Testimony of the New York City Economic Development Corporation New York City Council Committee on Economic Development Oversight – NYC Ferry Operations and Waterfront Sustainability October 28, 2025

Good morning, Chair Farías and members of the Economic Development Committee thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to the New York City Harbor, ! appreciate the opportunity to testify today. My name is Giacomo Landi and I serve as Executive Vice President of Asset Management for the New York City Economic Development Corporation. I am joined by my colleagues Allison Dees, Vice President of Ports, Waterfront, and Transportation, Franny Civitano, Deputy Director of NYC Ferry, and Michele Lamberti, Vice President of Legislative Affairs in our Government and Community Relations department. I am also joined by Captain John Garvey who serves as New York City Department of Transportation Deputy Commissioner for Ferries and Chief Operations Officer for the Staten Island Ferry.

The New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) works to create a vibrant, inclusive, and globally competitive economy for all New Yorkers. Our work is guided by four strategic priorities: strengthening business confidence, growing innovation industries with a focus on equity, building neighborhoods as places to live, learn, work and play, and delivering sustainable infrastructure.

On the eve of the anniversary of Super Storm Sandy in New York City, it's important to note that EDC is dedicated to sustainability and climate resiliency. We look forward to partnering with you as we advance electrification at the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal, the Brooklyn Marine Terminal, and the Manhattan Cruise Terminal. These initiatives are critical to the city's continued success, and we deeply appreciate the partnership and advocacy of the entire City Council, most especially Chair Farías, Council Member Avilés, and Council Member Bottcher as we move these projects forward.

Overview of Waterfront Assets

New York City was born on the working waterfront. Before there were skyscrapers, there were tall-masted schooners, mighty steamships, and smaller vessels and barges navigating our harbor, moving people and goods, bringing opportunity and prosperity to our shores.

As part of our mission, EDC serves as a proud steward of that legacy. EDC manages a wide range of waterfront and upland assets spanning all five boroughs and roughly 30 miles of the City's shoreline-from vital infrastructure like ferry landings and the Lower Manhattan Coastal Resiliency project to key industrial and commercial hubs such as the Sunset Park District, Hunts Point, and the North Shore of Staten Island.

EDC is also charged with developing and supporting the City's waterborne freight and passenger transportation infrastructure to strengthen the region's economic growth, while connecting New Yorkers to well-paying jobs. New York City's historic 520-mile coastline is one of its defining features, and our transportation facilities include marine cargo terminals, cruise terminals, maritime piers and wharfs, ferry landings, and an offshore wind staging port. EDC also oversees the City's passenger ferry system, NYC Ferry, which provides New Yorkers and visitors alike with a convenient and affordable transit option connecting communities to jobs, recreation, and each other.

EDC's vision for a Harbor of the Future, our maritime assets and our Blue Highways program, carry-on the city's maritime tradition, revitalizing long-neglected waterfront sites and reinventing how modern cargo, from international shipping containers to the smallest e-commerce packages, move throughout our city. This vision for the working waterfront will create good jobs as it improves quality of life for New Yorkers.

Waterfront as Economic Engine

New York City's ports are America's gateway to the largest and most diverse consumer market in the nation. EDC manages a number of waterfront sites on behalf of the city which include the Manhattan and Brooklyn cruise terminals and three cargo terminals – the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal, an offshore wind staging port, the 25th Street Freight Pier, utilized for aggregates, in Sunset Park, and the Brooklyn Marine Terminal, a container port in Red Hook. And we're excited about the upcoming development of the Hunts Point Marine Terminal.

Our waterfront assets are engines of economic development and employment. To that end, in 2024, our two cruise terminals welcomed over 1.5 million passengers, generating approximately \$509 million in economic impact and supporting 2,935 full-time jobs. At the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal (SBMT), we secured more than \$1 billion of private investment and spurred the creation of more than 1,000 union construction jobs to provide port upgrades, an onshore substation, and wind turbine staging and pre-assembly. SBMT will be a long-term operations and maintenance base for offshore wind. And the BMT redevelopment will support approximately 39,000 temporary construction jobs, approximately 2,400 permanent maritime, industrial, commercial, and residential jobs, and spur \$21 billion in economic impact for the city and region.

Waterfront Facilities Maintenance Management System

Through EDC's Waterfront Facilities Maintenance Management System (WFMMS), EDC provides maintenance and repairs to City and EDC assets safeguarding over 400 sites across 352 miles of city shoreline. This system is also an interactive resource that provides data and tools needed to track, assess, and prioritize waterfront assets in New York City. The system's centralized database of inspection information allows EDC to react more quickly, flexibly, and effectively in supporting critical City-led infrastructure projects and initiatives on the waterfront.

Commitment to Reducing Emissions

EDC's commitment to bolstering sustainability, the green economy, and climate resiliency for the city, extends to our stewardship of our port and waterfront assets. At EDC sites including Sunset Park, the Brooklyn Marine Terminal, Hunts Point, and NYC Ferry landings, we're at work building clean, electric ports, wrapped in sustainable infrastructure. Across our portfolio we have worked to advance electrification and the transition to cleaner energy sources to reduce emissions and their impact on our communities.

This work began with the installation of shore power at the Brooklyn Cruise Terminal in 2016. This was the first shore power system for cruise ships installed on the East Coast of the United States and it is among a handful of ports worldwide that are equipped with shore power. To expand the ability of BCT's system to connect with additional ships, EDC added a mobile cable positioning device (CPD). The mobile cable positioning device allows more ships to plug in than the original system could and will facilitate future connections, for example, this past weekend, the MSC Meraviglia was able to connect to shore power at BCT via the mobile cable positioning device. However, that is only part of the solution. Additional infrastructure is needed to continue providing shore power to more ships, and that work is currently underway with a pending ~\$6M additional capital investment.

EDC publishes a shore power report for the Brooklyn Cruise Terminal on our website, detailing shore power-capable vessel calls, connection status, duration, and reasons for non-connection.

Furthermore, EDC recently issued a penalty policy wherein any cruise ship that is not compliant with Local Law 54 is fined \$25,000 per occurrence for the first 5 non-compliant occurrences, and \$50,000 per non-compliant occurrence thereafter. Proceeds are intended to support enhancements in the shore power system, compatibility upgrades, and initiatives to improve overall connection rates at our city cruise terminals.

At the Manhattan Cruise Terminal (MCT), EDC is committed to the adoption of shore power. To advance the modernization of MCT as a resilient global gateway for the 21st century, EDC has undertaken a comprehensive MCT Master Plan process that we anticipate releasing in the coming weeks. The MCT Master Plan will offer a roadmap to ensure New York City remains a leading global cruise homeport by expanding market capacity while delivering shore power to all cruise, tug, public ferry, and Blue Highway berths, maximizing on-site renewable energy generation, and serving as a potential Blue Highways node on the west side of Manhattan.

Regarding our cargo terminal facilities, we have explored opportunities to electrify and reduce emissions at these sites. As part of the broader Brooklyn Marine Terminal (BMT) Vision Plan, EDC is committed to creating a resilient, all-electric port. The future port will

be fully electrified employing the use of electric cargo-handling equipment and shore power, which will significantly reduce emission and noise impacts in local communities.

Blue Highways

Another way we are reducing emissions is through the Blue Highways program which activates the city's waterways for local and regional movement of goods—improving quality of life for New Yorkers by reducing congestion on our roadways, adding resiliency to the city's supply chain, and tapping into our roots as a port city. This interagency program aims to restructure freight distribution in the city, shifting deliveries from roadways to waterways to create a robust and interconnected freight network that supports zero-emission transportation for middle-to-last mile deliveries and reduces the city's overreliance on trucks.

To advance the Blue Highways program, earlier this year, EDC announced a new public-private partnership at the Downtown Skyport to build-out a barge landing for fast ferries delivering cargo by e-cargo bike to Lower Manhattan destinations. In June, the Administration announced that the prison barge at Hunts Point will be removed and replaced by a Hunts Point Marine Terminal that will allow for the unloading of containers with perishable goods coming by barge to the Food Distribution Center from BMT, ports on the New Jersey and Staten Island side of the Harbor, and other points along the East Coast. The Administration made an initial \$28 million commitment toward this Hunts Point facility that is ultimately projected to remove 9,000 monthly truck trips from city streets and reduce roadway congestion. BMT will be a key node in the citywide Blue Highways program using barges, fast ferries, and zero-emission vehicles. The BMT port will focus on water-to-water freight, removing trucks from local streets and New York City roadways. EDC and NYCDOT are continuing to evaluate more than 25 sites across the boroughs for the feasibility of activating Blue Highway landings

NYC Ferry

NYC Ferry, a key EDC waterway and waterside asset, carried a record 7.4 million riders in 2024 and its ridership is already up 2 percent in 2025. This increasingly popular mode of transit offers safe, dependable, affordable, and accessible transportation between waterfront communities across the city increasing economic opportunity. With six routes that touch every borough, 25 landings, and 38 vessels, the system spans over 70 nautical miles and is the largest passenger-only fleet in the nation, based on hours of service and fleet size.

While the system operates year-round, it's become increasingly popular during the Summer. NYC Ferry broke daily, weekly, and monthly ridership records this summer. August saw the highest ridership in a single month with over one million total boardings—a 17 percent increase over August 2024.

The ferry's record summer ridership coincides with the July announcement of a proposed system-wide optimization and reconfiguration of routes based on a comprehensive and holistic review of how NYC Ferry routes work as a system, as well as years of rider feedback, ridership data, operational analyses, and existing infrastructure. The planned optimization will seek to address known issues, improve the rider experience, and ensure the long-term sustainability of the system. This plan received a tremendous response, with over 15,000 individual feedback submissions and nearly 90% of respondents saying they would ride NYC Ferry the same amount or more if the plan is enacted. We are completing review of the feedback and will announce the final map later this fall, with route changes taking effect this winter.

NYC Ferry Discount Program

An integral part of the NYC Ferry team's work has been advancing the goals set out in Mayor Adams and EDC's "NYC Ferry Forward," plan that was announced in 2022 to make NYC Ferry more equitable, accessible, and fiscally sustainable. In the three years since the plan was announced, NYC Ferry has successfully introduced and expanded the Discount Program to offer reduced-fare multi and single-ticket rides for seniors and people with disabilities. Since the program's expansion, 25,000 New Yorkers have enrolled, and we've seen a 600% increase in the use of discounted tickets after introducing the single-trip discount ticket option.

Our fare analysis has shown that lowering the upfront cost of participating in the discount program and introducing a ten-trip pack has led to increased trip frequency among our returning customers, including minority and discount riders. We aim to further improve this program by overhauling our ticketing system and technology. Within the next two years, we'll replace all ticket machines with new ones that allow verified users to purchase discount tickets at each landing. We will also introduce a tap-to-pay system that will give riders even more options to purchase tickets using their own fare media.

Student Discount Program

Thanks to your leadership and legislation, Majority Leader Farías, we were proud to launch the Student Discount program in August 2024. Making the ferry system affordable and accessible for high school students has become a critical component of our equity and accessibility work.

Since this affordable weekday commuting program opened, we've been actively promoting it to eligible students, their families, and school communities. Over 1,300 students registered for the program last year, and over 27,000 student discount tickets were purchased. Program re-enrollment for this school year just opened in the fall, and so far we've seen roughly 600 students register.

We have implemented an extensive engagement strategy to boost participation. We appreciate Council's enthusiasm and support and look forward to enrolling students for whom the ferry is a convenient means of transportation to and from school. We are always looking for ways to make NYC Ferry even more accessible to New Yorkers.

Language Access

Language accessibility is vital to ensure NYC Ferry serves all New Yorkers. To this end, the NYC Ferry app and website support over 40 languages. While there are ten designated languages for the City of New York that represent the most-spoken languages for the city at large, NYC Ferry works to tailor its language access to the specific language needs of the communities it serves.

NYC Ferry has identified six designated languages through an analysis of the language needs of its service area, as recommended by the USDOT and the Federal Transit Agency. These languages include Spanish, Russian, Polish, Yiddish, Chinese, and Korean. All our key documents, including our Commitment to Equality statement, complaint forms, rider surveys, and the information on our website and app, including schedule and fare information, are translated into the aforementioned six languages.

We also work to further adapt our language access plans to meet the specific needs of the communities we serve. For example, Yiddish translators are available at landings during Sukkot when Yiddish-speakers ridership tends to peak and engagement materials on the Hunters Point South landing design were translated into Chinese and Spanish.

Reduced Emissions

NYC Ferry is eager to reduce emissions from our vessels. In January, NYC Ferry, along with Staten Island Ferry, began testing the use of renewable diesel fuel, a petroleum-free alternative to traditional diesel fuel. Renewable diesel reduces carbon emissions by 60 percent or more, and its use in the City's ferries will help nearly 30 million annual riders navigate the city's waterways in a more sustainable way. NYC Ferry completed a six-month pilot and is currently analyzing the results to confirm that the fuel is safe for long-term use on our boats. We are optimistic that we will be able to move our entire fleet to renewable diesel. Additionally, we are investing \$20M to begin upgrades to 13 of our largest vessels to the highest EPA engine standards, Tier IV, to reduce pollutants and improve air quality.

These immediate upgrades are part of a broader sustainability strategy that will aim to transition the NYC Ferry fleet toward zero-and reduced-emissions vessels. As part of this strategy, EDC is conducting a study focusing on both the vessels and changes to shoreside infrastructure necessary to support decarbonized operation.

Council Introductions

As I've outlined today, EDC shares Council's goals and is committed to shore power, the electrification of our ports and transition to zero- and reduced-emissions ferry vessels. To that end, with respect to Council Introduction 937, and its proposed annual reporting on the use of shore power at city cruise terminals, and Introduction 1143, seeking a study on transitioning all city ports to zero-emission port operations, we are aligned with the goals of these introductions and look forward to working with Council on legislative language.

Turning to the NYC Ferry focused legislation, with respect to Introduction 1121, seeking the inclusion of middle school students in the NYC Ferry discount fare program, we share the desire to explore ways to expand fare discounts to NYC students. We look forward to working with your team to see how this can be accomplished. With respect to Introduction 1149, we recognize the importance of having multilingual printed information at landings. While providing landing signage in ten or more languages presents operational challenges, we are exploring strategies to better incorporate language access across landings.

Closing

In closing, we take great pride in our efforts to transition our waterfront infrastructure and assets ports and NYC Ferry toward greener, cleaner operations and our work to make NYC Ferry accessible to even more New Yorkers.

We value the Council's partnership and support in these efforts and thank you for the opportunity to testify about our work. My team and I are happy to answer any questions you may have.



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Mark Levine, Borough President

October 31, 2025

Testimony of Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine

NYC Council Committee on Economic Development – Oversight Hearing on NYC Ferry

Operations and Waterfront Sustainability

Thank you, Chair Farías and members of the City Council Committee on Economic Development for holding this hearing on NYC Ferry operations and for the opportunity to testify.

New York City's ferries are a vital and growing piece of our public transit system. I have long been a strong supporter of NYC Ferry and I am excited that service has grown to a record 7.1 million passengers during the last fiscal year. With that surge in popularity, the City has begun its first system-wide optimization in eight years, and the proposed changes are a significant step forward. They include restoring a direct Staten Island-to-Brooklyn ferry for the first time since 1964, creating a new route to connect the Bronx and Queens, and shortening travel times for some of the busiest East River crossings to Manhattan.

But to unleash the ferry system's full potential, the city must think bigger. The Hudson River and Upper Manhattan's west side is one of the most promising corridors for ferry expansion and presents an opportunity to bring a vital new transit option to thousands more New Yorkers. For years, I have called on the city to expand ferry service uptown, where much of the infrastructure for ferry service is already in place. For example, the West Harlem Piers at 125th Street opened in 2009 and were built with docks ready to support ferries. 16 years later, it is long past time to put them to use.

There are also opportunities to create new ferry stops at existing piers along the West Side, like the 79th Street Boat Basin and Dyckman Marina. These new stops would open up the possibility of a West Side route along the full length of Manhattan, connecting uptown residents to the far west side of Midtown and Lower Manhattan, where ferries already run from New Jersey and other boroughs. These new routes would offer expanded access to jobs and make NYC Ferry a viable transit option for even more New Yorkers and visitors.

Bringing ferries uptown also offers an opportunity for trans-Hudson service connecting Northern New Jersey to West Harlem – a crossing that would take less than 10 minutes. The revival of trans-Hudson service would offer a lifeline to thousands of commuters, dramatically reducing car dependency, traffic congestion, and pollution. This is especially critical for Upper Manhattan, a community burdened with some of the region's worst air quality.

The City has a rare opportunity to capitalize on the ferry system's success, and I urge the City Council to support further expansion. The current network optimization is a strong start, and it's time to bring the same modern, efficient water transit to Upper Manhattan. Thank you again to Chair Farías and Committee members for holding this hearing, and I look forward to working together to bring ferry service to more New Yorkers across the city.



PUBLIC TESTIMONY OF THE WATERFRONT ALLIANCE

October 28, 2025

New York City Council Committee on Economic Development Oversight Hearing RE: New York City Ferry Operations and Waterfront Sustainability

Submitted by Furhana Husani, Director of Programs and Climate Initiatives, Waterfront Alliance

Thank you, Chair Farías, and Council Members, for the opportunity to testify. My name is Furhana Husani, director of programs and climate initiatives at Waterfront Alliance. Waterfront Alliance is an alliance of more than 1,100 organizations, businesses, and individuals, and we are the leader in waterfront revitalization and climate resilience advocacy for the New York-New Jersey Harbor region.

On behalf of the Waterfront Alliance, we submit this testimony in strong support of Intro Numbers 937, 1112, 1143, and 1149, and Resolution Number 400. As a leader in waterfront revitalization and climate resilience advocacy for the New York-New Jersey Harbor region, the Waterfront Alliance is committed to sustainability and mitigating the effects of climate change. We have been a longstanding advocate for public access to the water and wrote the plan and guide for re-establishing a five-borough ferry system prior to the launch of NYC Ferry in 2017.

Our support for these bills aligns with our vision for the success of the NYC Ferry system, which we define through The Five E's: Expansion, Economics, Electrification, Emergency Services, and Equity. Please view our in-depth testimony from the September 10, 2024 New York City Council Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and Committee on Economic Development Oversight Hearing <a href="https://example.com/here-to-september-to-septembe

Support for Zero-Emission Ports and Environmental Accountability (Int. No. 1143 and Int. No. 937)

Waterfront Alliance strongly supports measures that promote the sustainability of our harbor, which is why we urge the passage of Int. No. 1143 and Int. No. 937.



Int. No. 1143: Feasibility Study of Zero-Emission Port Operations We specifically express our strong support for Int. No. 1143, which calls for a comprehensive feasibility study on transitioning all City ports to zero-emission operations.

- Climate and Health Benefits: The fossil-fueled maritime shipping sector is a major polluter, exposing portside residents to cancer-causing and asthma-inducing air pollutants such as particulate matter, sulfur oxide, and nitrogen oxide. Port electrification would bring significant public health benefits to the New York metro region, potentially reaping over \$60 million per year in Brooklyn alone¹. Transitioning New York City port operations to 100% zero-emissions by 2040 would align the city with the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting global warming to a 1.5°C trajectory.²
- Study Requirements: The study, to be conducted by the Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability (OLTPS) in consultation with the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC), will provide crucial insight into the investments needed, technology available, and workforce preparedness required to achieve this transition.
- Shore Power Evaluation: The study must evaluate whether it is practicable to
 provide incentives (such as reduced docking fees) to zero-emission vessels and
 determine if sufficient shore power can be provided to all commercial marine
 vessels by 2027, while also identifying any barriers to achieving this goal.
 Modernizing our ports is essential for New York City to maintain its global
 competitiveness, as the shipping industry rapidly shifts toward decarbonization.

Int. No. 937: Annual Reporting on Shore Power Use Int. No. 937 reinforces the city's commitment to clean air by requiring annual reporting on shore power usage at city cruise terminals.

• Environmental Impact: Shore power allows ships to turn off their auxiliary engines while docked, stopping the burning of diesel fuel and subsequently lowering air

¹ Zhihang Meng and Bryan Comer, Electrifying ports to reduce diesel pollution from ships and trucks and benefit public health: Case studies of the Port of Seattle and the Port of New York and New Jersey (International Council on Clean Transportation, 2023), https://theicct.org/publication/marine-ports-electrification-feb23/.

² Bryan Comer, "Zero-emission shipping and the Paris Agreement: Why the IMO needs to pick a zero date and set interim targets in its revised GHG strategy," International Council on Clean Transportation, September 8, 2021, https://theicct.org/zero-emission-shipping-and-the-paris-agreement-why-the-imo-needs-to-pick-a-zero-date-and-setinterim-targets-in-its-revised-ghg-strategy/.



- pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions. Currently, the Brooklyn Cruise Terminal has shore power capacity but is underutilized, and the Manhattan Cruise Terminal completely lacks shore power connections.
- Accountability: This bill mandates that the contracted entity monitoring compliance (currently EDC) submit a report including the total number of cruise ships that docked, how much utilized shore power, and an explanation of whether shore power was not used (e.g., if it was deemed unsafe or unavailable). This reporting requirement ensures transparency and supports targeted investment and policy to curb the environmental impact of cruise ships.

Support for Equity and Accessibility in Ferry Service (Int. No. 1112 and Int. No. 1149)

To ensure the NYC Ferry system fulfills its mission as an equitable and accessible service for all New Yorkers, we fully support Int. No. 1112 and Int. No. 1149.

Int. No. 1112 (or Int. No. 1121): Reduced Cost Ferry Service to Middle School Students This bill would extend eligibility for reduced-cost ferry service to include middle school students, specifically those enrolled in grades 6, 7, and 8. Currently, reduced fares (no greater than half of the standard fare) are available to NYC High School students (grades 9-12), senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and Fair Fares participants. Expanding this benefit aligns with the Waterfront Alliance's focus on Equity and reducing barriers for riders, especially for students traveling to or from school.

Int. No. 1149: Language Accessibility at Ferry Terminals This bill mandates that all written information regarding ferry schedules, fares, and tickets at City-owned and contracted ferry terminals must be provided in the "designated citywide languages". This critical measure ensures that the thousands of New Yorkers who rely on the ferry system, including those with limited English proficiency, have accessible information, thereby strengthening the system's commitment to Equity.

Support for Transportation Expansion and Congestion Relief (Res. No. 400 and Additional Expansion)

Waterfront Alliance views Expansion as one of the keys to success for the NYC Ferry system. We therefore support Res. No. 400 and encourage further exploration of new routes.



Res. No. 400: Expand NYC Ferry service to LaGuardia Airport (LGA) We strongly support Resolution No. 400, calling on the EDC to expand NYC Ferry service to LaGuardia Airport.

- Addressing Transit Deficiencies: LaGuardia Airport is among the busiest in the U.S., but it is currently the only major airport under the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey purview that is not accessible by train.
- Congestion Relief: Traffic congestion on the roads leading to LGA is often so severe that the Transportation Security Administration has advised passengers to allow at least two hours for travel to the airport. Expanded NYC Ferry service would provide an alternative, affordable mode of transportation for the tens of thousands of people who use LGA daily, including the over 9,000 people employed there.
- Feasibility: The Port Authority has presented a proposal for a ferry route connecting Manhattan to LGA, and the Queens Borough Board has supported the addition of the Marine Air Terminal ferry terminal. This route provides an alternative means of access that could help ease congestion on the roads near the airport. A 2013 EDC study projected a ferry to the LGA Marine Air Terminal could have a potential daily ridership of over 800 people. Furthermore, a ferry landing at Terminal A would be significantly less costly and more expeditious than other transit options, reducing emissions and taking cars off the road.

While we support Res. No. 400, we encourage the City to adopt an abundance mindset regarding public transportation and to continue widespread expansion of the NYC Ferry, prioritizing areas in transit deserts. We specifically urge the City Council to work with the EDC to prioritize the following expansions:

1. Brooklyn to Staten Island (via Bay Ridge Line): Currently, the commute from Staten Island to Downtown Brooklyn takes about 90 minutes via public transit. A ferry connection is necessary to link residents to emerging job growth centers and major investments, such as the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal (SBMT) project related to offshore wind power.



- 2. City Island (via Soundview Line): A ferry landing would provide an alternative method of transportation for this thriving residential neighborhood which relies on a single, frequently congested, and climate-vulnerable two-way bridge for access. A ferry could reduce the commute time to Midtown or Lower Manhattan by an hour.
- 3. Other Potential Routes: The City should also explore extending the St. George line to Upper Manhattan, adding a landing in Jamaica Bay (with potential connection to JFK), adding additional landings along and across the Rockaway Peninsula, the South Shore of Staten Island, Canarsie, Randalls Island, and Willets Point.

In conclusion, the NYC Ferry system, which has expanded to serve over 30 million riders since 2017, deserves continued investment and strategic growth. We urge the Council to pass Int. No. 937, Int. No. 1112, Int. No. 1143, Int. No. 1149, and Res. No. 400, recognizing their importance in advancing the environmental, equitable, and transportation goals of our waterfront city.













October 28, 2025

Committee on Economic Development New York City Council 250 Broadway, Suite 1833New York, NY 10007

RE: Strong support for Int 1143-2024 (a proposed Local Law in relation to a feasibility study of zero-emission port operations)

Dear Members of the New York City Council,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to express our strong support for the adoption of Int 1143, a proposed Local Law in relation to a feasibility study of zero-emission port operations, introduced by Council Member Alexa Avilés in December 2024. Many of our organizations have been working to advance climate action and clean air for communities impacted by port and industrial pollution in New York City and beyond. The passage of this bill is an important step towards the much-needed transition of New York City ports to zero-emissions, which would reap timely public health and environmental benefits for New Yorkers.

Int 1143 would direct the Mayor's Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability to conduct a study, in consultation with the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC), exploring the feasibility and potential pathways to transition all city ports to zero-emission by 2040. The study would also evaluate the feasibility and possible pathways to provide shore power to all commercial maritime vessels by 2027, as well as potential incentives to encourage the use of low to zero-emission vessels. The office would be required to complete this study and publicly report on it within one year.

For decades, New Yorkers living nearby ports have breathed in toxic air pollution from port operations. The fossil-fueled maritime shipping sector is a huge polluter, exposing portside residents to asthma and cancer-causing air pollutants such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxide, and sulfur oxide. Globally, fossil-fueled shipping pollution leads to nearly 265,000 premature deaths and 6.4 million cases of childhood asthma annually. Across the New York metro region, air

¹ Natalie Mueller, Marie Westerby, and Mark Nieuwenhuijsen, "Health impact assessments of shipping and port-sourced air pollution on a global scale: A scoping literature review," *Environmental Research* 216, no. 1 (2023),

pollution is estimated to cause over 21,000 new cases of childhood asthma per year.² The International Council on Clean Transportation finds that port electrification would bring significant benefits to the New York metro region, especially Brooklyn which would reap over \$60 million in public health benefits per year.³

In addition to improving New Yorkers' health, transitioning New York City ports to zero-emission operations would greatly benefit our climate in an era of global warming. If shipping were a country, it would be the sixth largest climate polluter in the world, emitting 1 billion tons of carbon dioxide into our atmosphere annually.⁴ Ocean shipping climate pollution is the equivalent of 3% of all global greenhouse gas emissions, but this could rise to as much as 17% by mid-century if the sector is left unregulated due to our increasing reliance on global logistics in a globalizing economy.⁵ Transitioning New York City port operations to 100% zero-emissions by 2040 would align with the Paris Agreement's goal of a 1.5°C global warming trajectory that avoids the worst impacts of climate change.⁶

Recognizing the increasingly undeniable impacts of climate change on New York, in 2019, the New York City Council declared a climate emergency, calling "for an immediate emergency mobilization to restore a safe climate." Indeed, without swift climate mitigation mobilization, average annual temperatures in New York City are projected to increase between 4°F and 6°F by the 2050s and between 5.6°F and 9.8°F by the 2080s compared with the 1981–2010 average. This would mean 14 to 32 days per year of over 95°F temperature by mid-century and 17 to 54 days per year by the end of the century. Bold action is needed to avoid higher levels of precipitation and sea level rise associated with global warming, which would make New York increasingly more prone to catastrophic flooding, and we urge City Council to pass this bill.

Modernizing our ports and transitioning them to zero-emission is crucial for New York City to maintain its competitiveness, as major ports around the world continue to electrify and the shipping industry shifts towards zero-emission technologies. As of 2022, 40% of global cruise fleet is shore-

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https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S001393512201787X; Mikhail Sofiev et al., "Cleaner fuels for ships provide public health benefits with climate tradeoffs," *Nature Communications* 9, no. 406 (2018), https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-017-02774-9.

² "EDF mapping reveals where traffic pollution harms children's lungs," Global Clean Air, Environmental Defense Fund, 2025, https://globalcleanair.org/traffic-pollution-harms-childrens-lungs/.

³ Zhihang Meng and Bryan Comer, Electrifying ports to reduce diesel pollution from ships and trucks and benefit public health: Case studies of the Port of Seattle and the Port of New York and New Jersey (International Council on Clean Transportation, 2023), https://theicct.org/publication/marine-ports-electrification-feb23/.

⁴ Zoe Schlanger, "If shipping were a country, it would be the world's sixth-biggest greenhouse gas emitter," Trade and Investment, World Economic Forum, April 18, 2018, https://www.weforum.org/stories/2018/04/if-shipping-were-a-country-it-would-be-the-world-s-sixth-biggest-greenhouse-gas-emitter/.

⁵ "Shipping emissions 17% of global CO₂, making it the elephant in the climate negotiations room," Transport and Environment, November 23, 2015, https://www.transportenvironment.org/articles/shipping-emissions-17-global-co2-making-it-elephant-climate-negotiations-

room#:~:text=Shipping%20could%20be%20responsible%20for,to%20a%20new%20scientific%20study.

⁶ Bryan Comer, "Zero-emission shipping and the Paris Agreement: Why the IMO needs to pick a zero date and set interim targets in its revised GHG strategy," International Council on Clean Transportation, September 8, 2021, https://theicct.org/zero-emission-shipping-and-the-paris-agreement-why-the-imo-needs-to-pick-a-zero-date-and-set-interim-targets-in-its-revised-ghg-strategy/.

⁷ "Resolution declaring a climate emergency and calling for an immediate emergency mobilization to restore a safe climate," Legistar, New York City Council, accessed March 10, 2025,

 $[\]underline{https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3940953\&GUID=506493D1-9DF1-4289-8893-\underline{4AF892557355}.$

⁸ "Climate Impact Spotlight: New York City," New York State Climate Impacts Assessment, 2025, https://nysclimateimpacts.org/explore-by-region/new-york-city/.

⁹ Ibid.

power capable, with nearly all (98%) new-build ships committed to integrating shore power technology. The Cruise Line International Association projects that by 2028, ~75% of cruise fleet globally will have shore power capability. The Port of Seattle has already issued an order requiring all home-ported cruise ships to plug into shore power by 2027 – the first port to independently issued such mandate. International regulations are pushing the shipping industry and ports to rapidly decarbonize including the Net Zero Framework put forth by the International Maritime Organization and recent FuelEU regulation requiring European ports to provide shore power by 2030. Without ambitious actions to transition our ports, New York City risks being left behind.

New York's future depends on a hopeful vision of climate action, and portside communities need relief. This bill is also a step toward ensuring that our waterfront remains a vibrant and sustainable hub for local economy and green jobs. We urge the committee to pass this bill.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Fern Uennatornwaranggoon Climate Campaign Director Pacific Environment

Rachel Spector Senior Attorney Earthjustice

Furhana Husani Director of Programs and Climate Initiatives Waterfront Alliance Victoria Alexander Interim Chair Resilient Red Hoo

Dr. Karla Sosa New York – New Jersey State Affairs Environmental Defense Fund

Dr. Andrea Marpillero-Colomina Policy, Research, and Data Analytics Advisor GreenLatinos

¹⁰ Mislav Rogosic, Tatjana Stanivuk and David Lucaci. "A Study on the Application of Shore-Side Power as a Method to Reduce the Emissions of Greenhouse Gases by Cruise Ships". J. Mar. Sci. Eng. 2025, 13(3), 453; https://doi.org/10.3390/jmse13030453



Testimony of Alia Soomro, Deputy Director for New York City Policy New York League of Conservation Voters City Council Committee on Economic Development Oversight Hearing on NYC Ferry Operations and Waterfront Sustainability October 28, 2025

My name is Alia Soomro and I am the Deputy Director for New York City Policy at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV is a statewide environmental advocacy organization representing over 30,000 members in New York City. Thank you, Chair Farías and members of the Committee on Economic Development for the opportunity to testify.

NYLCV has steadfastly advocated for reliable, affordable, accessible, and clean transportation for all New Yorkers to improve residents' quality of life, cut down on air pollution, and work towards our City's climate goals. Waterborne transportation, including ferries, are a critical part of the City's climate and sustainability goals and help to better connect parts of the City that are not well-connected to the subway. Since the NYC Ferry was launched less than a decade ago, it has served millions of commuters annually across all five boroughs. NYLCV appreciates the Adams Administration prioritizing the ferry system with the launch of NYC Ferry Forward: A Plan for a More Equitable, Accessible, and Financially Sustainable System. The plan's objectives include broadening outreach to NYCHA developments near the ferry landings and expanding the discount program to offer \$1.35 one-way tickets for seniors, people with disabilities, and other riders who participate in the Fair Fares NYC program.

As the NYC Ferry continues to improve and move towards accessibility goals, NYLCV supports the following bills that would contribute to a more sustainable system:

Intro 937

NYLCV supports Intro 937 of 2024, sponsored by Council Member Avilés, which would require the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to submit annual reports to the Mayor and Speaker on the use of shore power at city cruise terminals. Shore power is a technology that allows cruise ships to plug into the local electrical grid while docked, enabling them to shut down their diesel engines and reduce local emissions. New York is one of only two cities on the East Coast with a shore power system. This is a common sense bill aimed at increasing transparency from EDC, which will provide crucial information on shore power and our infrastructure as the city makes more strides in sustainability. This data would also be useful for the State Legislature as they consider legislation that would require cruise ships to use shore power.

<u>Intro 1143</u>

NYLCV supports Intro 1143 of 2024, sponsored by Council Member Avilés, which would require the Mayor's Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability to conduct a study in consultation with EDC on transitioning all city ports to zero-emission port operations. The study would be required to evaluate whether such a transition can be completed by 2040, the technology and investments required to make such a transition, and whether any additional workforce development would be necessary to complete the transition. The study would also evaluate whether it would be possible to provide shore power to all commercial maritime vessels by 2027, as well as whether incentives can be provided for the use of low to zero-emission vessels. The office would be required to complete this study and publicly report on it within one year. This bill will help us move towards a more sustainable port system.

Intro 1149

NYLCV also supports Intro 1149 of 2024, sponsored by Council Member Farías, a bill that would require all written information at ferry terminals regarding ferry schedules, fares, and tickets to be provided in the designated citywide languages and any other language deemed appropriate. This bill will help make the NYC Ferry system more accessible to more New Yorkers.

Intro 1121

Lastly, NYLCV supports Intro 1121 of 2024, sponsored by Farías, which would require the inclusion of middle school students in the NYC Ferry discount fare program. Making the NYC Ferry system more affordable and accessible to New Yorkers is vital if we want more residents to take public transit.

In addition to the bills above, NYLCV has the following recommendations for the NYC Ferry system:

- Continue Expanding Ferry Service to Transit Deserts: continue making the ferry system more equitable by expanding it in transit deserts, especially in communities that have been historically underserved. For instance, new routes to consider include Staten Island to Brooklyn, an extension of the Soundview line to City Island and LaGuardia Airport, more routes to southeast Queens, and an extension to Randall's Island. We also urge the City to plan comprehensively by coupling ferry stops with expansions in micromobility options, such as Citibike and e-scooter docks, as well as protected bike and bus lanes. This will allow more New Yorkers to access more forms of safe and clean transportation.
- Continue Working Towards an Electrified Ferry System: NYLCV appreciated the
 announcement of a hybrid-electric ferry to Governors Island, which includes the
 installation of shoreside rapid charging infrastructure to support fully electric operations.
 NYLCV calls on the City to continue working towards an electrified ferry fleet for the
 whole NYC Ferry system. To start, the City should commit to piloting one fully electric
 ferry to test operations, charging infrastructure, maintenance, and user experience.

NYLCV looks forward to working with the City and fellow advocates to make the NYC Ferry system more equitable and accessible.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



Resilient Red Hook Testimony in Support of Int 1143-2024

New York City Council Committee on Economic Development

RE: Support for Int. 937-2024: A Local Law or Annual reporting on the use of shore power at cruise terminals.

Dear Members of the New York City Council Committee on Economic Development,

On behalf of Resilient Red Hook we write in enthusiastic support of Int. 937-2024. Posting shore-power information is an integral part of supporting the city's maritime activities. This bill would save time, reduce public and stakeholder confusion, and—most importantly—protect public health in overburdened neighborhoods like Red Hook that have borne the brunt of cruise emissions for years.

From lived experiences and studies, we know that simply posting data is not enough. Public shore-power webpages have gone offline without notice; equipment has been swapped out with no public update; and the current online logs have omitted most ship calls in some seasons. To truly deliver transparency and accountability, Int. 937 should go further in a few specific ways.

Int. 937 should be expanded and we want to encourage that you consider going further by:

1. Complete, ship-by-ship reporting—every call, every time Require a comprehensive record for every vessel call, posted within 72 hours and kept in a permanent archive:

Ship name/line, date, arrival/departure, berth.

Plug-in status (Y/N), connection start/stop times, total kWh delivered, shore-power uptime.

Reason for non-connection (equipment, vessel compatibility, safety, weather, crew, etc.).

Emissions avoided if connected and emitted if not—calculated with a standardized method.

- 2. Compliance visibility—Long-Term Agreements (LTAs) and corrective actions
 The website should show the status of LTAs with each cruise line (the trigger for compliance under Our Air, Our Water), and—when ships don't plug in—post the corrective action, responsible party, and timeline. Include a monthly rollup: % of calls connected, average connection duration, cumulative pollution avoided.
- 3. Scrubber disclosure and sludge accountability

When ships claim to use scrubbers at berth, require posting of:

Scrubber type (open/closed/hybrid) and operating mode at berth;

Observed plume characteristics;

Where closed-loop sludge is offloaded and disposed of.

Residents should not be told to "call the Coast Guard" and left there; NYCEDC should post its own verification steps and any referrals to regulators.

- 4. Advance notice of equipment changes and outages Mandate public alerts for:
 - * Removal/installation of jibs and other key components;
 - * Commissioning dates;
- * Planned maintenance and unplanned outages that affect plug-in availability.

 Keep an uptime log so the public understands when shore power was available and why it wasn't.
- 5. Data that the public can actually use

Post dashboards and downloadable CSV/JSON, plus an API for researchers and health providers. Require a stable URL and prohibit takedowns of historical data. (If something must change, redirect—don't erase.)

6. Pair shore-power data with neighborhood air readings

Publish fence-line PM2.5/NO $_2$ /SOx sensors near the terminal and a public complaints dashboard showing what was reported, when, and how it was resolved. Offer multilingual SMS/email alerts for high-emission events or shore-power outages.

7. Independent oversight and community voice

Require regularly scheduled and transparent third-party audits of the data and a community advisory panel—with Red Hook representation—that can flag gaps and recommend fixes at a public meeting on a set cadence.

These improvements won't slow operations—they'll build trust, create predictable expectations for cruise lines, and give families, schools, and clinics the information they need to protect community health and wellbeing. They also align with our mission as Resilient Red Hook: minimizing differences and maximizing cooperation so the environment, economy, and community advance together.

We urge the Council to pass Int. 937-2024 and, wherever possible, incorporate these additions so the law delivers not just data, but durable, enforceable transparency. Thank you.

Victoria Alexander Chair Resilient Red Hook



Resilient Red Hook Testimony in Support of Int 1143-2024 New York City Council Committee on Economic Development RE: Support for Int. 1143-2024: A Local Law for a Feasibility Study of Zero-Emission Port Operations

Dear Members of the New York City Council Committee on Economic Development,

On behalf of Resilient Red Hook, we write in enthusiastic support of Int. 1143-2024, introduced by Council Member Alexa Avilés, to initiate a feasibility study for transitioning New York City ports to zero-emission operations by 2040. This bill aligns with existing public policies and mandates and further advances the impact of New York's emissions reduction and clean energy targets.

Red Hook is a historic industrial waterfront community that has long borne the burden of pollution from port activity, diesel trucks, legacy industry, and maritime shipping. The Red Hook peninsula, already vulnerable to climate-driven sea-level rise and flooding, is simultaneously experiencing unacceptable levels of diesel emissions and particulate matter—particularly in the working-class and NYCHA communities adjacent to port infrastructure. The community has seen a significant increase of truck emissions in the last few years from the unregulated development of many large last-mile distribution centers. These pollutants are directly correlated with high asthma rates and perpetuates other health disparities we have documented over years of local engagement.

As a community-led organization formed in the wake of Superstorm Sandy, we understand too well the intersection of environmental injustice, built infrastructure, climate risk, and public health. Our vision for a resilient Red Hook centers on an integrated approach to climate action—protecting our people, preserving our industrial working waterfront, and modernizing our economy through sustainable development.

A transition to zero-emission port operations is essential to achieving that vision and creating well-paid green jobs for the local community. It is also feasible. Electrifying port equipment, requiring shore power connections for vessels, and investing in green maritime freight will not only reduce emissions, but also create new economic opportunities—especially for local jobs tied to the construction, operations and maintenance, and development of new clean energy infrastructure.

The proposed feasibility study under Int. 1143 rightly directs the Mayor's Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability, in coordination with NYCEDC, to explore and publicly report on these pathways. This study can build on the foundational goals of the Brooklyn Marine Terminal

Memorandum of Understanding (April 2024), which prioritized modernization and maritime revitalization as the core purpose for state-city collaboration.

Red Hook must be a leader and model for what the transition to a zero-emission industrial working waterfront can look like. We call on the City Council to pass Int. 1143-2024 swiftly. Let us move together toward a clean, resilient, and just port economy—one that centers the voices of communities like ours and builds a healthier, more hopeful future for all New Yorkers.

With deep appreciation for your service and commitment.

Victoria Alexander

Chair

Resilient Red Hook

October 28th, 2025

New York City Council Economic Development Committee

RE: Strong support for bills Int 1143-2024 and Int 937

Dear Chair Fariás and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak at the committee hearing today. I also wanted to share my testimony in writing for reference.

- My name is Fern Uennatornwaranggoon. I work at Pacific Environment (PE), an
 environmental non-profit organization with a mission to protect the climate and marine
 environment. Through our <u>Ports for People</u> campaign, PE works in partnership with portside
 communities and environmental advocates to transform ports from hotspots of fossil fuel
 pollution to thriving hubs of sustainable economic development and environmental
 protection, here in the US and in Asia Pacific.
- I'm speaking to express strong support for bills Int 937 and Int 1143.
- PE has been working in partnership with residents and local advocacy groups such as
 Resilient Redhook and Waterfront Alliance, as well as e-NGOs such as EarthJustice, Green
 Latinos and Environmental Defense Fund on clean ports and shipping. We have also
 submitted a joint letter of support for bill 1143 for this hearing.
- While I'm not based in NY, PE has presence in NY, with staff living and working in NYC and specifically Brooklyn, but they're unable to attend the hearing today.
- Support for Intro 937 The EDC currently shares data on shore power plug in but the information is removed from the website from time to time. The sharing of information is sporadic and incomplete, making it hard for impacted community to track compliance to Our Air Our Water act. But this bill isn't just about monitoring whether cruise ships plug in, it highlights the fact that more needs to be done to overcome the technical challenges for ships to plug in. The EDC often cites technical difficulties, but shore power has been in place at Brooklyn Terminal since 2016—there has been nearly a decade to address technical issues. What else needs to be done to ensure all ships that are shore power capable can successfully plug in? The community needs more transparency and accountability.
- Support for Intro 1143 Ports are important economic engines but they are also hubs of pollution. Port pollution comes from multiple sources like trucks, rails, cargo handling equipment, but **the biggest source of pollution is invariable ships.**

- A medium-sized cruise ship emits GHGs equivalent to those of 12,000 cars, and huge amounts of other air pollutants that are harmful to human health.
- Moving ports to zero emission operations is crucial to address the environmental and public health impacts of ports and the shipping sector. It is also crucial for NY ports to remain competitive and attract businesses and investors.
- The shipping industry and ports around the world are rapidly shifting towards zeroemission technologies, and NY must not be left behind.
- Major ports across the US have committed to becoming net zero by 2050 or sooner. Port of Seattle has adopted an executive order requiring cruise ships to plug into shore power by 2027. Many of the cruise lines operating there are the same ones that visit Brooklyn and Manhattan.
- Regulatory pressure like the recently adopted FuelEU regulation requires ports in the European Union to provide shore power and ships to plug in by 2030.
- As of 2022, 40% of global cruise fleet is shore power capable, but the percentage varies by geographies with higher proportion of ships with shore power capability visiting those terminals that have shore power – you build it, they come.
- According to Cruise Line International Association, nearly all (98%) new-build ships have committed to integrating shore power technology and they project that by 2028, ~75% of cruise fleet globally will be shore power capable.
- Transitioning port operations to ZE creates high-road jobs -- during construction and installation phase and throughout operations and maintenance.
- Modernizing NYC ports by transitioning them to ZE is good not only because it will ensure clean air for local residents and port workers, but it is vital for these ports to remain competitive as a leading global destination which supports a vibrant local economy.
- ZE port feasibility would be a small step forward. In a way, the feasibility study is a
 misnomer. We know that ZE ports are feasible, technologically and economically. The
 study provides a crucial platform for the city to figure out the best and most expedient
 pathway to making ZE ports a reality.

Thank you.

Fern Uennatornwaranggoon

Climate Campaign Director, Pacific Environment

My name is Carolina Velasquez and I've been a New York City resident for 11 years, of which I have lived in Brooklyn for the most recent six years. I'm writing to express my strong support for bills Int 937 and Int 1143. As a long-time resident here, I have been concerned about the harmful air pollution generated by cruise ships and broader shipping activities at our city ports. Port and shipping pollution fuels asthma, cancer and climate change. I believe in the New York metro region, air pollution is estimated to contribute to more than 21,000 children's asthma cases each year. Across the region, around 20% of all childhood asthma cases are attributable to air pollution and we must do everything we can to proactively reduce this. I have seen large cruise ships spewing black smoke while docked in Brooklyn and this is unacceptable.

NYC has always been a leader in fighting climate change and environmental degradation. It's one of the reasons I'm proud to call it my home. But our ports are lagging behind. I support Int 1143 because I feel strongly that the city needs to proactively figure out how and when we can achieve a zero-emission port. I also want to see more transparency and accountability from the EDC and cruise companies, and to be assured that cruise ships are not burning fuels while docked in Brooklyn and dirtying our air – which is why I support Int 937. I want to see our ports free of pollution and these bills are small steps toward making that a reality.

My name is Jamie Yates and I've been a resident of Brooklyn for three years. I care deeply about the environmental impact of our ports on both a personal level as a NYC resident, as well as on a professional level as I advocate for policies to decarbonize ports and shipping here in the U.S. and at the International Maritime Organization, the UN body that regulates the global shipping industry.

The shipping industry and ports around the world are rapidly shipping towards zero-emission technologies, and NYC must not be left behind. Ensuring that our ports and waterfronts are clean, safe and vibrant is good not only for local residents, but it is important for our local economy and maintaining NYC waterfront as a modern. I recently served on the waterfront and environmental justice advisory committee for the Brooklyn Marine Terminal redevelopment plan where a commitment to a modern sustainable port with electric equipment and renewable energy generation were identified as critical aspects of bringing the terminal into the 21st century and beyond.

Transitioning New York City's ports to zero-emission operations is not only a public health imperative—it is a climate necessity. If shipping were a country, it would rank as the sixth-largest climate polluter, responsible for about 3% of global greenhouse gas emissions and projected to rise sharply without regulation. Converting to zero-emission port operations by 2040 would align New York with the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C climate target and help avoid the extreme heat, flooding, and sea level rise already threatening our city. As ports worldwide mandate shore power and zero-emission standards, New York must act boldly to protect its residents, strengthen its competitiveness, and lead in the global clean port transition.

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