serious cold snap and another dangerous winter storm.

Meanwhile, almost every other large subsidized housing complex and private market apartment complex had long since repaired and restored their tenants' utilities.

Even after utilities were reportedly restored in NYCHA developments, we heard from a number of tenants that the restoration had been only temporary, and that their heat, power, and hot water continued to be intermittent at best. Hopeful after NYCHA's assurances that utilities had been fixed, some tenants who had lost all of the food in their refrigerator due to Sandy restocked their refrigerators, only to lose a full refrigerator of food a second time.

Volunteers from a Red Hook community organization that delivered food, ice, and other necessities to homebound tenants twice a day for over six weeks – a crucial job that NYCHA was not doing – reported to us that NYCHA tenants continued to experience intermittent and unpredictable power, electricity, and hot water service. This was continuing to happen through mid-November, over six weeks after Sandy hit and even after NYCHA announced that all utilities had been restored across the city. NYCHA's response time in restoring heat, hot water, and electricity is shameful.

In Baruch Houses, one tenant whose apartment was flooded after the storm still has not had anyone come look at the damage or even respond to telephone calls; another elderly resident on the Lower East Side reports that his heat pipe had burst as a result of the storm. He has been given a work order date of May 2013 and NYCHA commented to him that by then he will not need heat anyway. NYCHA residents across the city continue to deal with serious mold conditions and many Lower East Side residents are also reporting problems with a heavy volume of rodents.

We have one client in the Surfside Gardens development who reports that currently, in mid-January – 2 ½ months after Sandy – the electricity goes out for several hours every other day, heat is intermittent, and hot water is tepid at best. Our client did not get any electricity restored until December 23rd, and she reports that her immediate neighbor just got her electricity restored late last week. Crime is widespread and the police are afraid to come to the development when the lights are out. NYCHA itself is allowing all residents to transfer, although there are few NYCHA apartments available for tenants to transfer into.

Restoration of basic utilities is still a live issue, but NYCHA is not publicizing the continued serious problems that are making whole developments uninhabitable. Instead, NYCHA is treating this as a settled and closed issue. Meanwhile, community activists report that NYCHA tenants are still waiting for repair of flood damage, mold and other Sandy-related conditions.

NYCHA Improperly Continued to Push Forward with Non-Payment Cases against Sandy-Affected Tenants.

In December we assisted a tenant from the Gowanus Houses who was referred to us by FUREE. The Gowanus Houses had lost utilities after Sandy for a number of days, and NYCHA acknowledges that tenants in Gowanus Houses were entitled to rent credits for those days. The tenant had a pending non-payment case in Brooklyn housing court, in which she had significant defenses.

My office, South Brooklyn Legal Services, needed time to evaluate her case and complete our intake paperwork, so we sent her in with instructions to ask for an adjournment. We did not expect her to have any problem getting the adjournment for two reasons. First, because she lived in a development that had lost utilities after Sandy, she was due a rent abatement, but NYCHA did not plan to calculate those abatements until the January rent bill. Second, NYCHA had made press statements that they would grant generous adjournments to tenants in pending court cases.

Despite our reasonable expectations, the Gowanus Houses tenant did run into a problem in housing court. NYCHA resisted her request for an adjournment and tried to pressure her into signing a payment stipulation with a final judgment against her. The judgment included full rent for November and December, without any calculation of the rent credit to which she was entitled. If NYCHA had obtained their judgment, they would have had a judgment against this tenant for rent they had already acknowledged they were not entitled to – days during November and December that the tenant had been without utilities. The tenant could have been evicted over money she did not owe, and would have had to pay money that she did not owe in order to keep her housing. In court, NYCHA did not want to back down and only grudgingly consented to the adjournment after my office arrived in the courtroom as a “friend of the court” to reiterate these arguments.

How many other tenants were not so lucky to have an advocate in court, and ended up with judgments against them that included rent that they didn’t actually owe? Likely quite a few: we have reviewed a number of other Gowanus Houses cases where pro se tenants signed final judgment stipulations in November and December that do not appear to include any rent credit for lost utilities.

South Brooklyn Legal Services also discovered that immediately after Hurricane Sandy, while tenants sat in cold, dark apartments, NYCHA continued to serve tenants with new eviction notices.¹ On November 2nd and 3rd, four days after Sandy hit, process server George Rodriguez trekked up and down the stairwells of the Coney Island and Surfside projects to serve tenants with nonpayment papers.

¹ Greg Smith, *Just days after Hurricane Sandy, NYCHA tenants with no heat, hot water or power get eviction notices*, *New York Daily News*, December 23, 2012, available at <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nycha-tenants-evictions-notices-days-sandy-article-1.1225992#ixzz2HymOoaDR>.

NYCHA also continued filing new non-payment cases against Gowanus Houses tenants throughout November and December, even after they had announced a moratorium on new cases. There is something wrong with our public housing authority when they prioritize sending a process server door-to-door to serve eviction notices over sending staff door-to-door to help tenants with dire needs.

NYCHA must inform the City Council how many new cases they filed in housing court in November and December against tenants in Sandy-affected developments, and how many judgments they obtained in November and December that included rent for which tenants were entitled to an abatement.

Unanswered Questions

Although NYCHA has now issued a list of the NYCHA developments that it acknowledges were affected by Sandy, and in which the tenants are entitled to a rent abatement, NYCHA has failed to provide key information. Most importantly, NYCHA did not include information about how many days the tenants will receive rent credits for being without utilities. Without this information, tenants and advocates cannot know whether the tenants are receiving the correct rent credit.

NYCHA also must inform tenants and the City Council how they plan to handle termination of tenancy proceedings that were affected by Hurricane Sandy. Did NYCHA in fact adjourn all termination of tenancy cases scheduled in the days and weeks after Sandy in which the tenant did not appear, as they had said they would? Were default judgments issued against any tenants? Will NYCHA try to terminate tenancies for “chronic rent delinquency” if part of the supposed rent delinquency includes problems paying rent during and after Sandy?

Plans for the Future

Looking to the future, NYCHA must develop a plan for coordinated response to emergencies and disasters. NYCHA should maintain records of the elderly and disabled residents of their projects, and assign employees to contact and assist them in case of emergency. NYCHA needs to provide disaster response training to its employees and insure that they know in advance the roles they will need to play in future emergencies.

NYCHA also must improve its communication on all fronts. It must implement a disaster plan that allows it to remain in communication with employees and to send those employees out to the sites where they are urgently needed. NYCHA must commit to communicating quickly and forthrightly with tenants and the larger City community.

We thank the City Council for addressing these important issues, and hope it will continue its careful oversight of NYCHA to insure that the mistakes of 2012 are not repeated.

Respectfully submitted,

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New York Cares Testimony
New York City Council Public Housing Committee's Hearing on Sandy
January 17, 2013

As the Office of Emergency Management's lead partner for mobilizing volunteers during disasters, New York Cares was on the ground immediately following Sandy and will continue to provide recovery services for at least the next year. Through the more than 13,500 volunteers whom we've deployed on over 800 relief and recovery projects to date, we have served tens of thousands of residents in the impacted communities (including the Rockaways, Staten Island and Southern Brooklyn) – including thousands of public housing residents.

Immediate Aftermath

In the days after the storm, we were one of five non-profit organizations called upon by Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs to canvass the impacted areas, and we saw first-hand the devastation caused by the storm: destroyed homes; overwhelmed make-shift shelters; elderly and handicapped public housing residents who did not have access to food or water, and were unable to get down the stairs in the absence of a working elevator.

For weeks after the storm, we mobilized 500 volunteers each day from five canvassing headquarter sites throughout the impacted areas. We coordinated with OEM, NYCService, NYCHA and other city agencies to resolve the problems we encountered – turning around food distribution and other volunteer projects, in many cases, overnight. For example, in the days after the storm, NYCHA informed us about elderly and handicapped residents at a large NYCHA housing development in Arverne, Queens, who were in need of food, water and blankets. Within 24 hours, a group of New York Cares volunteers – led by three NYPD officers and one NYCHA official – were at the development, carrying cases of water and supplies up eight flights of steps and through pitch-black, dank hallways to get the critical supplies to residents in need.

Challenges

Overall, the NYPD, the National Guard and the city staff working with NYCHA were helpful in escorting volunteers into public housing. However, at times there wasn't an adequate number of police to escort the all the volunteers present, and we were not able to mobilize every available volunteer – in spite of the overwhelming need among public housing residents.

Ongoing New York Cares Post-Sandy Work

New York Cares' projects to date have included much more than canvassing the impacted neighborhoods to assess needs, and distributing food, water and critical supplies. We have also distributed tens of thousands of warm coats; mucked out hundreds of homes; and provided ongoing education, health and revitalization services at a time when many of the local nonprofits and schools in the impacted areas remain shuttered. Over at least the next year, we will continue our muck out projects – including mold removal projects – and the expansion of our year-round programming in the Sandy-impacted neighborhoods.



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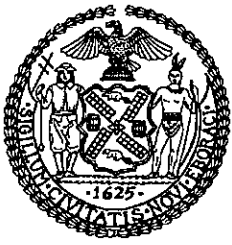
Ongoing Partnership With NYCHA

We value our partnership with NYCHA and the other involved city agencies, and we believe that close coordination will benefit all city residents when we encounter future storms and other disasters. We would like to be a part of a continued conversation about lessons learned and plans for the future.

About New York Cares

New York Cares, a past winner of the *New York Times* Company Nonprofit Excellence Award and the Peter F. Drucker Award for Nonprofit Innovation, engages 56,000 volunteers each year in our impactful programming that addresses urban poverty, with two overarching goals: (1) to meet immediate needs such as providing meals to the hungry, and (2) to offer longer-term education services and other support to help individuals break the cycle of poverty. We offer our programming at 1,300 schools and agencies citywide for clients who would not otherwise receive the services we provide. Every year, more than 400,000 New Yorkers depend upon New York Cares to build a better life.

Day in and day out, New York Cares mobilizes volunteers who help high-risk students to improve their classroom performance and to prepare for college; secure millions of dollars in tax refunds for low-income families; provide job training to unemployed adults; revitalize schools and parks; and so much more. And now – and for as long as it takes – we are on the frontlines of the city's response efforts, working around the clock to bring post Hurricane Sandy programming where it is needed most.



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Gigi Li, Board Chair

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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

January 17, 2013

**Re: Emergency Planning and Management During and After the Storm –
NYCHA Emergency Planning and Response**

Good afternoon. My name is Gigi Li, chair of Manhattan's Community Board 3 (CB 3), and I am here to testify on the challenges that NYCHA residents within Community Board 3 faced during and after Superstorm Sandy. I want to begin by thanking Chair Mendez for holding this important hearing and for the opportunity to testify.

Background

CB 3 stretches from the Brooklyn Bridge to 14th St on Manhattan's east side, and includes the neighborhoods of Chinatown and the Lower East Side. A substantial portion of Community Board 3 was identified to be in Zone A, particularly the stretch of NYCHA developments along the East River. After Community Board 11 in East Harlem, CB3 has the second highest number of NYCHA households in Manhattan, at just over 13,300. It appears that at least 90% of these units are in zones A and B.

First and foremost, I want to thank all of the elected officials and volunteers who stepped up to assist our community before, during, and after Sandy. It is my hope that we can learn from Sandy and adopt new policies that are not only preventive, but also increase the efficiency and speed of disaster relief to NYCHA residents in times of need.

To that end, I would like to highlight several points:

- **Need for Spanish and Chinese interpretation and translation:** Over 80% of CB 3's NYCHA residents identify as Puerto Rican, other Latino, or Asian. There is a clear need for all information from NYCHA to be in 3 languages, English, Chinese, and Spanish. Before the storm arrived, I volunteered as a door knocker at Smith Houses, encouraging families to evacuate in teams with trilingual language capacity. It became apparent very quickly that non-English speakers were less informed. Chinese interpretation occurred because volunteers from the community worked with local elected officials and their staff to cover limited high need areas. How is a non-English speaker supposed to know how to prepare and eat an MRE, or that eating 4 days of MREs in a row will result in severe constipation? Trilingual access to translation materials and during delivery of services is essential. In CB 3, there is also a good chance that your neighbor doesn't speak English.

- **Support for homebound, medically fragile, and individuals with disabilities:** With elevators not functioning, a significant number of medically fragile and wheelchair bound individuals were trapped inside their own home. I would suggest developing a “buddy system” within each building. As neighbors know each other best, residents can check-in on each other. Wheelchairs need to be charged, prescriptions need to be refilled - these are life threatening situations.
- **Coordination of relief efforts:** The first two days after the storm, there was no information. When assistance finally arrived, it was unorganized. There was a lack of information as to where residents could get help, and no cohesion among the volunteers and City, State, and Federal agencies offering assistance. A standard location and time should be identified as a meeting location within each development to ensure timely and efficient delivery of information, food, and supplies. Community Boards, which are City agencies, received no information before, during, or after the storm. There was no information relayed to us to be able update and inform our constituents as well as no way for us to make inquiries. Our Board was instrumental in coordinating volunteers and local information—but sorely lacked information to keep our constituents informed.

Developments with tenant associations fared much better than those without. Making sure that each development has a robust tenant association is step 1 to emergency planning and response. Emergency preparedness is a team sport, and success requires communication, coordination, and leadership. NYCHA needs to step up to the plate and lead.



Shore Soup Project

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In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, as residents of Rockaway and small business owners, we formed the Rockaway Rescue Alliance to offer support to our neighbors. The boardwalk, which was the previous location of our concession and mobile food businesses had been destroyed and many homes were flooded, structurally compromised and covered in black mold. Residents were without power, heat and hot water, a situation which for many continues to this day. Immediately, it became clear that in the absence of a large scale initial institutional response, what was needed was for neighbors to begin helping neighbors. We took to the streets on a mobile food tricycle cart and started giving out hot food and drinks to those who were without food and refrigeration, individuals who were walking the streets, finding no stores open and looking for aid. We noticed that equally important to warm and nourishing food and drink, was the chance to have someone to talk to. Our neighbors were traumatized, and deserved be listened to and checked up on.

After initially distributing food from one tricycle cart, we set up and maintained a hot food and distribution center on 59th St and Beach Channel Drive for several more days. There many volunteers joined our efforts. Then, we decided that the best way to equitably reach a large amount of people with hot food, was for teams of deliverers to come to them. We established a kitchen in Rockaway and started feeding 600-1500 meals a day, delivered door to door to people living in public housing and in private homes. This work involved going up and down dark stairwells and hallways and carrying delivery bags filled with heavy soups. Our team of generous volunteers, from a pool of over 400 total, have helped us to reach many residents. Our outreach, through delivery, is also the way in which we have been able to connect the people that we deliver to with other much needed services. We have been able to refer them to medical and legal assistance, temporary housing and to teams of volunteers that have come to gut and de-mold their homes.

Here are two testimonials from volunteers about their experience delivering in NYCHA buildings.

Christine Wexler, a volunteer from Westchester, wrote: "My first day down in Rockaway was life changing. The destruction and damage was overwhelming. Watching residents pull shopping carts to and from, wandering with no real place to go. It was obvious that everyone needed help. Expecting to see official disaster relief, I looked around at the people helping, they were just like me. A person who

woke up that morning and said I have to help. No organization, no mission, just willing and able. I delivered fresh soup door to door for the Rockaway Rescue Alliance. My first neighborhood changed me forever. I could not believe how people were surviving, I could not believe how people were coping. I went all day with no food, no bathroom and no sense of time. There was only one feeling, keep going, keep helping.

The door that stays with me, was answered by a 16yr old girl. She had not yet been placed in a temporary school. She had a family of 7. I left plenty of soup on the counter for her family and told her it will be OK soon and to stay warm and safe. I felt so guilty leaving her there, I would not have left my children there. It was cold, and unsafe and it would be dark soon."

Lillian Gerson, a core volunteer and Rockaway resident, wrote: "Volunteering with the Shore Soup Project, I delivered soup door to door in the Hammel Houses, Ocean Bay Apartments, 41 St. Houses, Carleton Manor, and numerous privately owned apartment buildings in the Rockaways. For weeks after the storm, the people in NYCHA buildings were living in complete darkness. As soon as we walked into the first floor and heard the big metal door slam behind us, everything in front of us went pitch black. With only the small beam from our flashlights, we found our way to the stairs and slowly went up. The elevators were down, the EXIT signs were out, heat and hot water were off, and many apartments on the higher floors were not getting any water out of the pipes, they couldn't even flush the toilet. This was an upsetting and terrifying situation for everyone I saw and spoke to. Many residents, especially older people, told me two weeks after the storm that they hadn't left their apartments since. Without power, people were without news and access to any information.

People felt unsafe in the dark halls and stairwells, and many people were not physically able to walk up all the flights of stairs, much less walk up lugging their vital stock of food and water. In the buildings I saw many people helping out their neighbors by carrying their supplies, sharing flashlights, and greeting each other with open arms. All in all people supported each other. It felt really good to share a sense of community with our Rockaway neighbors, to exchange stories, listen, and offer food and other supplies. Unfortunately however, I did not see this type of humanitarian response from the Housing Authority, FEMA, or even the Red Cross. This is a serious flaw, I believe that these organizations need to treat people with more direct consideration. We all deserve to be treated with respect and dignity."

Sharing healthy and hearty food is a vehicle for forging community bonds and connecting neighbors with other valuable forms of support. Rather than be discouraged by our collective loss, as we visit homes, we serve as a reminder that people do care about Rockaway residents, and that they/we have not been abandoned.

**Reginald H. Bowman President of Citywide Council of Presidents
Representing over 600,000 families in NYCHA Public Housing Communities.
Testimony At City Council Hearings on NYCHA response to Super storm Hurricane Sandy
January 17th ,2013**

**NYC Political Leaders:
NYCHA RESIDENTS: THE STORM IS OVER
TIME TO WORK TOGETHER, REBUILD OUR LIVES
AND RESTORE OUR HOMES!**

**Reginald H. Bowman President of Citywide Council of Presidents
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On October 29th, 2012 The Rain The Wind and the Tides of Sandy, the most Powerful Storm in 100 years hammered the east coast. (* See foot Note)

In total over 400 NYCHA buildings, containing 79,326 residents were directly or indirectly impacted by the storm. Zone A, which contains 26 Public Housing Communities, was hit the hardest. There was a plan in place for the impacted areas and it was executed. This entire city and the Northeast region was caught off guard by the magnitude of Sandy and we must admit in the first 48 hours the transportation systems and communication systems were crippled by the impact. Yet, the CCOP, resident leadership, and NYCHA, The Housing Police Department, The Mayor and the City of New York must be commended for being prepared for and responding appropriately to this unprecedented storm, and continuing to deliver in its aftermath.

This “Super Storm” hit us with the most powerful winds and storm surge ever encountered by the North East Corridor, that crippled all of the Communication, power and transportation systems in the New York City Metropolitan area, bringing the city of New York, to a stand still. The storm caused disorientation to every level. Some people lost everything, including their lives. And yet after being hit hard, the Resilient Spirit of Residents and NYCHA Leaders once again, created an impromptu network that connected all of the impacted areas and along with all New Yorkers, and we got back on our feet to recover from the Super Storm. The Storm is over and it is time to work together, rebuild our lives and help each other to restore our homes.

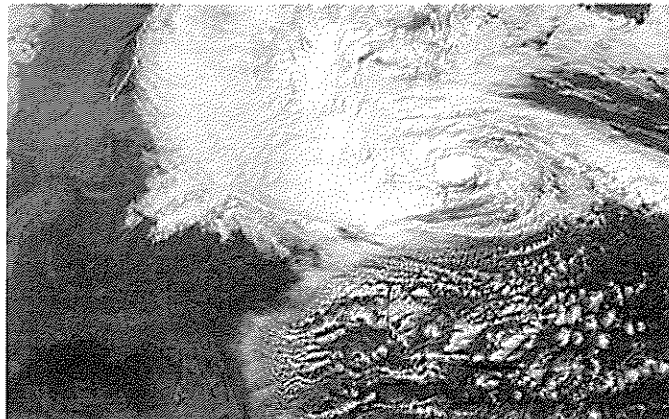
There are thousands of unsung heroes and sheroes, volunteers, NYCHA resident leaders and staff, which put aside personal comfort and are still spending countless hours responding to the challenge of recovery. The list is endless. Thank you for your efforts and for coming through! I got to witness the aftermath in Coney Island Personally, and the tremendous efforts underway. A full report will be mailed to all residents!

However, I would like to especially single out, Chairman Rhea, and Commissioner Lopez, for being on point with the emergency plan for our coastal zone properties and for making sure we had direct access to the Mayor’s Emergency Management plan/system which got the National Guard, FEMA, and the Elected officials to open the flood gates of needed relief to our Public Housing Communities. I would like to commend President Herma Williams, District Chair Bronx North, President Anne Cotton Morris, District Chair of Queens and the rest of the CCOP leaders, for being on the front line for residents in their districts and city wide beyond their districts.

Reginald H. Bowman President of Citywide Council of Presidents
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Special recognition also goes to the resident leaders of Brooklyn South's Coney Island area in particular, President Carolyn Walton of Glenwood Houses for creating and maintaining the "Coney Island Network Connection", President Shirley Aiken, Carey Gardens Houses who said "just put up a table", President Deborah Carter Gravesend Houses, serving more than 3 developments out of her RA office and President Peggy Thomas of Hammels Houses in the Rockaway's', all who were literally cut off by the storm, for surviving for days in the cold and dark. They created "Operational Resident Recovery Centers" receiving and distributing much needed equipment food and supplies before and when help began to arrive. Special mention goes also to the Resident Leaders of the Lower east side, Rutgers, Smith, Vladak Houses and the Leaders of Staten Island. It was mentioned that all of our resident leaders teams are on Point. Thank you all your efforts have not gone unnoticed.

A rare combination of weather fronts turned Sandy it into a "superstorm" with a total diameter of almost 2,000 miles (3,200km), the largest in Atlantic storm history, experts said. (See the picture below)



According to experts Sandy is the largest in Atlantic storm history Photo: GETTY
**Note: As rain from the leading edges of the monster hurricane began to fall over the Northeast, hundreds of thousands of people from Maryland to Connecticut were ordered to evacuate low-lying coastal areas, including 375,000 in lower Manhattan and other parts of New York City, 50,000 in Delaware and 30,000 in Atlantic City, N.J., where the city's 12 casinos were forced to shut down for only the fourth time ever.*

Post Sandy Super Storm Recommendations:

- **First, the next time a federal evacuation order is issued, people in the zone A areas should heed the warning and get out of harms way.**
- **Second, To sit and be critics of the response to the superstorm in my opinion is a blame game that is a waste of time and makes us less prepares for the next freak of nature.**
- **Third, Sandy should not be used as a political football to gain points. The damage needs to be assessed, the repairs to the homes and infrastructure need to be comprehensively planned; and the future emergency planning that is based on the lessons learned from this storm must be put into place.**
- **Fourth, New York City's and the Metro regions unique geographic exposure to the oceans and rivers that surround us, call for a task force to be commissioned the gathering of public and private experts in the field of coastal protection and recovery to prepare a new plan for the future protection of this city's and regions unique infrastructure.**
- **Now that we know what this type of storm can do, we can and must be prepared for the inevitability of next one.**

Good morning, Chair Mendez, and members of the board, I would like to thank you for affording the residents of NYCHA the opportunity not only to provide testimony on our experience during Hurricane Sandy but to also provide our objectives, overview and recommendations in their Emergency Preparedness Procedures. Allow me one moment to re-iterate on this one subject - NYCHA will always remain steadfast they did everything for Zone A - however it is historically a known fact when there is inclemental weather conditions - the Con Edison Plant which is located directly in the path of Zone A always has transformer explosions. During heat, severe rain - that's just Con Ed on 14th street, look at their record of outages due to transformer overload, explosions, it's just their transformers.

Since 1965 we have suffered numerous power outages - I would think in this ever evolving world technology and in one of the most famous forefront cities in the world we would all have preparedness manuals at the tips of our fingers ready for anything especially on the heels of 9/11 - I cannot totally blame con-edition - since their plant is built to sustain a previous population which has nearly tripled in the last decade, overloaded just like the school system overcrowded. However it may seem - somehow these issues are overlooked as the ever growing 6 story building is now a 20 story complex. However what NYCHA failed to consider is the Con Edison Grid Plant which provides power in the Zone A area's and all of lower Manhattan - **IS IN THE ZONE "A" AREA.**

1. I give NYCHA an "C" rating in their efforts to communicate to the residents which would suffer the most severe impact by the storm throughout the underlying areas of Zone A. However I grade them a "D" for the time frame provided. Sunday after 3pm - giving residents a 4 hour widow. Frankenstorm had been forecasted days before. **True NYCHA wait until the last minute.**
2. NYCHA failed in the following areas, most importantly they failed to assess the needs of the developments affected in both zone A and B. Their failure to identify resources available and their failure to communicate with resident leaders and volunteers. Lastly - Their lack of presence in the developments affected. However I did notice numerous photo opportunities - days after the storm.
3. They did not provide accommodations for the staff who would have to remain, the closest center is Rutgers - no generator was on site.

4. Zone A was closely monitored during the black out - But they forgot about Zone B. We had no family services, we had no backup generator, no one asked if we needed food or supplies, we had no police presence, no cots, no supplies, no gas, nothing. Actually the first time I saw the police was Friday November 2, 2012 they were door knocking after 11am with flyers providing a listing of the shelters available. Saturday was the first day I saw anyone from NYCHA - with the exception of the staff. The only communication I had was with the Management office.

5. NYCHA did not assist with the seniors, handicap, food, blankets. Where was the support staff, why did they not move staff from other developments which were not affected and provide support to the developments which were. As a Resident Leader I had to go out looking, begging, reaching out to everyone I could for assistance. I would stand outside in the cold with a flashlight because I was told food was coming - it never came. I would get calls after dark to come and get blankets or food at Rutgers, in the dark by myself or tell residents there was food at Rutgers - again after dark - the handling of this emergency was classic NYCHA key-stone cop calamity of errors, of which thousands of residents paid the price. **FOR THE RECORD The rent rebate can never compensate for the emotional, physical, psychological distress many residents endured.**

Recommendations:

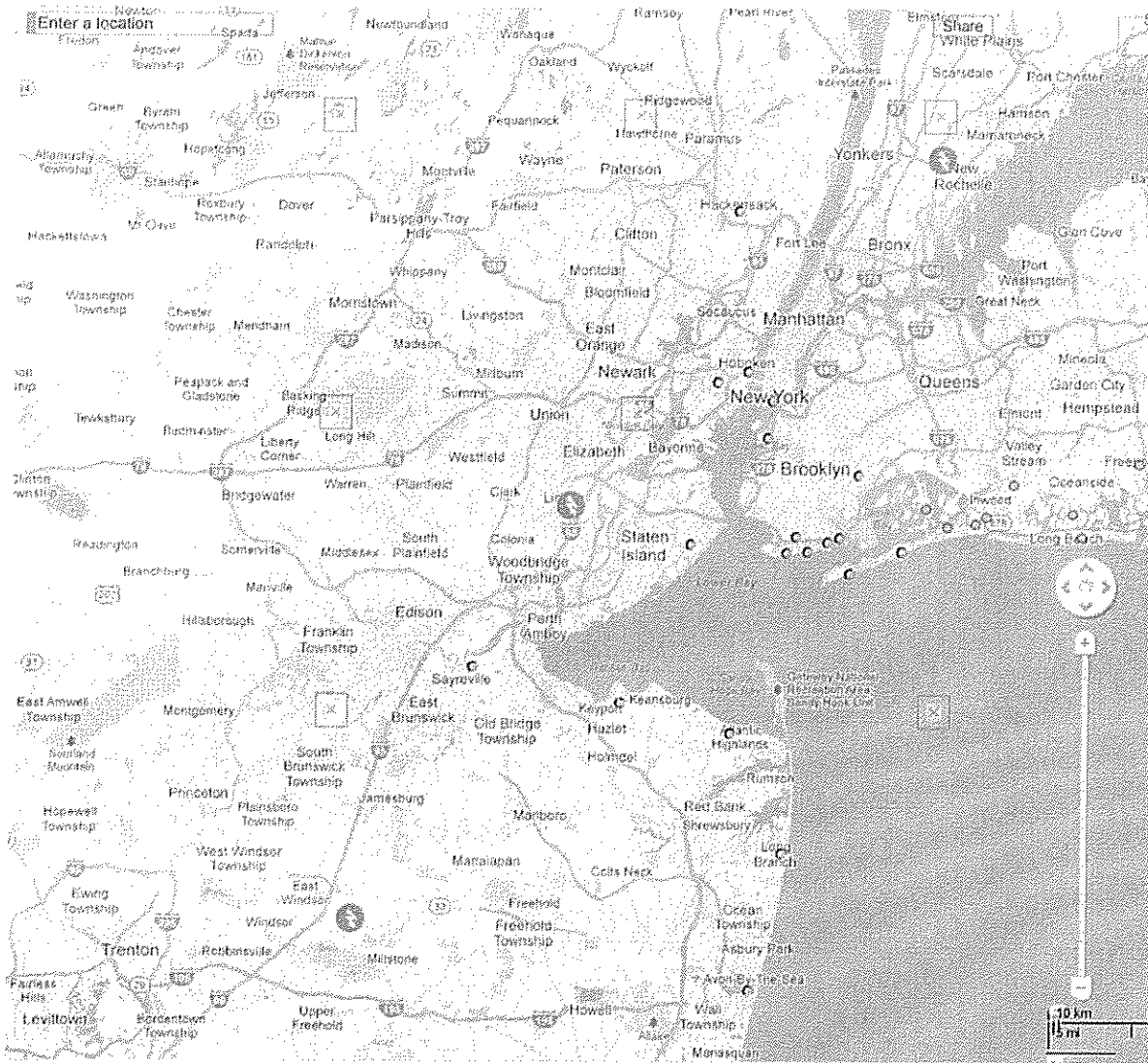
I begin with the establishment of an Emergency Response Committee - not limited to NYCHA but open to the participation of elected officials or their designees and resident leaders or residents with a background and desire to participate. NYCHA has many residents with Emergency Preparedness Training and background. This would provide a unique collaboration with different areas of expertise in order to put in place a well rounded Emergency Preparedness Manual which should be in a hard covered binder located in every management office covering every type of emergency and the appropriate response with alternatives.

MOST IMPORTANTLY PRIORITIZE

1. Support staff - All staff including administrative staff should be re-assigned (as opposed to just sitting around doing nothing) - While 250 and 90 Church were out of power - the staff should have been re-assigned as support staff. This was an emergency.
2. CERT Training - (Community Emergency Response Team) Staff should have CERT training in every development, with a hard copy training roster placed in the E.P.M. Book. CERT is conducted by the office of emergency management (OEM) this is free.
3. Every development should have a minimum of 2 staff members trained in CPR and First Aid. with a hard copy training roster placed in the E.P.M. Book
4. Ensure all equipment is topped-off with fuel in addition to maintaining several back-up fuel containers
5. Water supply and cot's - a hard copy listing of every development should be on hand with the total number of assigned staff and title, within each sector.
6. Encourage Resident Leader's to obtain CERT training and have them get volunteers within their development to obtain training as well. Assigned trained person's as building Captains.
7. Keep lines of communication, obtain a method of maintaining communication during outages. in todays technology anything is possible.
8. Maintain ample back up supplies in "C" zone areas to assist in area's affected.
9. Conduct Annual Emergency Preparedness Training/Mock Drills - ALL STAFF

I could sit here and go on and on, however I will attach all my recommendations with this testimony.

I thank you once again for affording me this opportunity, and hope this testimony is heard in Washington DC for the Sandy Relief Funds not only for the NYCHA (an acronym known as "No You Can't Have Anything") residents and developments affected, which seem to continuously remain in the rear , but to every community impacted by Hurricane Sandy.



Google Crisis Response · How are you using this map? Tell us. Help

Superstorm Sandy: NYC

Sandy was a major storm that caused extensive flooding, physical damage, power and transportation outages, and fatalities in NY and much of the US East coast.

- Latest alerts, NYC Emergency Mgmt
- City of New York on Twitter
- NYC Emergency Mgmt on Facebook
- WNYC Transit Tracker
- NYC gov information including volunteering and school status

How are you using this map? Tell us.
Reset to default view

Post-Sandy Imagery

Zoom to area
Imagery collected after Superstorm Sandy

- November 6th, 2012
- November 5th, 2012
- November 4th, 2012
- November 3rd, 2012
- November 2nd, 2012
- November 1st, 2012
- October 31st, 2012
- Haiti October 30th, 2012
- Handheld Imagery

Damage Assessments and Power Info

- FEMA Modeling Task Force (MOTF)-Hurricane Sandy Impact Analysis
- FEMA Remotely-Sensed Damage Assesments
- MapMill Crowd Assessment
- FEMA Disaster Declared Areas

Power outage information

- Volunteer Opportunities
- Sandy-related YouTube videos
- Senior services

Shelters and recovery centers

- Legend
- NYC food distribution points
 - Red Cross shelters
 - NYC evacuation centers
 - FEMA disaster recovery centers

- Red Cross shelters
- NYC evacuation centers

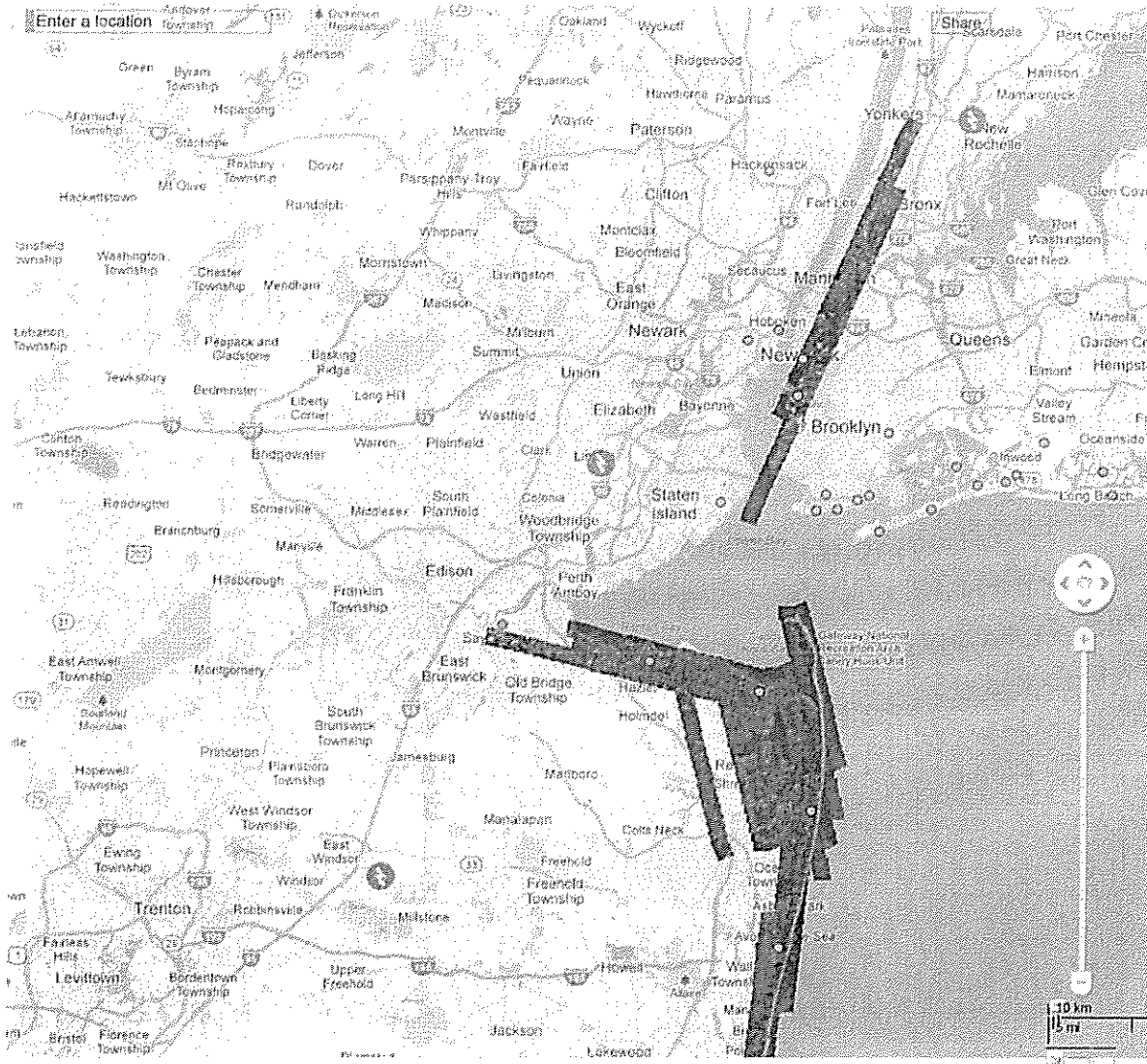
FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers

Zoom to area · Download KML
A Disaster Recovery Center is a place to get information about FEMA or other disaster assistance programs. Learn More
Source: FEMA

Road Conditions

Emergency Alerts

- Local emergency Twitter feeds



Superstorm Sandy NYC

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How are you using this map? Tell us.

Reset to default view

Post-Sandy Imagery

Zoom to area
Imagery collected after Superstorm Sandy

November 6th, 2012

November 5th, 2012

November 4th, 2012

November 3rd, 2012

November 2nd, 2012

November 1st, 2012

Zoom to area

NOAA 11-01-12

Zoom to area
Captured November 1st, 2012
Source: NOAA-National Geodetic Survey

October 31st, 2012

Haiti October 30th, 2012

Handheld Imagery

Damage Assessments and Power Info

FEMA Modeling Task Force (MOTF)-Hurricane Sandy impact Analysis

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Red Cross shelters

NYC evacuation centers

FEMA Disaster Recovery

Centers
Zoom to area • Download HTML
A Disaster Recovery Center is a place to get information about FEMA or other disaster assistance programs. Learn More
Source: FEMA



Google Crisis Response How are you using this map? Tell us. Help

Superstorm Sandy: NYC

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How are you using this map? Tell us.

Reset to default view

Post-Sandy Imagery

Zoom to area
Imagery collected after Superstorm Sandy

- November 6th, 2012
- November 5th, 2012
- November 4th, 2012
- November 3rd, 2012

November 2nd, 2012

Zoom to area
 NOAA 11-02-12
Caption: November 2nd, 2012
Source: NOAA-National Geodetic Survey

- November 1st, 2012
- October 31st, 2012
- Half October 30th, 2012
- Handheld imagery

Damage Assessments and Power Info

- FEMA Modeling Task Force (MOTF)-Hurricane Sandy Impact Analysis
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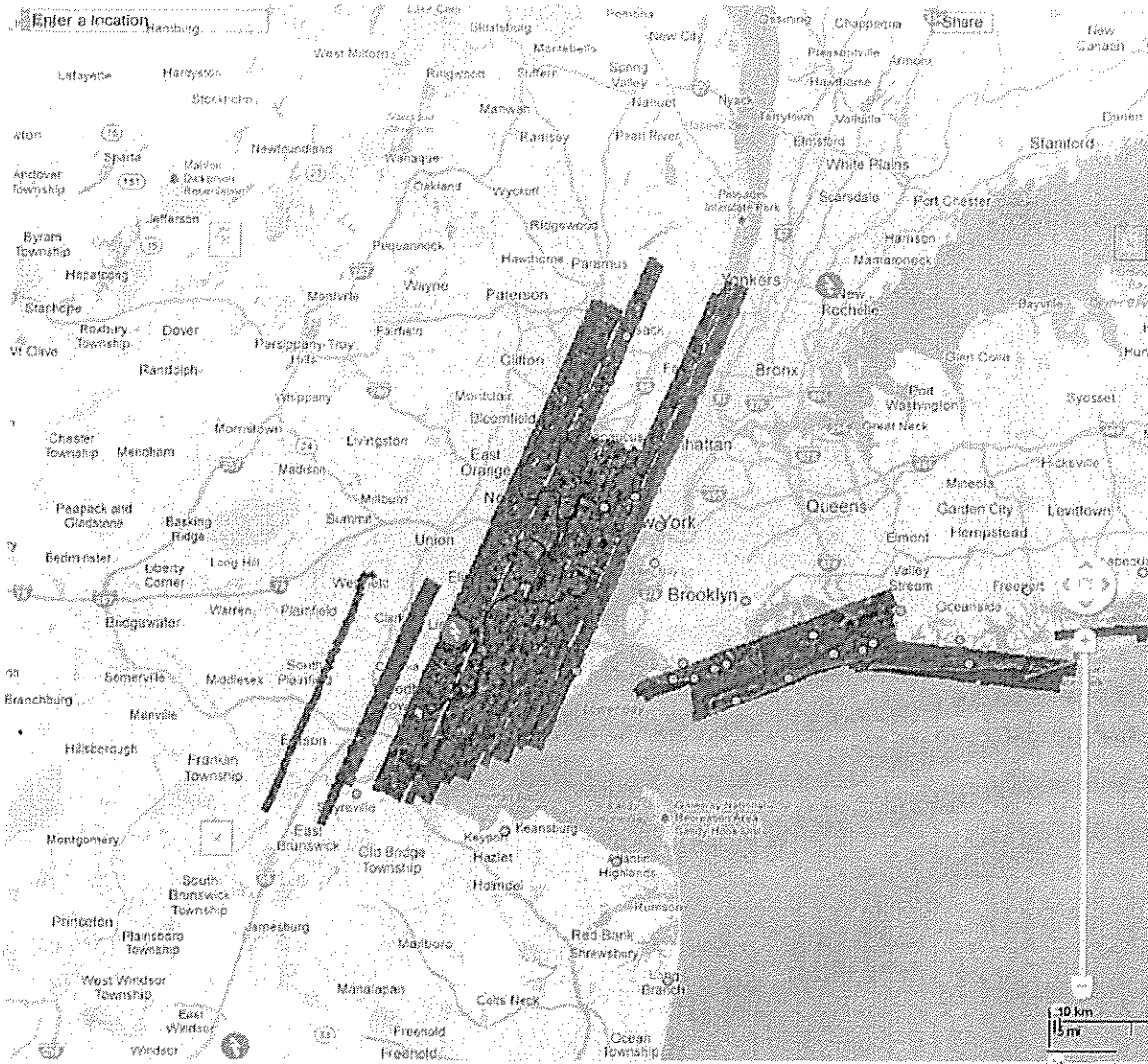
Shelters and recovery centers

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- Red Cross shelters
- NYC evacuation centers

FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers

Zoom to area • Download KML
A Disaster Recovery Center is a place to get information about FEMA or other disaster assistance programs. Learn More
Source: FEMA



Superstorm Sandy, NYC

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- NYC Emergency Mgmt on Facebook
- WNYC Transit Tracker
- NYC gov information including volunteering and school status

How are you using this map? Tell us.

Reset to default view

Post-Sandy Imagery

Zoom to area
Images collected after Superstorm Sandy

November 6th, 2012

November 5th, 2012

November 4th, 2012

November 3rd, 2012

Zoom to area

NOAA 11-03-12

Zoom to area
Caption: November 3rd 2012
Source: NOAA-National Geodetic Survey

November 2nd, 2012

November 1st, 2012

October 31st, 2012

Haiti October 30th, 2012

Handheld Imagery

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FEMA Modeling Task Force (MOTF)-Hurricane Sandy Impact Analysis

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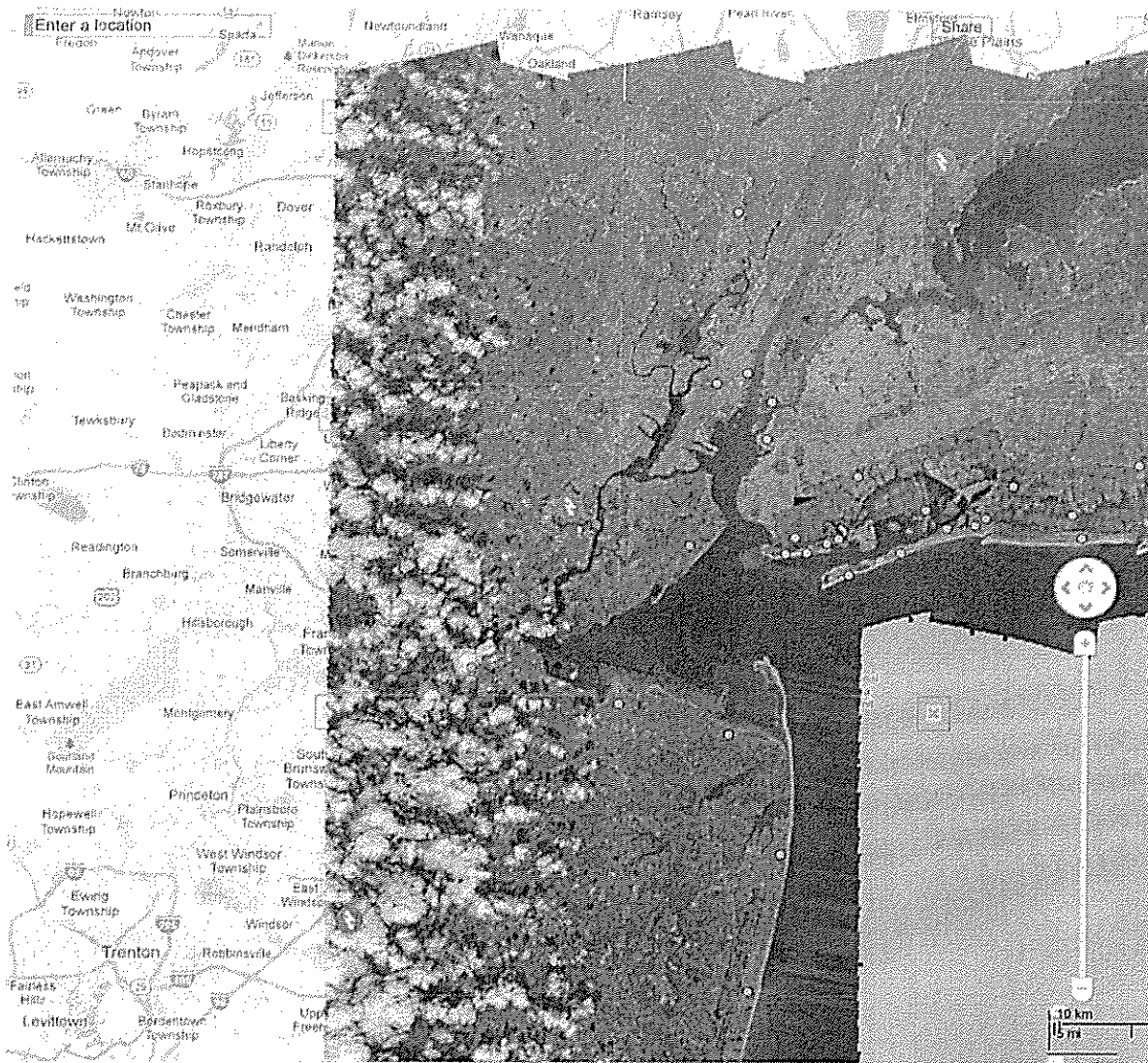
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 - Red Cross shelters
 - NYC evacuation centers
 - FEMA disaster recovery centers

Red Cross shelters

NYC evacuation centers

FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers

Zoom to area · Download KML
A Disaster Recovery Center is a place to get information about FEMA or other disaster assistance programs. Learn More.
Source: FEMA



Google Crisis Response · How are you using this map? Tell us. Help

Superstorm Sandy. NYC

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- NYC.gov information including volunteering and school status

How are you using this map? Tell us.

Reset to default view

Post-Sandy Imagery

Zoom to area
Imagery collected after Superstorm Sandy

November 6th, 2012

November 5th, 2012

November 4th, 2012

Zoom to area

Google 11-04-12 Flight 1

Zoom to area
Captured: November 4th, 2012
Source: Google

Google 11-04-12 Flight 2

Zoom to area
Captured: November 4th, 2012
Source: Google

NOAA 11-04-12

Zoom to area
Captured: November 4th, 2012
Source: NOAA-National Geodetic Survey

November 3rd, 2012

November 2nd, 2012

November 1st, 2012

October 31st, 2012

Haiti October 30th, 2012

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Red Cross shelters



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How are you using this map? Tell us.

Reset to default view

Post-Sandy Imagery

Zoom to area
Imagery collected after Superstorm Sandy

November 6th, 2012

Zoom to area
NOAA 11-06-12
Zoom to area
Captured November 6th, 2012.
Source: NOAA National Geospatial Survey

November 5th, 2012

November 4th, 2012

November 3rd, 2012

November 2nd, 2012

November 1st, 2012

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Haiti October 30th, 2012

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NYC evacuation centers

FEMA Disaster Recovery

Centers
Zoom to area Download KML
A Disaster Recovery Center is a place to get information about FEMA or other disaster assistance programs. Learn More
Source: FEMA

Hurricane Irene hit New York City, and thousands are without power. Over 70,000 Con Ed customers are without power—the most are in Queens (around 25,000)—and you can see Con Ed's power outage map here, and it'll show that none of the outages seem to be in Manhattan. On Long Island and in NJ, it's much worse—320,322 are without power on Long Island—while over 412,000 have lost power in the Garden State (and utility PSE&G is threatening to make more cuts).



**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/17/13

Name: Yetta Kurlane (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 161 W 16th

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Margarita Rosa (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: UNH e Grand Street Settlement

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Enrique Lopez (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 322 8th Ave New York, NY 10014

I represent: Spanish Boro Neighborhood

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sonja Shield, South Brooklyn Legal Services

Address: 105 Court St, Brooklyn NY 11201

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gi Gi Li

Address: _____

I represent: Chair, Community Board 3 Manhattan

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Edward Alexander

Address: 300 East 143 St #2A

I represent: C.V.H

Address: 115 E 106 St N.Y

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ANN VALDES

Address: GRAVESEND HOUSES

I represent: COMMUNITY VOICES HEARD

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ~~ANN~~ EVANGELINE PUGH

Address: CONY ISLAND HOUSES

I represent: COMMUNITY VOICES HEARD

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LARA WEIBYEN

Address: COORDINATOR - PEOPLE'S RELIEF EFFORT

I represent: _____

Address: _____

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cecil House

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gary Bagley

Address: 65 BROADWAY NYC

I represent: New York Care

Address: 65 Broadway

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/17/13

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Francisco Rosario

Address: 184 Eldridge St

I represent: Project Hope / University Settlement

Address: 184 Eldridge St

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: GLORIA WILSON

Address: 1940 WASHINGTON AVE # 4K

I represent: COMMUNITY VOICES HEARD

Address: 115 E. 106TH ST. N.Y.C.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/17/13

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Beverly Corbin

Address: 130 THIRD AVE

I represent: FURFE

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/17/13

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Valery Jean

Address: 1709 TROY AVENUE Bklyn

I represent: FURFE

Address: 81 Willoughby St. #701 Bklyn

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: REP. Raymond Ribero

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 1/17/13

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Alvin J. Bartolomey

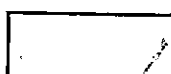
Address: 472 Columbia St.

I represent: FUREE

Address: 81 Willoughby St.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 1/17/13

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Deedra Cheatham

Address: 1214 Liberty Avenue

I represent: Families United for Racial Economic Equality

Address: 81 Willoughby Street

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Gericil Antonio Lopez (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Peggy Earisman (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 90 John Street, NY, NY

I represent: Legal Services NYC, Manhattan Legal Services

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Sonja Shield (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 105 Court St, NY, NY

I represent: Legal Services NYC, South Brooklyn Leg. Svcs

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Robyn Hillman-Harrigan

Address: 121 Beach 92 St

I represent: Rockaway Rescue Alliance

Address: 121 Beach 92 St, Far Rockaway, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Caroline Neayx

Address: 766 Franklin Ave #1 Brooklyn, NY 11238

I represent: Citizens Committee for Children

Address: 105 E. 22nd St New York NY 10010

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: Jan 17 2013

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Florence Dent-Hunter

Address: 427 West 26 St #6A

I represent: Cliff + Cleaseman Housing

Address: 427 West 26 St

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/17/13

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ann Dibble and Julia Russell

Address: 7 Hanover Square NY NY 10004

I represent: New York Legal Assistance Group

Address: same as above

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JULIA RUSSELL, NEW YORK LEGAL

Address: 7 HANOVER SQUARE ASSISTANCE GROUP
NY NY 10004

I represent: NYCHA tenants

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/17/2013

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: EMILIE ROSENBLAT READING FOR DAMARIS REYES

Address: _____

I represent: GOOD OLD LOWER EAST SIDE (GOLES)

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/17/2013

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: GILBERT ALICEA

Address: _____

I represent: GOOD OLD LOWER EAST SIDE (GOLES)

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 01/17/13

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nancy Ortiz

Address: _____

I represent: TA President of Vladeck Houses

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/17/13

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Paulie Anne

Address: 770 St. Marks Ave

I represent: Volunteers in Red Hook

Address: Red Hook



Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/17/2013

Name: Carl Stubbs (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 109-15 Merrick Blvd Jam. N.Y 11433

I represent: VOCAL N.Y. - Community Leader.

Address: 80A Fourth Ave BKLYN N.Y.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/17/13

Name: Judith Goldiner / Lucy Newman (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 199 Waver St, NYC

I represent: The Legal Aid Society

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/17/13

Name: Harvey Epstein (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 172 E 41st

I represent: Urban Justice Center

Address: 123 William Street

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

New York Communities for Change

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 1/17/13

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Carmen Rosario

Address: Harnets Houses, Far Rockaway

I represent: New York Communities for Change

Address: 2-4 Nevins St., Bklyn

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 1/17/13

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nathan Derby

Address: Harnets Houses, Far Rockaway

I represent: New York Communities for Change

Address: 2-4 Nevins St., Bklyn

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joel Kupferman

Address: 351 Broadway

I represent: New York PNJ Law Justice Project

Address: 351 Broadway = 320FL 10013

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 7-11-2013

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _____

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: 196 Beach 113 Rockaways

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: PRINCE BROWN

Address: FAR ROCKAWAY

I represent: DISSENTERS

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Reginald H. Bowman

Address: 365 Jackson Street

I represent: City Wide Council of NYCHA

Address: 250 Broadway