

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY,  
JOINTLY WITH THE COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND CRIMINAL  
JUSTICE SERVICES

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November 20, 2014  
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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E:

MARK TREYGER  
Chairperson  
ELIZABETH S. CROWLEY  
Co-Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Rosie Mendez  
Margaret S. Chin  
Donovan J. Richards  
Carlos Menchaca  
Eric A. Ulrich  
Steven Matteo  
Mathieu Eugene  
Fernando Cabrera  
Rory I. Lancman  
Paul A. Vallone  
Mark S. Weprin

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

Daniel Zarrilli  
Director  
Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency

Henry Jackson  
Deputy Commissioner for Technology  
Office of Emergency Management

Christina Farrell  
Deputy Commissioner of External Affairs  
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Charles Fraser  
General Counsel  
Department of Information Technology  
and Telecommunications (DoITT)

Priya Shrinivasan  
Assistant Commissioner  
Telecommunications Planning and  
Resiliency

Eric Hebert  
Amalgamated Warbasse Houses Resident  
Coney Island, Brooklyn

Tony Schloss  
Director of Community Initiatives  
Red Hook Initiative

Elizabeth Malone  
Vice-Chair  
Board of Directors  
Brooklyn Long-Term Recovery Group

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

Ann Valdez

Coney Island Resident

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Good morning. I am  
3 Mark Treyger, Chair of the Committee on Recovery and  
4 Resiliency. I wanna thank Chairperson Elizabeth  
5 Crowley and the Fire and Criminal Justice Committee  
6 for joining us today for a joint hearing and welcome  
7 all of you who plan to testify for coming as well.

8 Today we will be hearing two pieces of  
9 legislation, the first, Int. 0426 would require the  
10 Office of Emergency Management to develop a plan for  
11 the resiliency and recovery of our public  
12 communications networks. The second, Int. 0519,  
13 would require OEM to develop community-focused  
14 emergency preparedness materials with information  
15 tailored to the risks faced and resources available  
16 within the most vulnerable neighborhoods.

17 These are two different bills but one  
18 single idea that communication and information is how  
19 we prepare for, how we survive and how we recover  
20 from emergencies. It is our responsibility in city  
21 government to ensure that the information people need  
22 is provided to them in the format that is easiest for  
23 them; not that it's easiest for us. When an  
24 evacuation order is given, your world shrinks down to  
25 what you need to know, such as is your home in an

2 evacuation zone or where is the nearest evacuation  
3 center or shelter. We need to recognize that and  
4 provide the emergency preparedness materials people  
5 want and need for those moments; that is the spirit  
6 behind Int. 0519. Int. 0519 amends Title 30 of the  
7 Administrative Code to add a new section which would  
8 require OEM to create and distribute localized  
9 emergency preparedness materials. The materials  
10 would be for communities limited to contiguous zip  
11 codes in similar geographic area, in similar  
12 circumstance in which there is a particular risk of a  
13 specific emergency condition occurring. The  
14 materials would only include information relevant to  
15 the community, such as local evacuation zones,  
16 evacuation routes, evacuation centers, nearby  
17 fire/ambulance services, local charitable  
18 organizations that may provide post-emergency  
19 services and any other information deemed relevant by  
20 the Office of Emergency Management Commissioner. The  
21 materials, once prepared, would be translated into  
22 the languages spoken within the relevant communities;  
23 then be distributed both physically and online.

24 The other bill being heard today, Int.  
25 0425, which would require a communications recovery

3 and resiliency plan, is already supported by a super  
4 majority of the members of this Council; that is a  
5 clear statement of the importance this body places on  
6 protecting our home phones, our cellular phones, our  
7 internet and our television and radio during and  
8 after emergencies. It is vital that we ensure that  
9 the public cannot only receive information during an  
10 emergency, but also communicate back with the world;  
11 that is why I believe a communications plan that  
12 looks into protecting our infrastructure and  
13 resiliency measures, as well as how to quickly  
14 restore service, is so needed.

15 We in Southern Brooklyn saw how easily a  
16 fallen tree could pull down a wire and disrupt  
17 telephone or internet service for whole blocks. We  
18 saw how wind damage and power outages could shut down  
19 cellular network towers, but most of all we saw how  
20 important the ability to communicate was to our  
21 recovery, and that story was true all over this city,  
22 whether you are congregating outside of Starbucks to  
23 use their Wi-Fi or charging your phone with an  
24 extension cord that a neighbor dangled out a window.  
25 We rely on our communication networks and they need  
to be a part of our emergency and recovery planning.

2 I wanna thank the members of the  
3 administration testifying today; I hope we will have  
4 a fruitful discussion on both of these bills and  
5 other issues raised today. Thank you and I now turn  
6 over to Chair Elizabeth Crowley, the Chair of the  
7 Fire and Criminal Justice Committee.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: Good morning.  
9 Thank you, Chair Treyger for holding this hearing  
10 today. My name is Elizabeth Crowley and I am the  
11 Chair of the Fire and Criminal Justice Services  
12 Committee. I too want to thank everyone who has come  
13 here today to testify. My Committee oversees the  
14 Office of Emergency Management and I welcome  
15 representatives from OEM who are here today to  
16 discuss these two bills.

17 OEM's role in any emergency is critical;  
18 it is their duty to convey information to the public  
19 that can literally save lives, and at the very least,  
20 their planning and communications can mitigate the  
21 damages from any emergency, making it less painful  
22 for the affected area to endure, particularly in  
23 situations where the emergencies are known well ahead  
24 of time, such as in Superstorm Sandy where OEM had  
25 ample time to develop extensive plans to mitigate the

2 damage from that emergency. OEM's role is hugely  
3 important. OEM also plays a vital role in  
4 coordinating and responding to any disaster, manmade  
5 or otherwise, in which there is a multi-agency  
6 response. They are the custodians of the City's plan  
7 to respond to these emergencies, such as the City's  
8 600-page Coastal Storm Plan and the quality of their  
9 plans, such as those proposed in the legislation  
10 being considered today, is of huge importance.

11 I have been disturbed, however, by  
12 reports of OEM failing in its duty to communicate to  
13 the public during Superstorm Sandy and failing to  
14 ensure that its contingency plans were actually used  
15 in the City's response, particularly in a situation  
16 like a massive storm in which lines of communication  
17 are often damaged, it is imperative to have backup  
18 communication plans in place. I am interested in  
19 learning more about how OEM plans to deal with  
20 communication issues in the future and how the  
21 proposed legislation on this topic addresses this  
22 issue.

23 I was also disturbed to hear reports  
24 during Superstorm Sandy that certain neighborhoods  
25 felt ignored by OEM, even abandoned by OEM and all



2 other City agencies as well. Particularly in  
3 situations where we can predict which area might be  
4 most affected by a particular emergency, it is just  
5 common sense that OEM should have an area-specific  
6 emergency plan in place. I am interested in learning  
7 more about how the proposed legislation could help in  
8 addressing this issue.

9 I am also interested in learning more  
10 about what equipment OEM might need going forward to  
11 comply with this legislation and what lessons they  
12 have learned from Superstorm Sandy on these issues.

13 I hope to have a productive discussion  
14 today and I'd like to thank Chair Treyger once again  
15 for holding this important hearing.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, Chair.  
17 I'd like to just also mention we've joined by Council  
18 Members Paul Vallone, Steve Matteo, Margaret Chin,  
19 Donovan Richards, and I think that's it for now.  
20 [background comment] Oh and yes, Council Member  
21 Rosie Mendez as well. Thank you.

22 And we have our first panel; I believe  
23 Dan Zarrilli from the Mayor's Office of Recovery and  
24 Resiliency; Henry Jackson, representing OEM;  
25 Christina Farrell, representing OEM; Charles Fraser

2 from DoITT. [background comment] Right, is that... or  
3 that's two times he printed? [background comment]  
4 Okay. Alright. May I ask... I'd like to swear  
5 everyone in. Do you swear or affirm to tell the  
6 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in  
7 your testimony before these committees and to respond  
8 honestly to Council Member questions? [background  
9 comments] Please.

10 DANIEL ZARRILLI: Thank you and good  
11 morning, Chairperson Treyger and Crowley and Members  
12 of the Committee on Recovery and Resiliency and  
13 Members of the Committee on Fire and Criminal Justice  
14 Services.

15 My name is Daniel Zarrilli and I'm the  
16 Director of the Mayor's Office of Recovery and  
17 Resiliency. It is a pleasure to appear before you  
18 once again; this time to discuss two bills that  
19 impact the city's critical telecommunications  
20 infrastructure and emergency planning.

21 I'm joined here by OEM Deputy  
22 Commissioner Henry Jackson, OEM Deputy Commissioner  
23 Christina Farrell and DoITT General Counsel Charles  
24 Fraser. Each will provide detailed testimony about  
25

3 the two bills being heard today; I wanna begin by  
4 laying the foundation for our testimony.

5 As many of you know, in 2012 Hurricane  
6 Sandy highlighted many vulnerabilities that we have  
7 across the city, claiming the lives of 44 New Yorkers  
8 and causing \$19 billion of damage and lost economic  
9 activity all over the city. I've testified  
10 previously on the city's efforts to prepare for  
11 future extreme weather events and the long-term  
12 impacts of climate change. Today I intend to focus  
13 on our telecommunications infrastructure in  
14 particular.

15 In order to communicate with friends and  
16 family and to support a vibrant global economy, our  
17 city relies on massive telecommunications  
18 infrastructure with some 50,000 miles of cables,  
19 thousands of cell phone sites and more than 100  
20 critical facilities. Sandy exposed vulnerabilities  
21 in this system and caused power outages and  
22 telecommunications failures, especially in buildings  
23 without hardened utilities. An estimated 35,000  
24 buildings experienced flooding that damaged  
25 telecommunications equipment; some critical  
26 facilities were better prepared than others. For

2 example, in Manhattan, Verizon's Broad Street central  
3 office had mechanical equipment, including switch  
4 gear, at or below ground level or grade. Salt water  
5 overwhelmed the systems and the building was not  
6 operational for 11 days. On the other hand,  
7 Verizon's West Street central office, by contrast,  
8 had elevated mechanical equipment, newer copper  
9 infrastructure and extensive fiber optic deployment.  
10 The building was operational again within 24 hours  
11 after Sandy. This contrast is illustrative of the  
12 potential benefits of implementing proactive  
13 telecommunications resiliency measures.

14 In addition, the Sandy experience made us  
15 all aware of the limitations of critically important  
16 cell phone towers when grid power is lost for any  
17 significant period of time. Telephone landlines have  
18 been long recognized as infrastructure assets that  
19 are among the most resistant to weather  
20 interruptions, however, given the near universal  
21 adoption of mobile phones in recent years, it's clear  
22 that cell phone resiliency needs to be strengthened  
23 as well. The impacts of climate change, including  
24 future flood risks and increased temperature are only  
25 going to exacerbate these risks.

3 Performing the necessary work of  
4 upgrading our critical telecommunications  
5 infrastructure to adapt to future risks is likely to  
6 be a costly and lengthy endeavor, requiring  
7 partnership between the public and private sector. A  
8 Stronger, More Resilient New York, the City's  
9 comprehensive climate resiliency plan outlined  
10 several key strategies to increase resiliency in the  
11 telecommunications systems. These include increasing  
12 accountability to promote resiliency, enabling more  
13 rapid recovery from extreme weather events, hardening  
14 facilities to reduce weather-related impacts and  
15 creating redundancy to reduce the risk of outages.  
16 Much progress has been made and the  
17 telecommunications sector is better prepared now than  
18 it was when Sandy struck; we've launched a new  
19 Telecommunications Resiliency Team, we are working  
20 with the private sector on business continuity plans  
21 and emergency efficiency measures, building code  
22 standards have been upgraded and work is underway to  
23 reduce the risk of flooding more broadly across the  
24 city as we implement the entire comprehensive climate  
25 resiliency plan. But it is clear that there's more

2 to do as we continue to build resiliency across the  
3 city.

4           And as mentioned before, the power grid  
5 is a central component of our telecommunications  
6 infrastructure; to address this the city has been  
7 working hard with our local utilities on a range of  
8 efforts. For instance, it has been reported recently  
9 ConEd is investing \$1 billion over four years to  
10 harden its systems to reduce risk during future  
11 disasters and we continue to work with other  
12 utilities across the city to prioritize parallel  
13 storm-hardening measures as well in those systems.  
14 After all, keeping the power on is a critical  
15 resiliency measure for our telecommunications sector  
16 and indeed for the entire city.

17           In conclusion, the City will continue  
18 working to implement its ambitious resiliency agenda  
19 across its entire climate resiliency plan; in  
20 particular, on telecommunications crucial progress  
21 from OEM, DoITT and city agencies has certainly  
22 reduced our vulnerability to climate events since  
23 2012, but much more remains to be done and we're  
24 committed to that effort.

2 Thank you for your time and attention to  
3 this important issue; I look forward to continuing to  
4 work with you and your staffs to realized our shared  
5 goal of a stronger, more resilient New York. And now  
6 I'm gonna turn it over to DoITT General Counsel,  
7 Charles Fraser, to specifically discuss Int. 0425.  
8 Thank you very much.

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you.

10 CHARLES FRASER: Good morning Chair  
11 Treyger and Chair Crowley; Members of the Committee  
12 on Recovery and Resiliency and Members of the  
13 Committee on Fire and Criminal Justice Services.

14 My name is Charles Fraser; I'm the  
15 General Counsel of the Department of Information,  
16 Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT). With me  
17 today, to my immediate right, are Priya Shrinivasan,  
18 our Assistant Commissioner for Telecommunications  
19 Planning and Resiliency and Patrick Bryant, the  
20 Senior Policy Analyst for that office. I am  
21 overseeing that office pending the hiring of a new  
22 deputy commissioner for telecommunications planning,  
23 which I am hopeful will be completed by the end of  
24 the year.

2 Thank you for the opportunity to testify  
3 today on Int. 0425 of 2014, which would amend the New  
4 York City Administrative Code in relation to a  
5 communications access plan for certain emergency  
6 events.

7 The strength and devastation of Hurricane  
8 Sandy was a wakeup call for all of us to get serious  
9 about climate change and its consequences, especially  
10 rising sea levels and stronger and more frequent  
11 storms. The City conducted a comprehensive analysis  
12 of the vulnerabilities of the city's infrastructure  
13 to Sandy-like events in the future, summarized in a  
14 report issued in June 2013. The report outlined in  
15 18 chapters recommendations for mitigation of those  
16 vulnerabilities.

17 Chapter 9 of the report concerned the  
18 resiliency of the private sector's provision of  
19 telecommunication services in the city. The lead  
20 recommendation of that chapter was the creation in  
21 DoITT of a Telecommunications Planning and Resiliency  
22 office and we completed the implementation of that  
23 recommendation last summer with the hiring of  
24 Assistant Commissioner Shrinivasan, who comes to use  
25 from the Federal Communications Commission where she



3 spent 20 years in telecommunications policy and  
4 enforcement. The initial steps for that office are  
5 information gathering and to that end we have begun  
6 regular meetings with the private telecom providers  
7 in New York.

8 It is important to understand the legal  
9 context of the City's relationship with the private  
10 telecommunications industry. Telecommunication  
11 services are regulated primarily at the federal level  
12 and secondarily at the state level, preempting  
13 regulation in some areas by municipalities such as  
14 New York, therefore, gathering information from  
15 private telecom providers relies in very large part  
16 on the voluntary cooperation of those providers, and  
17 given the highly competitive nature of the modern  
18 telecom industry, as might be expected, providers  
19 have so far been cooperative in varying degrees.

20 The Telecom Resiliency office will work  
21 on a number of matters, including developing more  
22 strategic communication with telecommunication  
23 providers so the City has an ongoing dialogue to  
24 discuss resiliency initiatives and address barriers  
25 to implementation; developing resiliency and disaster  
recovery negotiation objectives for future

2 telecommunications franchise agreements -- this might  
3 include things like providing backup power sources,  
4 tightening service and restoration standards and so  
5 on; ensuring that the City has access to more  
6 complete and detailed maps of telecommunications  
7 assets installed in, on or above city streets;  
8 standardizing format and frequency of performance  
9 data reporting about significant outages across  
10 providers; exploring options to increase conduit  
11 resiliency; exploring options with providers for  
12 voluntary real time outage reporting for use by first  
13 responders and advocating for state and federal  
14 regulatory changes and state, federal and local  
15 legislative changes that would lead to better  
16 emergency preparation awareness and response.

17           Before I turn to Int. 0425 itself, I  
18 would like to review some of the other measures that  
19 the City has undertaken in the telecom field  
20 following Hurricane Sandy.

21           The City maintains a program of vigorous  
22 advocacy before the FCC and the PSC, the New York  
23 State Public Services Commission. We regularly  
24 submit comments on policy initiatives, including  
25 those involving resiliency measures and submit policy

2 recommendations on our own. DoITT and the Law  
3 Department are leaders on the Intergovernmental  
4 Advisory Committee to the FCC, where we have earned  
5 respect for thorough policy analysis and thoughtful  
6 commentary on policy proposals and initiatives. For  
7 instance, in December 2013 the City submitted  
8 comments to the FCC encouraging stronger backup power  
9 requirements for wireless companies, better  
10 transparency on outages to customers and more  
11 immediate communication with first responders  
12 regarding outages within affected areas. Similarly,  
13 in July of this year DoITT submitted comments to the  
14 PSC urging increased PSC focus on telecom resiliency  
15 issues.

16 As proposed in the City's Hurricane Sandy  
17 After Action Report in May 2013, DoITT works with the  
18 Mayor's Office and the Office of Emergency Management  
19 on the Emergency Management Data Task Force, which is  
20 establishing protocols for regular reporting of  
21 outages to the City from utility providers. Earlier  
22 this week we joined Mayor de Blasio in announcing  
23 LinkNYC, the winning proposal to replace public pay  
24 telephones with sleek, modern structures that will  
25 provide free, unlimited, high-speed Wi-Fi service and

2 free domestic telephone calling for all users. This  
3 proposed franchise agreement is subject to Franchise  
4 and Concession Review Committee approval and notably,  
5 is the first telecom franchise to incorporate climate  
6 change-related resiliency requirements, including a  
7 fiber optic network to minimize outages as a result  
8 of flooding and battery backup to sustain 911 calling  
9 functionality for 24 hours after a power outage. We  
10 expect to negotiate for similar resiliency provisions  
11 and future telecommunications franchise agreements.

12 DoITT's primary concern about Int. 0425  
13 is that as written it contemplates greater City  
14 access to private telecom industry information and we  
15 believe is realistic. In order for the Commissioner  
16 of Emergency Management to develop and issue the plan  
17 contemplated by the bill at the level of detail  
18 described in the bill, the commissioner would need  
19 comprehensive access to private telecom industry  
20 operational information, business continuity plans  
21 and other information that in our experience is not  
22 easy to come by. Our concern is therefore that the  
23 bill will create expectations that may prove to be  
24 unrealistic in light of the City's existing legal

2 authority in the field of private sector  
3 telecommunication services.

4 Preparing and fortifying New York City's  
5 telecommunications infrastructure for the next  
6 emergency event is a priority for DoITT and we look  
7 forward to continuing our work with the City Council,  
8 our agency partners, telecommunications partners and  
9 the public to that end.

10 I thank the Committee Members for your  
11 time this morning and look forward to answering your  
12 questions.

13 HENRY JACKSON: Okay. Good morning,  
14 Chairpersons Treyger and Crowley, Members of the  
15 Committee on Recovery, Resiliency and Fire and  
16 Criminal Justice. I am Henry Jackson, Deputy  
17 Commissioner for Technology at New York City  
18 Emergency Management.

19 I am here today to speak to Int. No. 0425  
20 that proposes the creation of a communications access  
21 plan. Certainly we recognize the importance of  
22 communications before, during and after an emergency;  
23 in fact, we often say that communications is the most  
24 important facet of managing an emergency.

3 New York City Emergency Management is  
4 responsible for the development, maintenance and  
5 oversight of emergency plans, protocols and playbooks  
6 that help prepare the City to respond effectively  
7 during an incident in order to reduce disruptions to  
8 people and services. We create and update the City's  
9 emergency plans for a range of natural and man-made  
10 disasters. The plans focus on citywide coordination  
11 and operations and are either operation-specific,  
12 such as debris management or hazard-specific, such as  
13 coastal storms, winter weather or heat. Plans  
14 outline the decision-making process and operational  
15 strategies during a hazardous event. This includes  
16 coordinated roles and responsibilities of key  
17 stakeholders for events, primarily City agencies.  
18 Interagency coordination is the heart of New York  
19 City Emergency Management's core competency as the  
20 City's coordinating agency during large-scale  
21 incidents, with a focus on consequence management; we  
22 activate the City's Emergency Operations Center, co-  
23 located at our headquarters, to bring in the Mayor  
24 and representatives from agencies involved in the  
25 response. We coordinate all players, from the  
largest to the smallest agencies, including city,

2 state and federal, and of specific note for this  
3 hearing, private sector partners, such as those from  
4 the telecommunication and utility companies.

5 We know that the public expects minimal  
6 disruptions to telecommunication systems and quick  
7 restoration when impacts occur. In an emergency  
8 where telecommunications are impacted, the system  
9 takes a hit and vendors respond quickly to restore  
10 services. When this happens, those in the EOC work  
11 with the City's vendors to provide safe access that  
12 they need to the impacted area so that they can do  
13 their restoration work.

14 The City has developed many tools and  
15 programs over the years to ensure effective  
16 communications to the public; among them are Notify  
17 NYC, Wireless Emergency Alerts, information received  
18 through 311 and traditional media outlets and the  
19 consolidated joint information concept to centralize  
20 and coordinate effective public communications.

21 Communications before an emergency is  
22 equally important but can present challenges in  
23 personal preparedness and readiness. Through our  
24 programs, like Ready New York and the Know Your Zone  
25 campaign, we work to educate citizens about hazards

3 faced by the city. We encourage people to have a  
4 plan and a communications plan is one of the most  
5 important parts of that plan. We explain the  
6 significance about having a reunification point with  
7 their family and a phone number of a point person  
8 outside the city that family members can call and  
9 report into. We encourage people to keep a battery-  
10 operated radio at home, because radio is the most  
11 reliable, resilient and affordable communication tool  
12 that the City uses to get information to the public.

13 The intent of this legislation is to  
14 ensure that we have resilient communications  
15 infrastructure. The Office of Recovery and  
16 Resiliency and DoITT have discussed their work in  
17 this sphere and New York City Emergency Management  
18 shares in this goal of working with them to improve  
19 resiliency. To that end, I would like to outline a  
20 few of our concerns with the bill.

21 The Community Access Plan, as described,  
22 calls for a communications access plan to be utilized  
23 in preparation for coastal storms and other severe  
24 weather and natural disaster events where such events  
25 may disrupt the public's access to communications,  
which should a description of the City's current and



2 planned communications infrastructure, both public  
3 and private. The challenge here, as DoITT has  
4 described, is that the City's communication  
5 infrastructure consists mainly of public safety radio  
6 systems and NYCWiN, the New York City Wireless  
7 Information Network, and as also explained, there are  
8 challenges with compelling the private sector to  
9 share that information with us.

10 The plan should also include an  
11 evaluation of resiliency of all such communications  
12 infrastructure, including an assessment of  
13 neighborhood vulnerabilities. Again, we can and do  
14 evaluate the resiliency of our public safety radio  
15 system continually, so we can meet the goal here as  
16 it relates to public sector communications  
17 infrastructure that can be safely shared. However,  
18 we have neither the expertise nor experience to write  
19 planning assumptions based on the resiliency of  
20 technology systems we do not own or control.

21 Another component of the plan is an  
22 assessment of short- and long-term infrastructure  
23 improvements that can be implemented in identified  
24 vulnerable areas to improve their resiliency. On the  
25 public safety side we are always making these

2 assessments and improvements; on the private sector  
3 side we have few tools to compel the private sector  
4 to make substantial improvements to their system.

5 The Office of Recovery and Resiliency has published  
6 their reports that identified vulnerable areas and  
7 different strategies for defending against those  
8 vulnerabilities.

9 Finally, the plan calls for a description  
10 of how the agency will coordinate with other relevant  
11 agencies, authorities and communication service  
12 providers to assist such entities in planning for  
13 resilience in future communications infrastructure  
14 and for identifying areas most in need of such  
15 infrastructure improvements.

16 I have described how the Emergency  
17 Operations Center works during an emergency; with our  
18 planning efforts we take the same approach of pulling  
19 everyone in a room so that all needs are identified  
20 and addressed. As described by DoITT, their  
21 Telecommunications Planning and Resiliency office is  
22 working with providers to continue to enhance  
23 communications resiliency.

24 To summarize, New York City Emergency  
25 Management is a coordinating agency and we use all

2 the expertise at our disposal to serve the people.

3 Citywide plans for emergencies are built on agencies

4 operationalizing their own programs and competencies

5 and then feeding that information to us. The

6 representatives sitting at the table with me today

7 are colleagues and partners and in an emergency we

8 will have these agencies sitting with us in the

9 Emergency Operations Center. As a city, there are

10 specifics of this legislation that we have addressed

11 or are working towards at the operational level. The

12 Council's determination preparing the citizens of New

13 York City is commendable and we agree that

14 infrastructure and telecommunications resiliency is a

15 key component to a faster, better recovery from any

16 emergency. We look forward to continuing our

17 conversation with you about how to best prepare and

18 plan for emergencies and natural disasters and I'd be

19 happy to take your questions at the end of the

20 panel's testimony.

21 CHRISTINA FARRELL: Good morning

22 Chairpersons Treyger and Crowley; Members of the

23 Committees on Recovery and Resiliency, Fire and

24 Criminal Justice. I'm Christina Farrell, Deputy

25 Commission of External Affairs at New York City

2 Emergency Management. I too am pleased to join you  
3 today to discuss Int. 0519 and public outreach and  
4 emergency preparedness of local communities.

5 As you know, the mission of New York City  
6 Emergency Management is to plan and prepare for  
7 emergencies, educate the public about preparedness,  
8 coordinate the city's response and recovery  
9 operations and collect and disseminate critical  
10 information to key stakeholders and the public during  
11 emergencies.

12 NYC Emergency Management consists of 185  
13 people operating on a city budget under \$5 million.  
14 The vast majority of our staff and projects are  
15 funded through Department of Homeland Security  
16 grants. While our numbers often surprise people, we  
17 are experienced consequence managers and we work hard  
18 to prepare the public before, during and after an  
19 emergency by knowing the resources available to the  
20 City and leveraging these to get New Yorkers what  
21 they need in times of crisis. We know that what  
22 people need before a crisis are information and the  
23 necessary tools to be personally prepared.

24 Underlining our mission and all components of our  
25 plans and operations is the extensive and detailed

3 public preparedness campaign that we run for everyone  
4 living, working and visiting the five boroughs.

5 New York City Emergency Management is  
6 responsible for the development, maintenance and  
7 oversight of more than 40 emergency plans, protocols  
8 and playbooks for the City. To reach all New Yorkers  
9 the plans are broad and comprehensive for citywide  
10 response by relevant agencies and with details  
11 covering the city as a whole. We model our emergency  
12 preparedness materials, public outreach and  
13 communications using the same citywide concepts.

14 I hope you are familiar with our Ready  
15 New York campaign. With the exception of the  
16 Hurricane Guide and Coastal Storm Preparedness, which  
17 feature specific neighborhood resources, such as  
18 coastal storm evacuation zones, which I will explain  
19 in more detail, our Ready New York material is  
20 applicable to any borough, any community and any  
21 neighborhood. While neighborhoods, by their nature,  
22 serve as the foundation of preparedness, people also  
23 need to consider the communities in which they work,  
24 where their children go to school, where their  
25 elderly parents live, where they may own real estate  
and a variety of other factors. Knowing this, we

3 have built our Ready New York brochures and a  
4 comprehensive listing is available at the end of this  
5 testimony, upon both the way the City plans for  
6 emergencies and the way that people should prepare  
7 themselves for emergencies. If you look at the list  
8 of Ready New York brochures, available in 13  
9 languages and Braille and audio format, you will see  
10 that the identified hazards are not community-  
11 specific. Information on pandemic preparedness is  
12 applicable regardless of community, as is that for  
13 winter weather, utility outages, summer heat and many  
14 more. Regardless of the hazard, we urge people to be  
15 prepared to shelter in place or be prepared to leave,  
16 and this is the message that we push through our  
17 materials as well as at more than 1,000 public events  
18 we present at each year. All of our material is  
19 available online for viewing, printing and ordering  
20 in bulk and those without access to a computer may  
21 call 311 to get their brochures in the mail to them.

22 Our flagship guide, *My Emergency Plan*,  
23 walks people through how to develop an emergency plan  
24 for themselves or their loved ones and includes  
25 details, such as medications they may need, phone  
numbers for transportation resources should mass

2 transit not be working, specific resources for their  
3 particular needs and many other details. People can  
4 also build their plans digitally by downloading the  
5 Ready NYC mobile app available for Apple operating  
6 systems and soon available for Android. This app  
7 encourages New Yorkers to make an emergency plan  
8 before a disaster and I encourage you to download it  
9 for your family and ask your constituents to do the  
10 same.

11 Two components of the legislation at hand  
12 would require specific community information. We  
13 agree that this is necessary for coastal storm  
14 evacuation planning and it is already incorporated  
15 into our hurricane guide. In this guide you can  
16 identify evacuation zones by address, as well as  
17 identify all 64 evacuation centers throughout the  
18 City. It's not necessary to go to the center nearest  
19 your home, so by looking at the possibilities, people  
20 can make the best choice for themselves. People can  
21 also go online or call 311 and provide a specific  
22 address to generate their zone and other useful  
23 information. Unlike some counties in Florida or the  
24 Carolinas, the City does not designate evacuation  
25 routes. In general, in a pre-storm evacuation

3 scenario, before the onset of hazardous conditions,  
4 all roadways are open and available for travel. We  
5 encourage people not to make specific plans around  
6 established routes, but rather to plan around routes  
7 and transportation modes with which they are already  
8 familiar and comfortable. We also advise people to  
9 plan where they are going to go in an evacuation and  
10 advise that they plan how they're going to get there.  
11 Since the city is so densely populated, we don't want  
12 to clog roadways designated as evacuation routes when  
13 there are many other equally safe routes to use.

14 As would be required within this  
15 legislation, our materials do not provide contact  
16 information for local firehouses, police stations or  
17 ambulance services. There is only one number for  
18 emergencies and that is 911. Directing people to  
19 call local numbers could potentially cause delay or  
20 confuse an emergency response and the message to New  
21 Yorkers should always be to call 911. When people  
22 need information during non-emergencies, the best  
23 resource is 311, which has extensive information on  
24 all of our programs and available resources.

25 The legislation also requires contact  
information for charitable organizations or



3 nonprofits that would provide services and materials  
4 during and after an emergency. This is not  
5 information we put on our guides for several reasons.  
6 At the time of an incident the City's Emergency  
7 Operation Center will work with contracted city  
8 partners, as well as partners within the private  
9 sector to identify and prioritize the need for  
10 services and materials and identify the most  
11 expedient and cost-effective options to get these  
12 services provided. This is accomplished by  
13 coordinating resource requests among all City  
14 agencies, often working with charitable organizations  
15 and nonprofits to fill these needs. Pre-providing  
16 contact information and locations for these  
17 organizations could potentially delay and duplicate  
18 requests for resources, as well as overwhelm the  
19 capacity of these charitable organizations or  
20 nonprofits. The list of charitable organizations or  
21 nonprofits that would actually provide services or  
22 materials could also change, depending on the nature  
23 or need of an incident. Varying nature of  
24 emergencies is that we don't know what the emergency  
25 will be, where it will be or what the scope of  
devastation and crisis will be. We cannot pre-

3 identify locations, as it may send people into harms  
4 way; the location of recovery centers depends on  
5 safety, power, accessibility and the ability to get  
6 the needed services in. During recovery operations  
7 for any emergency we provide real time information to  
8 the public on available city services, such as  
9 donations management, food services, sheltering,  
10 supplies and many others. While different city  
11 agencies take the lead in providing these services,  
12 New York City Emergency Management coordinates  
13 information flow to the public through the press,  
14 social media, elected officials, the private and  
15 nonprofit sectors, Notify NYC and 311, among others.

16 I hope you all registered for Notify NYC  
17 and that you urge you constituents to register as  
18 well. It's free, real time and it will provide  
19 important information to direct them to safety or to  
20 needed recovery operations after an incident.

21 With respect to community-based planning  
22 there is significant programmatic work happening. We  
23 have recently started two pilot programs in Staten  
24 Island and the Rockaway Peninsula to engage in  
25 grassroots community-based planning to assist local  
organizations in building out their planning with

3 input and information from the larger citywide  
4 perspective. Strong elected official cooperation and  
5 assistance in working with community leaders is  
6 needed to succeed at these programs and with your  
7 help we are happy to expand these pilots to other  
8 neighborhoods, as they have already improved  
9 communication and coordination between our agency and  
10 important community partners.

11 As part of this community-based planning  
12 model we have also recently introduced a community  
13 space survey and I brought copies for everyone today.  
14 Traditionally, when the City needs to open a space to  
15 the public, be it a shelter after a fire or a flood  
16 in a specific neighborhood, a residential service  
17 center, like what was opened in East Harlem after the  
18 building explosion last March or large-scale recovery  
19 resource centers that were vital after Hurricane  
20 Sandy, we look to city locations like public schools  
21 to open these centers. However, as you all know very  
22 well, the place people congregate and feel  
23 comfortable visiting may not be government locations,  
24 they may be a local American Legion hall or a  
25 community center run by a nonprofit or a faith-based  
institution; that is why we're committed to working

3 with all of you and additional partners to identify  
4 as many spaces as we can across the five boroughs so  
5 when we need to find a suitable space in which to  
6 offer services we can consider both government and  
7 community spaces.

8 We are also an integral partner in the  
9 New York Rising program run out of the Governor's  
10 Office and based around community planning. There  
11 are many ways we can work with your communities to  
12 provide best practices, suggestions and subject  
13 matter expertise without legislation. If you are  
14 interested in connecting your local groups to us for  
15 this program, please let us know. Also, please use  
16 our existing programs, including Ready New York for  
17 individual preparedness, Citizen Corps for community-  
18 level preparedness, and CERT as a principle  
19 community-based volunteer program. All of these  
20 working together are available for you to schedule  
21 town halls with your constituents, meetings with your  
22 business partners and community leader roundtables.

23 In addition, New York City Emergency  
24 Management coordinates the development of the New  
25 York City Hazard Mitigation Plan. Updated this past  
March, this resource-rich document provides an

3 overview of New York City, the factors that make it  
4 vulnerable and assesses the hazards that pose a  
5 threat to the city. This document includes maps,  
6 table and additional information that is available on  
7 our website to help communities understand their  
8 geographical, physical and social vulnerabilities to  
9 an array of natural and manmade hazards. Today we  
10 are also launching a shorter version of this plan  
11 called New York City's Risk Landscape: A Guide to  
12 Hazard Mitigation, as well as a Reduce Your Risk  
13 public information campaign. This guide is targeted  
14 at a larger audience and is more user-friendly and  
15 accessible. This guide is meant to inform New  
16 Yorkers of specific hazards the city is vulnerable to  
17 and how to apply best practices for risk reduction.  
18 Hazards in the guide include coastal storms, coastal  
19 erosion, flooding, strong windstorms, winter weather,  
20 extreme heat, water shortages, earthquakes and  
21 pandemic influenza. These documents demonstrate our  
22 continued commitment to promote awareness of the  
23 risks we face as New Yorkers.

24 In summary, we support the intent of this  
25 legislation but have some concerns with the bill as  
it is written and would like to talk with the Council

2 further about it. We have an existing and robust  
3 program that meets the comprehensive needs of New  
4 Yorkers and want to continue to work with you and  
5 your community's leaders to improve our plans and  
6 communications. We provide materials in the way in  
7 which we plan, which is all city. We need the  
8 flexibility of providing real time information in  
9 order to make sure people go to the right place for  
10 the right service without putting themselves in  
11 danger. We are in agreement with the Council that  
12 personal preparedness is essential and the first step  
13 to saving lives and we applaud the Council's efforts  
14 to push this issue and hope you will work with us to  
15 better inform your constituents. Thank you. Along  
16 with my colleagues, I'm happy to take questions.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you. I guess  
18 I'll ask the first question to Director Zarrilli.  
19 What was the amount of damage to communications  
20 infrastructure in the City of New York as a result of  
21 Sandy? Do we have that date breakdown across the  
22 five boroughs?

23 DANIEL ZARRILLI: We have in the  
24 publication *A Stronger, More Resilient New York* have  
25 documented the impacts in the telecommunications

2 industry from Hurricane Sandy; we estimate that about  
3 35,000 buildings were likely impacted on the  
4 telecommunications side and I think we could probably  
5 get back to on some many more specifics on what we  
6 know about the impacts from the storm itself, but  
7 certainly the flooding caused damage to many of the  
8 critical facilities and then power outages caused a  
9 number of other impacts throughout the  
10 telecommunications industry. I'm not sure if Chuck  
11 wants to add to that, but I think we could also get  
12 back with some more specifics.

13 CHARLES FRASER: I don't have data, but  
14 my recollection is that... we get reports from the  
15 cable franchisees because we have franchise  
16 agreements with them and my recollection is that the  
17 total number of accounts that had outages were in the  
18 hundreds of thousands.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yes, including my  
20 own and many... [crosstalk]

21 CHARLES FRASER: [laugh] Mine as well.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: many families from  
23 across my part of town and of course many members  
24 here as well.

2 Now in that same CERT report, have you  
3 requested business continuity plans from the service  
4 providers, as recommended in the CERT report and have  
5 they shared those with you?

6 CHARLES FRASER: Reports of what?

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: In the CERT report  
8 there are recommendations that the service providers  
9 would provide you with a business continuity plan..

10 [interpose]

11 CHARLES FRASER: Oh. What we did is --  
12 the franchise term is Corrective Action Plan -- and  
13 yes, we did ask for Corrective Action Plans and we  
14 received from the three cable TV providers, which are  
15 the three biggest telecommunication providers in the  
16 city -- Verizon, Time Warner and Cablevision -- and  
17 we've been preparing for follow-up discussions with  
18 them with our new telecommunications resiliency  
19 staff. So in other words, they laid out in their  
20 letters, their responses to us what they had done and  
21 what they were planning to do; the next step is now,  
22 okay, so have you done what you were planning to do.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So I think you're  
24 beginning to address one of the concerns that you've  
25 raised.. [crosstalk]



2 CHARLES FRASER: Yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: about compelling  
4 them or forcing them. I mean, this is a matter of  
5 public safety and it's also about the future  
6 existence of their company as well; I mean, I'm sure  
7 that their primary concern is the safety of their  
8 customers as well and so if some have begun to share  
9 that information with you, I mean how could we make  
10 sure that all are sharing that information, which is  
11 critical from a public safety standpoint?

12 CHARLES FRASER: Well the short answer is  
13 we can't assure it; we have no legal right to mandate  
14 the sharing of information with us in this area.  
15 What we have is persuasion and perhaps some degree of  
16 coercion in the form of embarrassment. I have to  
17 say, in one respect I don't think their primary  
18 concern is the safety of their customers, their  
19 primary concern is turning a profit.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Well that is  
21 something that we will shine a light on, because that  
22 is really, in my mind, unacceptable, because public  
23 safety should be paramount in any of the discussions  
24 and I understand businesses are designed to make  
25

2 profits, but if we don't have people, that's just not  
3 gonna happen.

4 Now one thing I will say, and anyone  
5 could chime in on this; do private communication  
6 companies use public lands or public structures to  
7 operate their communications?

8 CHARLES FRASER: Many do and that's why  
9 they need a franchise from us. So if you use the  
10 public streets to provide services for a business,  
11 you need a franchise from the city. If it's a  
12 telecommunications business, you need a franchise  
13 from DoITT. And so we have the payphone franchises,  
14 which will shortly be a payphone/Wi-Fi franchise, we  
15 hope, we have the cable TV franchises, we have what's  
16 called pole-top franchises, which is mobile telecom,  
17 wireless. So providers rent antennas that are put on  
18 light poles and utility poles and so on and then  
19 provide cell service through those; that requires a  
20 franchise. I guess that's it, I think those are our  
21 franch... Oh, also high-speed voice and data, which we  
22 refer to as high-cap, a high-capacity franchise; all  
23 those need franchises from the City.

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But I think the  
25 point here is that if they are using public lands..

3 CHARLES FRASER: Yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: and public  
5 structures to operate their companies, that provides  
6 us a path to require that their plans meet our  
7 resiliency standards.

8 CHARLES FRASER: First I have to say,  
9 before Hurricane Sandy we negotiated franchise  
10 agreements with an eye toward making the streets  
11 available for use to provide services to the public  
12 and generating revenue for the City. We did not,  
13 before Hurricane Sandy, and I say we, meaning our  
14 collective predecessors, use the franchise agreements  
15 to negotiate resiliency measures. One of the  
16 recommendations that follows the recommendation that  
17 we create the resiliency unit is that we develop  
18 negotiation goals, as I mentioned in my testimony,  
19 for future franchise agreements. So there will now  
20 be a third purpose added to our negotiations in  
21 franchise agreements; not just generating revenue for  
22 the City and creating services for the public, but  
23 also ensuring the resiliency of those services. So  
24 in our payphone franchise, which we just concluded a  
25 contract for review and approval by the FCRC, we have  
for the first time a resiliency attachment to that

3 contract, which has certain minimum requirements; the  
4 most important are fiber-based networks to protect  
5 against flooding, elevation of the battery backup and  
6 batter backup that's supposed to sustain 911  
7 functionality for 24 hours after a power outage. And  
8 the unit's brand new; that's what we were able to get  
9 in this franchise agreement; when the big franchise  
10 agreements come up in 2020, the three cable ones, we  
11 will be making... I expect that we will be negotiating  
12 for fairly ambitious resiliency standards. Until  
13 then, the contracts are what they are and we were  
14 able to persuade and cajole and as I say, to some  
15 extent coerce, but not mandate.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But I do believe  
17 that the government here does have sway in getting  
18 information about where they stand with their  
19 resiliency. Because what we're calling for in the  
20 bill is to give us the state of the resiliency plans  
21 as they are and to work with them towards the  
22 creation of a resiliency plan. Some have already  
23 moved forward voluntarily, but I think that we need a  
24 current assessment of where we stand, so therefore we  
25 can shine a light on those companies who are, in my  
opinion, in our opinion, compromising public safety.

2 CHARLES FRASER: I would love to agree  
3 with that; I certainly agree that they ought to do  
4 that and of course the fact that we're asking them to  
5 do it emphasizes that I agree that they ought to do  
6 that... [interpose]

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: What is wrong with  
8 publicly calling them out, publicly... [interpose]

9 CHARLES FRASER: I have not said that we  
10 won't.

11 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. And I think  
12 that... [crosstalk]

13 CHARLES FRASER: I think I mentioned  
14 today in my testimony that we've had varying degrees  
15 of cooperation; that needs to stop varying or we'll  
16 be back.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. So I think  
18 that all we want is just to know which ones are  
19 meeting the resiliency standards that we're setting  
20 forth in the CERT report and... [interpose]

21 CHARLES FRASER: Well I can't tell you  
22 that yet; what I have so far is those who have been  
23 forthcoming with us and those who have been less  
24 forthcoming with us, and as to those that have been  
25

2 less forthcoming, I obviously can't tell you whether  
3 they're meeting our resiliency standards or not.

4 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And are you allowed  
5 to disclose which ones are forthcoming and which ones  
6 are not?

7 CHARLES FRASER: I will say this; that  
8 the wireless providers have been very forthcoming,  
9 those we've met with; of the wired providers,  
10 Cablevision and Verizon were quite forthcoming; Time  
11 Warner Cable was, unfortunately, less so.

12 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Well the public  
13 should know that.

14 CHARLES FRASER: They do now.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: The public should  
16 know that and I think that, you know, when they claim  
17 to impose hikes on prices and rates and meanwhile  
18 they're not doing their part to keep the public safe  
19 to make sure their communications is resilient, the  
20 public should know that as well, because that is  
21 information that we certainly wanna have.

22 I'll ask one more question; then I know  
23 that Chair Crowley also has some questions. In the  
24 last Council, in the last administration, there was  
25 legislation that was passed centered around the

2 distribution of food and distribution and access to  
3 fuel. How are you able to work around the  
4 private/public concerns that you're raising here  
5 about communications with those aspects and you know,  
6 because I'm sure you had to work with food  
7 distributors about their plans to make sure that food  
8 reaches the city during times of emergency; I'm sure  
9 you had to work with fuel companies about how to make  
10 sure fuel reaches the fuel ports in the city. So how  
11 are you able to work with them on those areas but  
12 we're not able to work here on this area?

13 HENRY JACKSON: Well so on the food side,  
14 it wasn't necessarily to work with the industry; we  
15 came up with a scope of work for an RFP, we put an  
16 RFP out on the street to get some vendors to bid on  
17 providing hot and other foods after an emergency at  
18 different scales. So the food supply stream wasn't  
19 impacted, it didn't become a scarce resource, it was  
20 just a matter of getting the food to shelters and  
21 other locations. And so that we handled sort of  
22 unilaterally, we wrote up what we wanted, we put an  
23 RFP out on the street and I think that's still in  
24 process and almost closed out. On the fuel side we  
25 did experience... what DoITT's sort of suggesting is

2 that that is a very competitive industry and we did  
3 have difficulty getting individual fuel companies to  
4 talk to us and tell us about their supply streams,  
5 and that did become, as you know, a scarce resource.  
6 The way we handled that was; we had two contractors  
7 on contract and they would share information and we  
8 had a broker who had access to sort of everybody else  
9 and gave us sort of situational awareness about the  
10 industry and the kinds of things that we would need  
11 to do to create a supply to distribute.

12 DANIEL ZARRILLI: And let me add to that.  
13 In thinking about the food supply resiliency beyond  
14 emergency planning, we're also... you know, we're well  
15 aware of how vulnerable the Hunts Point Food  
16 Distribution Center can be in future events and so  
17 we've been working to conduct a food supply  
18 resiliency -- a full supply chain study to understand  
19 better the vulnerabilities within that supply chain  
20 and what sort of strategy they can put in place to  
21 make that supply chain more resilient. But we run  
22 into the challenge on several industries where we  
23 have only limited levers that we can pull in order to  
24 get information and to get compliance and so we're  
25 trying to push that wherever we can. Similarly, on



3 the liquid fuel side we're working together as and  
4 administration, but also through an intergovernmental  
5 group and with stakeholders on a liquid supply  
6 resiliency conversation around emergency waivers and  
7 other elements of the liquid fuel supply chain and  
8 that's... you know, it's not the easiest conversation  
9 for a lot of the same reasons is that we don't have  
10 the ability just to say give us your information and  
11 mandate compliance, but we are working in a  
12 cooperative manner to move that forward and to  
13 continue to build a resiliency in these supply  
14 chains.

15 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: You know, I would  
16 say that the same -- and I understand what challenges  
17 you faced on the fuel legislation, but I think the  
18 same energy should apply here, same pathway should  
19 apply here, that working with those that are -- you  
20 know I think that we need to begin with piecing  
21 together for the public who is working with us on  
22 this, who is sharing light on their resiliency plans  
23 and who is not and I think that the same method that  
24 you used on covering the fuel distribution plans is  
25 the same thing we should apply with communications,  
because of the things that I keep hearing from the

2 government is -- stay informed, stay informed -- well  
3 how do you do that when you don't have access to  
4 phones or television or radio; I mean that's just  
5 something that's just -- you know, that's the  
6 disconnect that I think that many people are  
7 experiencing. We keep staying stay informed, but  
8 how? And so I think that they have an obligation,  
9 especially those companies that are using public  
10 lands, benefiting from public land, public  
11 structures, should share their resiliency plans and  
12 efforts, and those that are not, like Time Warner and  
13 others that you might tell us, should be called out  
14 on it, because quite honestly, this is a matter of  
15 public safety. Safety here trumps profit; it's a  
16 matter of keeping the public safe.

17 Last question; then I'll turn it over to  
18 the Chair, was the other bill, to Miss Farrell,  
19 Christina Farrell from OEM, you had mentioned that we  
20 want to definitely encourage people to call 911  
21 during times of emergency; there's no dispute here;  
22 the issue though is that I remember I tried to call  
23 911 that night and I couldn't get through and I think  
24 that many New Yorkers could not get through that  
25

2 night to 911. What should the public do if they  
3 can't reach 911?

4 CHRISTINA FARRELL: That obviously was a  
5 seminal moment and I think... you know we have areas in  
6 the book where you can write special numbers if you  
7 want for your local firehouse; I don't work for Fire  
8 or PD, but I would hazard a guess that trying to get  
9 through to a local firehouse at that same moment  
10 would've also been incredibly difficult. I know and  
11 I think it's come up at other hearings, you know the  
12 ongoing work to strengthen 911 and to make sure that  
13 that doesn't happen when something happens in the  
14 future, but I would say on the preparedness side, you  
15 know many of those calls and some of those calls  
16 ended up -- you know, 'cause people obviously wanted  
17 to keep trying to call; some calls came to the  
18 emergency operations centers where we were all  
19 working and you know, we don't dispatch ambulances  
20 and things, we weren't able to -- we got the calls  
21 and we weren't able to do really anything with them.  
22 But a lot of people that should have evacuated, you  
23 know one, two, three days earlier, did not and then  
24 they found themselves in a dangerous situation, so a  
25 lot of this -- there's always gonna be last-minute

2 emergencies and things that come up and that's  
3 obviously vitally important, but a very strong part  
4 of our message and especially if you're looking at  
5 something like coastal storms where Chairperson  
6 Crowley noted, we call it a notice event; you have  
7 two, three, four days notice; we don't know exactly  
8 how it's gonna hit and how -- and you can see the  
9 difference between Irene and Sandy, but especially  
10 people that live in a costal evacuation zone, people  
11 who have special needs, you know, the time to be  
12 evacuating and accessing emergency services was not  
13 on that Monday night; the time was Sunday, Saturday,  
14 Friday and that's a hard message, we understand, you  
15 know, if it's a nice day out and we're telling you  
16 leave the comfort of your home and go to an opened  
17 shelter, go to your friend's house that's not gonna  
18 be as comfortable; we know that that's not people's  
19 first choice, but as was played out during Sandy,  
20 that's very important. So that is part of the  
21 message to cut down and the less calls that come in  
22 the less challenges we're gonna have.

23 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: But I will say that  
24 day, the morning of... before the storm surge hit, I  
25 remember following the press where the former Mayor

2 did not... there was no great urgency and certainly  
3 that storm surge hit in the evening and then everyone  
4 ran into a panic and a scramble. So I will tell you  
5 that there was a disconnect in the messaging that day  
6 from the government to its people. And I do think  
7 that we need to have more localized planning  
8 , [background comment] because 911 system was  
9 overwhelmed, we could not get through and people  
10 turned to their houses or worship, they turned to  
11 their local organizations, as you pointed out, where  
12 before FEMA and anyone else arrived there were local  
13 groups that were providing emergency help and there  
14 were many people that were stranded -- there are  
15 people here later on from high-rise buildings where  
16 they had to help people with disabilities, the  
17 seniors most vulnerable who had a difficult time of  
18 evacuating because there's a financial aspect  
19 involved there as well; not everyone has the means to  
20 immediately just relocated. So I'm just telling you  
21 that we need further work on this to have as much  
22 more of a localized -- there's no one size fits all  
23 emergency plan here; I think that we need to have as  
24 much localized input and planning as possible. I'll  
25 turn it over to Chair Crowley. Thank you.

2 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: Thank you, Chair  
3 Treyger. I'd like to follow up on the last line of  
4 questionings that Chair Treyger asked, our 911  
5 system; I don't think that was a good enough answer  
6 as to why nobody could get a call through that  
7 particular night. [background comments] I think you  
8 said something about three or two or one day  
9 beforehand -- Chair Treyger was absolutely right,  
10 there was no sense of urgency. Our mayor at the time  
11 did not give a sense of urgency to the 400,000 New  
12 Yorkers that live in a flood zone area; if we look at  
13 the Governor of New Jersey, he certainly did, he was  
14 screamin' top of his lungs, get out. So we were  
15 wrong, yet we look at the same national weather  
16 services for advice as to when we should tell people  
17 to evacuate. That you cannot change, it's history,  
18 44 people died, some others may not be counted  
19 towards that, but died days that followed. We did  
20 not have the infrastructure in place and I do not  
21 believe, especially when we're asking some critical  
22 questions today that OEM is in a place to protect us  
23 when the next Superstorm Sandy hits. Our 911 system  
24 went down that day, it went down the day we had a  
25 tornado that ripped through Brooklyn and Queens, it

2 went down the day that the northeast was paralyzed  
3 with power outages; it's gone down on regular days  
4 for a number of hours, we do not have a reliable 911  
5 system. I know that we have a representative from  
6 DoITT here, but what sense of security should New  
7 Yorkers have that in a time of emergency our 911  
8 system will have an operator that is able to pick up;  
9 that call will connect, the calls will not be  
10 overloaded... [interpose]

11 CHARLES FRASER: I can't answer as to  
12 what either 911 or the last mayor did or didn't do in  
13 Hurricane Sandy; as you presumably know, the 911  
14 system was administered by a separate entity from  
15 DoITT up until the current administration. But I can  
16 tell you this, that it's not my understanding that  
17 911 went down at all; it's my understanding that call  
18 waiting times went up and it's my further  
19 understanding -- this is also true for 311 -- 311  
20 also didn't go down, but the call waiting times went  
21 up. And I'm not suggesting that's okay, I'm just  
22 clarifying what... [crosstalk]

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: What happened  
24 was, when New Yorkers dialed 911, no call went

2 through. So whether the system collapsed or not...

3 [crosstalk]

4 CHARLES FRASER: No, no, and if I may  
5 finish...

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: or they had to  
7 wait and call back in 10 minutes and... [crosstalk]

8 CHARLES FRASER: it is not the case that  
9 no call went through; that's the point I'm trying to  
10 get to. And please understand, I'm not saying that  
11 makes it okay; 911 was not a DoITT responsibility at  
12 the time, and I'll get to that in a minute, but 911  
13 did not go down. As I understand it, the primary  
14 problem was, both for 911 and 311, that the people  
15 who staff the calls, many of them weren't able to get  
16 to work and both 911 and 311 have undertaken  
17 contingency planning in light of Hurricane Sandy and  
18 that experience to find ways to get more people to  
19 work so more calls can be taken. I'm the general  
20 counsel and my staff was helping take 311 calls  
21 because they couldn't get people to work, but...

22 [crosstalk]

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: Right. So...

24 CHARLES FRASER: but if I may finish, as  
25 to what people might expect in the future, I assume



2 you're aware that the Mayor tasked my commissioner;  
3 in fact, literally, before she actually started work,  
4 to do an assessment of the status and progress of  
5 911, which she has completed, and she is in the  
6 course of revamping the approach to that going  
7 forward. I don't know whether you've met  
8 Commissioner Roest; I have a very high degree of  
9 confidence in her ability, I'm not a technical  
10 person; she is, and I think that going forward we  
11 will have a much sounder development of the 911  
12 upgrade than was happening before.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: Right and DoITT  
14 was heavily involved in the 911 system before your  
15 agency became the lead agency and.. [crosstalk]

16 CHARLES FRASER: No, that's not correct...

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: we may disagree  
18 today, but I know I had neighbors that called 911  
19 [background comment] and the call was never..  
20 [interpose]

21 CHARLES FRASER: I'm not disputing that  
22 at all... [crosstalk]

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: the phone did  
24 not ring.

25

2 CHARLES FRASER: I'm not disputing that  
3 all, but it was not because 911 went down, it was due  
4 to staffing problems; that's my understanding..  
5 [crosstalk]

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: When it comes to  
7 New Yorkers who need emergency help, they wanna make  
8 sure a call goes through.

9 CHARLES FRASER: But it's important to  
10 understand what the problem was, because the fix has  
11 to be directed to the problem and if the problem was  
12 staffing, then the solution is staffing.. [crosstalk]

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: Staffing was  
14 part of the problem -- there is a problem and it has  
15 to do with Verizon, I believe, because that was the  
16 reason I was given in the past, is that when a  
17 certain amount of calls come in at a certain time,  
18 the network system does not have the capacity for the  
19 phone to dial and for that connection to be made to  
20 the center; it's not about answering the call and  
21 they need to [sic] put you on hold.. [crosstalk]

22 CHARLES FRASER: It is certainly true.. it  
23 is certainly true that scalability is one of the  
24 goals of the modernization process.. [crosstalk]

2 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: Right, which  
3 leads me to the next question. We've been sitting  
4 here for about an hour and I have not heard anything  
5 about our call boxes. The FDNY maintains call boxes;  
6 anyone on the dais familiar with our call boxes?  
7 [background comment] They're federally mandated to  
8 make sure that these call boxes are working; there's  
9 14,000 of them. So if you cannot get through by  
10 dialing directly to the Fire Department, and most of  
11 those 911 emergencies are FDNY needed, but you need  
12 EMS or you need the firefighters to come through.  
13 But we have this system that fails to be maintained  
14 even though the federal government says, New York  
15 City, you have to maintain these call boxes. In  
16 fact, a significant number of them were damaged in  
17 Superstorm Sandy and FEMA gave us... [crosstalk]

18 CHARLES FRASER: None of us are from the  
19 Fire Department.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: \$150 million to  
21 fix those call boxes and they're still not working  
22 today... [crosstalk]

23 CHARLES FRASER: I am aware...

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: and yet the City  
25 is putting out a franchise on our telephones, on our

2 payphones to make those kiosk stations, but we  
3 already have our own infrastructure where people can  
4 push a button or pull a lever and get to their local  
5 firehouse or fire call-taking center; Queens we have  
6 a different center than MetroTech, where you have  
7 call dispatchers, EMTs, and fire dispatchers sitting  
8 at a desk waiting for those calls.

9 CHARLES FRASER: None of us are here from  
10 the Fire Department; I am aware that the Fire  
11 Department has a \$150 million FEMA grant to repair  
12 the call box system; I really recommend that you take  
13 that up with them.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: OEM?  
15 [background comment] I mean we're here.. like we have  
16 a bill; we want you to evaluate and describe what our  
17 communications capability is in the City of New York.  
18 We have 14,000 call boxes, every four blocks there's  
19 a call box, wherever you are in New York you're  
20 positioned to know where these call boxes are, so  
21 when you can't get your cell phone to work you could  
22 walk to one of these boxes and know that you could  
23 get two very important critical emergency-responding  
24 agencies, one agency, but two forms, firefighters and  
25 EMTs.

2 HENRY JACKSON: Again, you know, I can't  
3 speak for the Fire Department; I will have a  
4 conversation with them about their fire boxes and see  
5 if they can be woven into the fabric of resiliency  
6 for communication from the.. [crosstalk]

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: Please do, thank  
8 you, especially when you come to answer to speak and  
9 say that you're not ready about a bill that the  
10 Council and a majority of the members have signed  
11 onto asking for us to evaluate our communication  
12 infrastructure, what is it, and how we could do  
13 better to improve it and that is a vital part of our  
14 emergency response infrastructure.

15 Earlier Council Member Treyger asked  
16 questions about our franchise and how we could make  
17 sure our franchises in the city that have to do with  
18 these telecommunications companies; I believe the  
19 response was that we're not allowed to ask them when  
20 we give new franchise agreements, to include...

21 [interpose]

22 CHARLES FRASER: No, that was not the  
23 answer...

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: No.  
25

2 CHARLES FRASER: the answer was precisely  
3 the opposite. One of the goals of this unit that was  
4 created by recommendation of the report I referred  
5 to, one of the goals is to develop proposals of  
6 negotiations objectives for resiliency in future  
7 contract negotiations. We can't change the existing  
8 contracts, the contracts are in place and our three  
9 biggest franchise agreements, three cable TV  
10 franchises, come up in 2020, so we have plenty of  
11 time to plan for that. Meanwhile though, we are  
12 asking the franchisees on a voluntary, cooperative  
13 basis to provide us information and undertake  
14 resiliency measures, and as I indicated, we are  
15 having some success with that.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: Right, it's  
17 unsuccessful; is it... now did someone say this..  
18 [crosstalk]

19 CHARLES FRASER: I said we are having  
20 some success...

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: was unrealistic  
22 expectations?

23 CHARLES FRASER: Yes, it is unrealistic  
24 to expect that the private telecom providers will  
25 allow information voluntarily about their plan and so

2 on to be made public. We are only able to get what  
3 information we can get by assuring them that it will  
4 not be made public. If they felt that it was exposed  
5 to public disclosure, it would not be given to us.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: Now if there is  
7 a storm approaching, I've gotten alerts on my cell  
8 phone; where are those coming from? We must have  
9 some agreement with -- my provider's AT&T, but we  
10 must have some agreement somewhere that I get alerts  
11 and many [background comments] New Yorkers get alerts  
12 on our phones?

13 HENRY JACKSON: Yeah, that's the wireless  
14 emergency alerts; that's a system set up by the  
15 federal government in cooperation with the FCC and  
16 all the cell companies to allow us to hit cell towers  
17 and then hit any cell phone that's in range of cell  
18 towers in some geographic range. So we used that  
19 during Sandy a couple of times; this was the first  
20 city in the country to test it and to use it and so  
21 that's a great tool for us to push a message all  
22 around the city, but again we're dependant on that  
23 device... [crosstalk]

24

25

2 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: So if you had an  
3 agreement with the telecommunication providers, what  
4 more could you do in addition to giving those alerts?

5 HENRY JACKSON: Well we've asked, through  
6 the FCC and the FCC really had to make this happen  
7 because of their authority to make the cell phone  
8 companies comply with us; we've asked for more  
9 actually granularity in that system. Right now the  
10 system is set up on a county level and we've  
11 explained we have big counties here, we'd like to get  
12 down really to much smaller counties, to much smaller  
13 areas so we can do localized alerting. So we've  
14 asked the FCC a number of times and the rule-making  
15 process is long and arduous.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: Do you meet  
17 regularly with communication providers to discuss how  
18 you can work together for emergency planning?

19 HENRY JACKSON: I think DoITT does and we  
20 use DoITT as our subject matter expert in terms of  
21 telecommunications policy and infrastructure.

22 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: Do you know what  
23 micro-trenching is; is there a micro-trenching pilot  
24 where you put fiber optics in cement to protect it  
25 from weather damage?



2 CHARLES FRASER: It's no longer a pilot;  
3 it was a pilot undertaken, if I remember right, April  
4 2012; it's not a resiliency measure; I wouldn't want  
5 to tout it as that. What it is, is it's a shallow  
6 trench typically in the joint between the curb and  
7 the sidewalk for laying conduit and then fiber optic  
8 cable; it's shallower than a conventional street cut  
9 and it doesn't involve damage to the streets. So the  
10 theory of it is that it's cheaper and faster; it is  
11 not a resiliency measure.

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: It's not  
13 protected any more than other... [crosstalk]

14 CHARLES FRASER: Trenches?

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: fiber optics  
16 that would be susceptible to weather, be it directly  
17 wind or rain?

18 CHARLES FRASER: Well any trenching is  
19 better, in my opinion, than aerial, but it's not  
20 being used to replace aerial, it's being used to  
21 replace conventional trenching.

22 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: Is it better?

23 CHARLES FRASER: Than...

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: What we  
25 currently have...

2 CHARLES FRASER: conventional? No, it's  
3 only better in the sense that it's cheaper and faster  
4 and therefore enables deployment more quickly. It's  
5 not better in the sense... the conduit is till the  
6 same, the fiber is still the same; it's still  
7 underground... [crosstalk]

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: Is it better  
9 than fiber that's out, exposed?

10 CHARLES FRASER: My opinion, yes. It's  
11 also more expensive... [crosstalk]

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: That's the type  
13 of fiber most of us have in Queens?

14 CHARLES FRASER: Yeah, outside of  
15 Manhattan. Manhattan must have underground,  
16 according to state law dating from the 1880s and as  
17 well as parts of Brooklyn... [crosstalk]

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: Why does it have  
19 to in Manhattan and not for the other boroughs?

20 CHARLES FRASER: The state law in the  
21 1880s required undergrounding of wires for then-  
22 existing cities of half-a-million or more which were  
23 two, Brooklyn and New York.

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: And that law  
25 expired?

2 CHARLES FRASER: No, no, it still applies  
3 to what was the City of New York and what was the  
4 City of Brooklyn in the 1880s.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: So then we're  
6 out of compliance in the boroughs?

7 CHARLES FRASER: No. No, it never  
8 applied in Queens, eastern... [crosstalk]

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: Well we're the  
10 same city, we're five boroughs.

11 CHARLES FRASER: The law -- I can't give  
12 you the whole history of it, 'cause I don't have it  
13 with me; believe me, I've checked into it. No, the  
14 law only applies to cities as they existed at that  
15 time, the geographic... [crosstalk]

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: Well right...

17 CHARLES FRASER: extent of those cities.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: that's like a  
19 135 years ago and... [crosstalk]

20 CHARLES FRASER: That's correct.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: and we're still  
22 in like the 17th century in Queens. We need to be  
23 brought into the 21st century.

24 CHARLES FRASER: I'm all with you on that  
25 one. We actually have a provision in our franchise

2 agreements with Cablevision and Time Warner  
3 permitting us to direct them to move certain aerial,  
4 from above ground to below ground; I would encourage  
5 you, if you have places that you particularly are  
6 interested in, we would definitely wanna pursue that;  
7 that's a bit concern of ours and it's something we've  
8 tried to push.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: Anytime I've  
10 tried to push it in the past I have been told it's  
11 just too expensive of an endeavor [sic]... [crosstalk]

12 CHARLES FRASER: The providers will tell  
13 you that; they will tell you it's more expensive, but  
14 before I leave I'm gonna give you my business card so  
15 that you can call me rather than the providers.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: Okay. I just  
17 wanna lastly ask about EMTs/EMS. Now when  
18 emergencies happen they are being sent out and a lot  
19 of the technologies that they use to communicate to  
20 hospitals before they get there or to take the  
21 information that is critical about patients is on a  
22 tablet, but they are susceptible to losing power and  
23 connectivity and so they don't do anything on paper;  
24 do you see this as a problem for us relying too much  
25

2 on technology, especially when people's lives are in  
3 the balance?

4 HENRY JACKSON: I am sometimes concerned  
5 about that, I'm the technology guy and I tell all our  
6 planners that you should plan based on what you think  
7 you have, but you'd better have a paper backup,  
8 because we see this again and again as technology  
9 systems fail during large emergencies because they're  
10 just not built to withstand the impact that comes  
11 with some of these things. And I'm sure those EMS  
12 guys have paper backups...

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: They don't.

14 HENRY JACKSON: No?

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: I know that they  
16 don't. And so I believe it's OEM that gets all the  
17 work together before a major emergency or... you know,  
18 a lot of these times you just can't predict an  
19 emergency might happen -- tornado, certainly we  
20 didn't... [interpose]

21 HENRY JACKSON: Sure.

22 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: expect it to  
23 happen in Queens when it did; we were still  
24 susceptible to terrorist attacks in the city,  
25 [background comments] more so than anywhere else in

2 the world. So I think OEM has to be more on top of  
3 what's going on out there when it comes down to  
4 emergency workers responding. I didn't even begin to  
5 talk about, but I have at a number of other hearings,  
6 how badly the incident management plan was for FDNY  
7 during Superstorm Sandy -- how no additional  
8 employees were called in; how people stayed, of  
9 course, after their shift was done, but also that --  
10 especially EMS, they didn't have a contingency plan;  
11 they were told to shelter in place; you had, you  
12 know, EMTs stationed on corners in Rockaway standing  
13 on their ambulance buses. So I hope we could take  
14 what we learned from that storm and make sure that  
15 our response is much better, but when it comes to  
16 little situations like that where EMTs are out there  
17 with their pads or their, you know, tablets they have  
18 paper backup and that we have the staff in place and  
19 that we're calling additional response workers in to  
20 make sure that we have enough adequate staff,  
21 especially in the 911 call centers. I have no  
22 further questions. I just would like to make sure  
23 that we acknowledge Council Member [background  
24 comment] Rory Lancman who's here.

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah. Yeah. And I  
3 think earlier we had Council Member Mathieu Eugene  
4 here as well.

5 Just really quickly; you mentioned that  
6 the text messages, those alerts, those were Notify  
7 NYC; is that correct?

8 HENRY JACKSON: There's two types; there  
9 is Notify NYC, which is an opt-in system; you have to  
10 come to our website, register your cell phone, and  
11 then the WEA alerts are not opt-in, you don't have to  
12 give us anything through the cell tower, we hit every  
13 phone that is connected to.. [crosstalk]

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Are those alerts  
15 available in different languages?

16 HENRY JACKSON: We're working on  
17 notifying in different languages; right now the WEA  
18 alerts are just in English.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: 'Cause I would  
20 strongly urge that we really meet the diverse needs  
21 of our communities. I represent a district that is  
22 very diverse and many folks, interestingly, did not  
23 know about Build it Back when it first opened up last  
24 year and I'm not sure if they were getting all their  
25 information about this as well.

2 Members have questions, beginning with  
3 Council Member Donovan Richards.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you and  
5 good to see you again, Dan and thank you for being  
6 out in the Rockaways yesterday on a cold, cold day.

7 I just had a few questions. So I  
8 noticed... and I guess this is... Christina Farrell, OEM,  
9 this question is for you. In your testimony you  
10 spoke of Florida and other counties who have  
11 designated evacuation routes and I'm wondering why  
12 New York City is not heading in that direction, so  
13 can you speak to why we wouldn't, and [background  
14 comment] as a representative of the Rockaways, I can  
15 certainly say a lot of my constituents did not  
16 evacuate in Irene nor Sandy, but what if the next  
17 time, you know, comes and everyone decides to  
18 evacuate, we're gonna have a lot of disorder and I'm  
19 really worried about that, so I'll let you speak to  
20 why we don't and...

21 CHRISTINA FARRELL: So in a place like  
22 Houston or Florida or Carolina people may have to  
23 travel up to 90 miles to get out of an evacuation  
24 zone, there are parts of the country that are under  
25 sea level, so when the water comes in it doesn't go



2 back out; they have similar concerns, but amplified.

3 And they may not have the concentration of first  
4 responders the way that we do in the city, they don't  
5 have the concentration in general of high-rises and  
6 residents and you know, everything is a little more  
7 spaced out. So if someone has to travel 90 miles,  
8 obviously you don't want them routed on local streets  
9 if they're going to a whole other part of the state  
10 or possibly another state. In the city, even for  
11 people in the Rockaways and Coney Island, which are  
12 obviously Zone 1 and the most at risk, you know the  
13 furthest anyone has to travel is several miles, which  
14 understandably, under conditions, even under a  
15 regular rush hour can take a lot of time, but we  
16 don't have the need... you know, there's a lot of  
17 contraflow, which is when you take northbound lanes  
18 and you change them southbound or vice versa; it's a  
19 lot more complicated in other areas in the south than  
20 it is up here, believe it or not. In areas like the  
21 Rockaways, we do have the evacuation signs, the blue  
22 signs and we're in the process -- you know the group  
23 that I mentioned that I know your staff has been  
24 involved in, it was brought to our attention that  
25 when the Aqueduct Evacuation Center which serves the

2 Rockaways was moved to John Adams, the signage wasn't  
3 moved because the parking is still at Aqueduct, but  
4 we've been told by the community that that is  
5 confusing, so we're working with Department of  
6 Transportation next week; when we get to November  
7 30th we'll be out of hurricane season for this year,  
8 so in the off time, before June 1st, our commitment  
9 is to update those signs so they will in fact say  
10 John Adams so people understand. You know, many  
11 parts in the city people take the train, people walk,  
12 people take a bus, you know there are very few  
13 evacuation centers that have parking on the scale of  
14 Aqueduct or some of the other areas that aren't as  
15 mass transit heavy; so it's not as big of an issue  
16 here. But certainly when we work in the community  
17 planning and if people wanna speak -- I know an issue  
18 also when you get into eastern Queens is our  
19 cooperation with Nassau County, how that may work.  
20 So those are the kind of things that we are happy to  
21 come to talk to you, your community leaders; your  
22 constituents and if there are things, like the  
23 signage issue that was brought up, that is confusing  
24 or needs to be addressed, we're happy to do that,  
25 especially -- once hurricane season is in place and

2 we have any updates to the plan; we've printed our  
3 guides -- you know obviously if something happens  
4 important we can adjust it, but we really try in the  
5 off season, from December through May, to make any  
6 adjustments, so if you'd like us to follow up with  
7 questions about that, we're happy to do that in the  
8 coming months.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Sure. And your  
10 guides are online?

11 CHRISTINA FARRELL: All the guides are  
12 online; you can go to [nyc.gov/readynewyork](http://nyc.gov/readynewyork)...  
13 [interpose]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay.

15 CHRISTINA FARRELL: or you can call 311  
16 or you can call OEM and we'll mail out as many as  
17 people would like in up to 13 languages and audio.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Got you. And  
19 have you guys ever thought -- because one of the --  
20 obviously communication is a huge issue that we dealt  
21 with in the Rockaways and I'm sure all over the city,  
22 the lack of communication therefore -- is it  
23 feasible, would you say, to put some of this  
24 information -- for instance, you know, DEP sends out  
25 water bills, [background comment] Department of

2 Finance I'm sure sends out tax bills, you know, so  
3 there are ways that we can sort of get some of this  
4 information to constituents; would it be feasible to  
5 ensure that this particular information, these links  
6 in particular on water bills or.. [interpose]

7 CHRISTINA FARRELL: We can do that; we've  
8 certainly done that with DEP in the past, we promoted  
9 Notify NYC this past season; both National Grid and  
10 ConEd put out information on their bills and to their  
11 customers about the evacuation zones.. [interpose]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay.

13 CHRISTINA FARRELL: you know, we can look  
14 into other formats.. [crosstalk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Yeah.

16 CHRISTINA FARRELL: but if you have  
17 additional ideas -- you know, our charge is to get it  
18 out; we did a large multimedia campaign around Know  
19 Your Zone this summer on the buses and the subways  
20 that was very well-received, but we want to get the  
21 information, you know, not in the way we wanna give  
22 it, but in the way people will receive it. So we've  
23 given the postcards out at all the schools in the  
24 zones in English and Spanish so students could bring  
25 it home to their parents; senior centers. So any

2 ideas, any way that we can... anyone who's willing to  
3 share the information, we're happy to take them up on  
4 it.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: And I was  
6 saying particular, heavy focus on seniors in NYCHA  
7 housing, [background comment] because many of them  
8 don't necessarily leave a five-block radius sometimes  
9 [background comment] and there needs to be a way that  
10 we communicate with them. You know, one of the  
11 things you guys spoke of is calling 911 or 311, you  
12 know, post-storm and even during the storm and I  
13 wanna be clear, you could not get through, there was  
14 no... the phones were out in the Rockaways, so there  
15 was no way to communicate at all and I was elected in  
16 March after Sandy and there were still developments  
17 in the Rockaways without phones; there was no way for  
18 the most vulnerable of us to communicate to even our  
19 family members [background comment] five or six  
20 months later. So I think the City needs to really  
21 look at... and I know you spoke of these Wi-Fi phones,  
22 but I don't think we even have payphone in particular  
23 in the Rockaways where you would link these  
24 particular, you know, Wi-Fi zones, I guess, if that's  
25 what you're calling it, so there needs to be some

2 more innovation as we move forward; perhaps it's  
3 moving in a Wi-Fi truck -- I don't know [background  
4 comment] what technologies are out there, but I'm  
5 sure there are technologies that can come into these  
6 communities who are, you know, the most vulnerable  
7 amongst us. So I just wanna thank the Chairs for  
8 this particular hearing and I look forward to  
9 continuing to work with you and Commissioner Esposito  
10 and everyone else. Thank you.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: I'd like to  
12 recognize Council Member Chin for questions.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you to the  
14 Chairs. I guess my question is that shelters -- I  
15 represent Lower Manhattan and most of my district was  
16 in a flood zone, but we only had one emergency  
17 shelter, which was Seward Park High School and even  
18 with the high school itself they ran out of  
19 electricity; they had to use emergency generators,  
20 and some of the seniors that were relocated there had  
21 to be relocated again. So I think I heard in your  
22 testimony that you were looking at doing a survey of  
23 other local facilities that could possibly serve as  
24 shelter?

2 CHRISTINA FARRELL: So the evacuation  
3 centers, the 64 that are across the city, you know  
4 one thing mandated by that is that they can't be in  
5 any of the evacuation zones. A fair amount of the  
6 city and we redid the zones; it was already in  
7 process, and it happened after Hurricane Sandy, last  
8 spring we went from A B C, from three zones to one  
9 through six and we added -- you know the zones go up  
10 further, away from the coastline now; they included  
11 more people, so unfortunately some people are  
12 traveling further. If you used to be in Zone A,  
13 which some of your constituents may be, and you had  
14 to travel out of Zone C, you may have had to go a  
15 mile; now, if you have to get past Zone 6, you may  
16 have to go one-and-a-half miles. You know, it's  
17 climate change and a lot of the things that are  
18 happening and also the lessons we learned from those  
19 two storms. So when we talk about a community space  
20 survey, we're not looking for additional evacuation  
21 centers; we are looking to increase -- and there's  
22 been legislation passed after Sandy and complied  
23 with, to add additional supplies for the most  
24 vulnerable, so the very young, the elderly, people  
25 with special medical needs; we are looking to expand

2 our cache of those supplies, under Henry, who runs  
3 logistics. But you know, most of the time the kind  
4 of centers that we open are much smaller scale. Like  
5 I said, after East Harlem, the City Council speakers  
6 help us find a space where we could have services for  
7 the people that were displaced from those buildings.  
8 After some flooding in Howard Beach this past spring,  
9 we were able to secure a small business  
10 administration declaration where people could get  
11 assistance through them and we needed to find a  
12 space, so we worked with the Community Board 10 chair  
13 to find a space in a church. So a lot of what we do,  
14 if something happens, if there's a fire in the middle  
15 of the night and we need to move people suddenly, you  
16 know we look to facilities for that and what we wanna  
17 do... when we went out and met with our partners in  
18 Broad Channel, when we met with people in Staten  
19 Island, they've said -- you know the other challenge  
20 with schools is they could be good for a short-term,  
21 but obviously schools, their business is to teach  
22 children and they want to open -- we had to get  
23 everyone out of those schools, except for the ones  
24 that were heavily damaged, by the Monday after Sandy  
25 so the schools could open, children could go back to



2 school, parents could go back to work. So you know  
3 we recognize that there's a lot of facilities that  
4 are not city-run or city-owned that could be good  
5 centers and they may be more familiar to residents,  
6 they may be co-located with some of the things that  
7 you've mentioned; if a house of worship or if a  
8 community group is setting up food or clothing or  
9 technology assistance, so we want to look at that and  
10 you know when the storm is happening, that's not the  
11 time for me to reach out to you and say do you know  
12 any community centers, the time is now so we can look  
13 -- our centers a 100 percent have to be accessible,  
14 which a lot of the infrastructure, the buildings in  
15 the city are old and so they may not be fully  
16 accessible, so that's the first thing. But we can  
17 come in and help with that, so that's why we want to  
18 open up and you know, sometimes we'll run a CERT  
19 training and we'd like to do that in a community  
20 space where people feel comfortable, there's lots of  
21 different reasons we could have a large town hall.  
22 So we wanna work with elected officials and with all  
23 members of the community to get more information on  
24 spaces, but it's not... there are certain mandates and  
25 a lot of precautions that need to be put in place for

2 coastal storm sheltering, so what we're talking about  
3 is everything else, all the other times, 365, that we  
4 open centers for different emergency services.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Well yeah, that's  
6 good, 'cause during Sandy we used one of the  
7 community centers to distribute food.

8 CHRISTINA FARRELL: Uhm-hm. So that's  
9 what we want to know about, so when we look to put  
10 something in place, maybe we can do a co-located so  
11 people don't need to go to your center and then come  
12 to the city center, you know it's a one-stop shop and  
13 there's benefits on both sides.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: But looking back to  
15 shelters, I mean just looking at that one so-called  
16 emergency shelter, my district, they will never have  
17 enough room if everybody decides to evacuate..

18 [interpose]

19 CHRISTINA FARRELL: Right. So what... the  
20 way the city, and if you get a copy of our hurricane  
21 guide you can see it; what we do is, we have the 64  
22 designated evaluation centers; anytime there's  
23 evacuation order issued for a coastal storm, whether  
24 it be for Zone 1 up through Zone 6, we will open  
25 every evacuation center, we will open all 64, but

3 behind that is about 440 additional shelters, which  
4 we don't publicize, because we're not always going to  
5 open those. You know, most of the evacuation centers  
6 people can... they are co-located as a shelter, but as  
7 you said, if a shelter gets busy, what we do is we  
8 ask people to come to the center to meet with their  
9 family, to assess what their needs may be and then if  
10 that center is getting full we will open mostly  
11 schools or CUNY facilities in the neighborhood, so  
12 it's kind of like a spoke and wheel, we have that in  
13 the middle and then we have six to eight centers we  
14 can open. We opened, I think, in the low 70s, I  
15 think we opened about seven additional shelters after  
16 Sandy; the really startling fact is that we could  
17 open up to 500, so if you think about a kind of  
18 disaster, a coastal storm that could come to the  
19 city, where we would even have to double or triple,  
20 not even getting close to 500; you can see the  
21 enormity of scale, but we do have many facilities  
22 that we can open base don the need.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: But most likely a  
24 lot of people are gonna shelter in place, so I think  
25 a lot of the focus needs to be on how people can  
prepare if they decided to stay and especially in my

2 district there are lot of high-rises and with Sandy  
3 the problem wasn't so much the storm or the flooding,  
4 I mean people didn't have light for a whole week and  
5 for these high-rise buildings, you have no  
6 electricity, there's no elevator and they can't pump  
7 the water up; that was the biggest problem we had..  
8 [crosstalk]

9 CHRISTINA FARRELL: Those are all the  
10 reasons...

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: so with a high-rise  
12 building it's like, how do we... in terms of  
13 preparedness to get people to be able to... if you're  
14 gonna stay in place, how are you gonna be able to  
15 have enough supplies to stay for a week or more?

16 CHRISTINA FARRELL: If people are in an  
17 evacuation zone that we're calling for a mandatory  
18 evacuation, you know our advice is never gonna be  
19 it's okay to shelter in place, for all the reasons  
20 that you're mentioning, even if your house or your  
21 apartment, your high-raise goes through unscathed,  
22 there's things outside of your control, with power  
23 and with food and water; Sandy happened right before  
24 the beginning of winter, so we had snow and no heat  
25 soon after, so our message is going to be that if

2 you're in the mandatory evacuation zone you need to  
3 evacuate and we want to help you, we want to give  
4 people transportation, if they need transportation,  
5 we wanna give people supplies, their medications, you  
6 know other resources, the food that they are  
7 comfortable eating, all of those things. You know  
8 are there are certain disasters when you shelter in  
9 place, we're coming up to snow season; that's a  
10 classic example of when we tell people to shelter in  
11 place, to stay off the roads, to stay safe until the  
12 danger has passed, but if people live in a mandatory  
13 evacuation zone and an evacuation zone order has been  
14 called, what we need to do is work to make it not as  
15 scary and not as treacherous for them to evacuate so  
16 they won't be put in harms way.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: But I think we  
18 still need to... down the road... we still need to do a  
19 lot more education for the public about the emergency  
20 shelters... [crosstalk]

21 CHRISTINA FARRELL: We... we agree.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: because the way it  
23 is now, I mean the people who went to the shelters; I  
24 don't think they're gonna come back and they were not  
25 equipped to take care of seniors.

2 CHRISTINA FARRELL: Yeah, that's why  
3 we've done... the playbooks that we provided to the  
4 Council, we've done one on special medical needs  
5 sheltering and we've done another one on sheltering;  
6 we're always looking to increase our stockpile to  
7 have more things available and to look at ways to  
8 improve. So we agree with you on that.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Well we have to  
10 work together on that.

11 CHRISTINA FARRELL: Definitely.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, Chairs.

13 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, Council  
14 Member. I mean I'll say that... I mean I think we're  
15 gonna... these committees will continue working  
16 together to review the overall city comprehensive  
17 emergency plan with all emergencies, but here I have  
18 to say that just discussing the centers that were in  
19 place, I mean the one publicized center for Southern  
20 Brooklyn is FDR High School and they -- which is near  
21 Borough Park -- definitely does not have the capacity  
22 to accommodate of all the areas that are supposed to  
23 be under mandatory evacuation. I understand you  
24 mentioned that there are other centers that are not  
25 public, but I would argue that even with FDR High

3 School there were reports where they were short on  
4 supplies and not everybody evacuated. And I also...  
5 Council Member Chin mentioned the issues of seniors  
6 and I would like to know how are we staffing these  
7 centers, you know, I mean we're gonna look at all of  
8 these things when we have further hearings, but who's  
9 staffing them and their training. I could tell you  
10 that you publicized certain evacuation centers, but  
11 when I spoke to directors at Coney Island Hospital,  
12 they found at their doors seniors from nursing homes  
13 just dumped off and dropped off, saying here, they're  
14 yours, with no name tags, no information about what  
15 medication they might need. So many people were not  
16 following the plan, for a variety of reasons, but  
17 hospitals complained to me that they were just left -  
18 - and they themselves were heavily damaged by Sandy;  
19 Director Zarrilli and I were recently at Coney  
20 Hospital for a big announcement, but they themselves  
21 were going through a lot; can you imagine the added  
22 burden of having nursing homes just dump seniors at  
23 their doors saying here, they're your problem, with  
24 no names, no idea who they are and what their needs  
25 are.

3 I also wanna say that for all these  
4 efforts through outreach, you know we have members in  
5 the audience who will speak later one from CERT who  
6 if not for them, there were seniors in high-rise  
7 buildings that were stranded that did not have all  
8 the means to evacuate. And I'll say again, messaging  
9 from the leaders during that time was crucial; we did  
10 not hear from the mayor at that time a sense of  
11 urgency; if anything, that morning of there was the  
12 sense, well, you know we're midway through the storm,  
13 things aren't that bad, even though the waves were  
14 turning up and then that night things got horrible.  
15 So I have to say that messaging, especially from the  
16 top, has to be very clear, coordinated; responsible.

17 Just a couple of follow-up questions I  
18 have. Are you familiar with some communities that  
19 have come up with, like organically on their own,  
20 resilient communication networks? For example, the  
21 Mesh Network in Red Hook, where they organically  
22 created, even before Sandy, sort of like a Wi-Fi hub,  
23 even without coordination from the city government.

24 CHARLES FRASER: Yes, we are and in fact  
25 they've come to us to discuss the possibility of a  
franchise because they're interested in expanding



3 that. That's exactly the kind of thing that we're  
4 looking to increase as part of broadband adoption  
5 measures, which also go to resiliency in the sense  
6 that competition is inherently resilient, competition  
7 is redundancy and redundancy contributes to  
8 resiliency. So those kinds of small-scale  
9 initiatives are very good and very much to be  
10 encouraged and as you say, the Red Hook initiative  
11 was done initially entirely without government  
12 involvement 'cause they didn't use any public  
13 property, but now they wanna expand, they do wanna  
14 use public property and we're working with them to  
15 help achieve that.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. So you are  
17 in talks with them currently? [crosstalk]

18 CHARLES FRASER: Yes we are. Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: And see this is  
20 where a communications infrastructure, you know,  
21 resiliency plan makes sense, because now you're  
22 beginning to formalize a document or a series of  
23 documents that could share best practices to the  
24 public. You know and you had mentioned before about  
25 some companies are hesitant to share their resiliency  
efforts, but let's be clear I think with what we're

2 trying to ask here, we're trying to assess who is  
3 cooperating, who's not; I think that the... Has the  
4 City of New York provided to the private companies a  
5 set of resiliency standards that they would like to  
6 see met, not asking for specific, you know, private  
7 details of how they reach those standards, because I  
8 understand each one has certain competitive edges  
9 that they don't wanna publicize and all that, but  
10 have we at least provided to them a set of standards  
11 that we'd like to see met?

12 CHARLES FRASER: We have not; as I  
13 mentioned to you, it is brand new; it's not a bad  
14 idea at all and we might pursue that. What we have  
15 done along those lines is we have specific items that  
16 would be parts of such a thing, so battery backup,  
17 for example, the FCC at one point had proposed an  
18 eight-hour requirement for battery backup and never  
19 actually promulgated the rule; we think that's a  
20 really good place to start. It's only a start  
21 because eight hours only gets you a relatively short  
22 distance. Also, pre-placement of Cells on Wheels,  
23 known as COWS, and Cells on Light Trucks, known as  
24 COLTs, it's apparently the animal analogy for cell  
25 backup, but other measures that we've been advocating

2 with the providers, franchisees and otherwise, that -  
3 - they're not a comprehensive set of standards for  
4 resiliency, but they would be elements of such a  
5 thing if there were. I'm hoping that this unit will  
6 be a long-term project; as of now it's funded on a  
7 two-year grant, and that's exactly the sort of thing  
8 I think we might well do, if this unit is made  
9 permanent.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Hey look, I was a  
11 former public school teacher, so I know a little bit  
12 about standards and I think that the city government  
13 should present these industries that have an  
14 important responsibility to maintain communications  
15 during the most crucial times, for us to come up with  
16 a set of standards that we'd like to see met and  
17 letting us know who has met those standards and who  
18 has not met those standards and that give us a  
19 picture of what we're dealing with in the City of New  
20 York and that will also begin to, in my opinion,  
21 drive the discussion about when they use our public  
22 property to operate their companies that is certainly  
23 a point of discussion worth pursuing, and you're  
24 saying that you're open to creating those set of  
25 standards, presenting it to these private companies?

2 CHARLES FRASER: Absolutely. And in  
3 fact, I mentioned before that one of the purposes of  
4 this unit is to introduce negotiation objectives  
5 related to resiliency in future franchise agreements,  
6 those providers that work off of franchises; that  
7 would essentially be what you're saying. Now since  
8 franchise agreements are individually negotiated,  
9 they may vary in terms of what the resiliency  
10 standards would be written into each contract, but  
11 that is the intention. It sort of amounts to  
12 standards that each franchisee would have to meet.  
13 Now, Sprint for instance, T-Mobile, they're not  
14 franchised by us and so we don't have that mechanism;  
15 it would have to be something more, just voluntary,  
16 as you say, like publishing standards and asking them  
17 to demonstrate that they meet them.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Now have these... I  
19 mean I know how it's working with the public  
20 government, the city government as far as we get  
21 reimbursed from FEMA and as Dan Zarrilli knows, we  
22 have to increase our resiliency when we take FEMA's  
23 money. To you knowledge, have these companies been  
24 reimbursed monies for damages sustained to their  
25

2 companies and are they bound by the same rules for  
3 resiliency as well?

4 DANIEL ZARRILLI: Yeah, I'm not aware  
5 that they are eligible for that same type of FEMA  
6 public assistance, so no.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So from... as far as  
8 let's say from the Small Business Administration,  
9 have they received any type of reimbursements from  
10 FEMA or from the federal government that we know of?  
11 Because I know that when it comes to NYCHA, for  
12 example or schools, when we receive monies, it's not  
13 just to simply repair damage, it's to build up our  
14 resiliency in the city; are those the same standards  
15 applying to those types of industries as well?

16 DANIEL ZARRILLI: I guess the one place  
17 where it does apply is anywhere that they trigger the  
18 new building code and so with the help of the Council  
19 last year, the building code was upgraded and  
20 measures were put in place for new construction as  
21 well as substantial alteration of buildings to  
22 elevate mechanical equipment and comply with the most  
23 recent Appendix G in the Building Code around flood  
24 plain standards. But around other work that may not  
25 trigger that, they're gonna make the decisions that

3 make sense from their point of view and not  
4 necessarily from just from a resiliency point of  
5 view.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah, because my  
7 feeling is we're in this together, you know and they  
8 have a role to play; we have a role to play and  
9 communication is something, just like... there's no  
10 question, fuel was very important, to make sure that  
11 we had access to fuel in light of the gas shortages  
12 right after Sandy, food distribution is crucial, of  
13 course, but communications; I mean the whole message  
14 that we hear from government is stay informed, well  
15 how do they stay informed? So this is another area  
16 that I think we need to pursue and that was purpose  
17 of this legislation and I think that we can move  
18 ahead on parts of it.

19 The last thing I'll have for Christina, I  
20 believe, is; you had mentioned in your testimony that  
21 OEM contracts with partners to provide some services  
22 and as we mentioned, many people turn to houses of  
23 worship, they turn to local centers in their  
24 community, you know, they have not been reimbursed a  
25 dime for services they provided right after Sandy,  
during and after Sandy, but you have contracts with

2 partners; can you tell some of these partners that  
3 you contract with to provide some of these services;  
4 anyone know?

5 [background comments]

6 HENRY JACKSON: We have contracts with  
7 different folks for fuel, for food, for water, for  
8 generators, for pumps, for light towers, for sort of  
9 those critical resources that we need, but for  
10 distribution we have a commodity distribution plan  
11 that would get those resources out to the community.  
12 We haven't contracted out the distribution; we would  
13 use city employees, we would use the CERT members, we  
14 would use essentially city employees and people that  
15 work for us to do that distribution; that piece of it  
16 isn't contracted out.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. But you  
18 know, we'll be having future hearings on this topic,  
19 but there are many organizations that actually  
20 provided life-saving help to people before anyone  
21 from the government came in and they probably did not  
22 have contracts with the City of New York, but they  
23 actually saved lives and they helped feed people,  
24 give them shelter when they themselves were inundated

2 and your contracted partners I'm sure got paid, but  
3 many of these local providers are struggling.

4 CHRISTINA FARRELL: And I've spoken --  
5 UGA and other organizations have reached out to me  
6 and to our finance people to talk about this. You  
7 know, the vast majority of the funding that the city  
8 and our partners get reimbursed is through FEMA and  
9 so we have to follow the FEMA regulations, we try to  
10 work and explain and put things altogether, so part  
11 of what I've spoken to with UGA, who represents some  
12 of the groups you're talking about and others, is  
13 explaining pre-storm, you know what may be eligible,  
14 what may not; how it works and you know, looking at  
15 that issue because I know we've gotten calls from  
16 organizations that have expended funds, and the way  
17 the reimbursement and things are set up, the way... the  
18 money comes to us, just like you were saying -- Dan  
19 gets money and then has to show more resiliency; for  
20 us to be able to access the money we have to follow  
21 the FEMA regulations, which... you know because they  
22 weren't existing contractors; they may not be  
23 compliance. So we wanna try to figure that out but  
24 we also moving forward want people to know up front;  
25 people may decide to provide services because -- out



2 of the goodness of their heart or because they are  
3 serving their neighborhood and I think also the  
4 Mayor's Fund, you know the previous staff at the  
5 Mayor's Fund and other groups like that, the Red  
6 Cross funding and I think that they look to fill some  
7 of those gaps in the process. But there should be  
8 more education and more holistic service [crosstalk]

9 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah, I could tell  
10 you, those gaps have not been filled and the services  
11 provided to people were certainly nondenominational;  
12 didn't ask people if they Jewish, Christian; Muslim,  
13 they helped all that needed help. And I do know that  
14 there are times when the administration works with  
15 the federal government; for example, I became aware  
16 that when it came to providing TDAP assistance or  
17 certain assistance to undocumented residents who were  
18 impacted by Sandy, they found a way to create TDAP  
19 private and I think that there are ways to reimburse  
20 organizations that provided life-saving work for non-  
21 religious services and I plan to follow up to work  
22 with you on making sure that that actually happens.  
23 And with that I think there are no further questions.  
24 Okay. Thank you. [pause]

2 I would like to call up now Eric Herbert,  
3 Elizabeth Malone, Ann Valdez and Tony Schloss.

4 [pause] We called up Tony Schloss, Eric Hebert,  
5 Elizabeth Malone and Ann Valdez; is that is?

6 [background comments] Oh. [background comments]

7 [pause]

8 ERIC HEBERT: Chair Treyger, Chair  
9 Crowley, Council Members and my fellow New Yorkers,  
10 thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today  
11 to share my experience with Superstorm Sandy. I am  
12 just one person with one story that I hope enlightens  
13 you on what the ordinary citizen went through and how  
14 they recovered and thrived afterwards.

15 My name is Eric Hebert; I'm a resident of  
16 Amalgamated Warbasse Houses in the Coney Island  
17 section of Brooklyn, Mr. Treyger's area. Warbasse is  
18 a Mitchell-Lama Co-Op in which we pride ourselves on  
19 being self-owned and self-governed. One of the  
20 things about living in Warbasse is we have our own  
21 power plant, separate from the city's main grid,  
22 which failed after Sandy. With the exception of my  
23 time on active duty with the U.S. Coast Guard, I have  
24 lived here since I was 12 years old. In my time with  
25 the U.S. Coast Guard I rode out on patrol three

3 separate hurricanes in the Atlantic, including  
4 Hurricane Diana in 1984, as I sailed off the coast of  
5 North Carolina on the Cutter Tamaroa, the cutter made  
6 famous during the *Perfect Storm*. I know firsthand  
7 the power of Mother Nature's strongest force, the  
8 hurricane. My story about Sandy, like many others,  
9 started the year before; as Hurricane Irene was  
10 headed towards New York, I left with my parents to  
11 Upstate New York. We prepared, put tape on the  
12 windows and other safety precautions and headed  
13 north. Of course Irene missed the city and passed  
14 right overhead. As we got back home, there was no  
15 damage of any kind. With the news of Hurricane Sandy  
16 moving up the coast, we had the fresh memories of the  
17 year before in our minds; then we were told that it  
18 would be downgraded from a hurricane before it even  
19 reached the city. Like many others, we chose to not  
20 listen to the mandatory evacuation order and stayed  
21 put. I knew the winds would be fierce, but much less  
22 than hurricanes I had been through before, but nature  
23 had other things in mind. Sandy had the lowest  
24 barometric pressure ever recorded in New Jersey; if  
25 the eye would have been over Paris, the storm would  
have covered the entirety of the United Kingdom. The

2 storm surge hit exactly at high tide on a full moon,  
3 which is known as a higher high-tide; my building was  
4 hit with an eight-foot flood. We were not prepared  
5 for what happened that night. At This time I  
6 submitted an article written by my father -- much  
7 better writer than me -- about our experiences after  
8 Sandy hit. As a senior U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary  
9 Officer, the last eight years has had me assigned to  
10 projects that affected the national level; after our  
11 ordeal with Superstorm Sandy, I wanted to focus my  
12 efforts and experience on my local community; I found  
13 volunteering with the Community Emergency Response  
14 Team (CERT) to be a perfect fit for me. New York  
15 City CERT is administered by the Office of Emergency  
16 Management (OEM). New York City CERT volunteers  
17 undergo an extensive 10-week training program that  
18 raises awareness about emergencies and disasters and  
19 provides basic response guild needed for fire safety,  
20 light search and rescue, disaster, medical operations  
21 and traffic control. After graduating from the 10-  
22 week program, me and my fellow CERT members support  
23 our communities by assisting with emergency education  
24 and response. Emergency service personnel are the  
25 best equipped to respond to disasters; we are trained

3 to support the effort of New York City's first  
4 responders. During non-emergency situations we  
5 educate our communities about emergency preparedness  
6 by working with the Ready New York program that  
7 Deputy Commissioner Farrell mentioned several times  
8 and building community [bell] disaster networks.  
9 Int. 0519 will provide OEM with the resources to get  
10 more focused information directed at the unique needs  
11 of my special neighborhood. In Brooklyn's Community  
12 District 13 where I live in Coney Island, we have a  
13 large Russian and a large Spanish-speaking community,  
14 we also are directly on the coastline; many of our  
15 residents live in high-rise co-ops or NYCHA housing;  
16 we need a targeted program to educate our neighbors  
17 in how to prepare for, to survive and recover from  
18 all forms of disasters and incidents. Thank you for  
19 allowing me to address you today.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, Eric.

21 And I will say, when I mentioned before about  
22 individuals and people who were there before anyone  
23 from the government was there, you were there and you  
24 helped save and helped people recover, seniors in  
25 need of medication -- I know in Warbasse the lights  
were out and so the government owes you an enormous

3 amount of gratitude and thanks for the life-saving  
4 work that you did during and after that storm.

5 ERIC HEBERT: Thank you, Council Member.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you. Thank  
7 you. Next please.

8 TONY SCHLOSS: Hi, thank you for having  
9 me today. My name is Tony Schloss; I'm the Director  
10 of Community Initiatives at the Red Hook Initiative  
11 in Red Hook. I apologize; I don't have a copy of  
12 this testimony, but I'm trying to be tech savvy.

13 In the last two years since Sandy hit Red  
14 Hook my focus has been on communication, successful  
15 response and recovery of work in Red Hook and the  
16 resiliency we have created since all is enabled by  
17 communication and social networks. I believe  
18 networks and communication would be the most critical  
19 feature of resiliency. The original impetus in  
20 creating Red Hook Wi-Fi -- thank you for the question  
21 earlier -- before Sandy even was to encourage local  
22 communication; the splash page of our network tells  
23 Red Hook residents about local news, events, job  
24 opportunities, local businesses and more. In that  
25 work we also learned of a need for broadband access  
in our community and that also became a goal and

3 finally, we use the network as a platform for job  
4 training and career development for Red Hook young  
5 adults who install, maintain and promote the network.

6 During Sandy our network remained  
7 standing where larger networks failed. We created a  
8 Wi-Fi network with updated local information and  
9 connection to the internet in the immediate area of  
10 our community center and overnight expanded it to  
11 Coffey Park, where Red Cross and other government  
12 agencies conducted much of their work. We were lucky  
13 to have power, which is critical, at the sites of our  
14 routers and Brooklyn Fiber, a local internet service  
15 provider who helped to improve our connection. We  
16 also received support from FEMA in the form of  
17 volunteers with tech experience to help expand the  
18 network quickly, as well as to supply additional  
19 bandwidth through a satellite internet connection.

20 After Sandy we shared information about  
21 where supplies could be found, where food was being  
22 served and other recovery information as it became  
23 available. Residents accessed that information and  
24 were able to contact loved ones outside of Red Hook  
25 using the internet connection.

3 Our network also functions as an  
4 intranet, so we can communicate with users and they  
5 with each other regardless of an internet connection.  
6 The intranet is one of the functions of our network  
7 that is due to its being a mesh network. In a mesh  
8 network connections are decentralized, so there are  
9 fewer choke points or places where an interruption of  
10 service affects the network. Nodes in our network  
11 can see all the other nodes in the area and self-  
12 organize their communication so information flows  
13 most efficiently. If one node is to malfunction, the  
14 others reroute their information and the information  
15 then continues to flow. We also are able to design  
16 and build our mesh network so it's easy to add nodes.  
17 For example -- this gets a little technical -- using  
18 a long-range high-power antenna we can shoot a signal  
19 down a long street and then we can pick it up with  
20 lower-power omnidirectional routers that serve as  
21 access points for users; residents, businesses or  
22 nonprofits may host an access point for users in  
23 their area. In a square mile radius of Red Hook we  
24 have 24 nodes and 15 hotspots forming our network, in  
25 the next year of Red Hook Wi-Fi we hope to share our  
service within the footprint of the Red Hook Houses;



3 currently our service works only on the perimeter,  
4 but we are now in discussions with NYCHA to secure  
5 permissions to install our lightweight, low-power  
6 routers on their property, bringing our signal into  
7 the interior public areas of the development. This  
8 would bring [bell] connectivity to those who are in  
9 need of broadband access and digital literacy, as  
10 well as provide the Housing Authority a network for  
11 communication with their residents and systems on  
12 their property. We are currently also a finalist in  
13 the EDC Rise competition in which we would introduce  
14 solar panels into the network and increase the  
15 coverage throughout the neighborhood to make a truly  
16 resilient system. In discussion of resiliency, power  
17 must always be considered.

18 That is the tech side of the story and  
19 one way to bring communication to communities in  
20 times of need and during normal times. Another  
21 critical component to the Red Hook story is the  
22 digital stewards program and the part that I enjoy  
23 most being a part of. The Red Hook digital stewards  
24 are 19- to 23-year-old residents of the Red Hook  
25 Houses who are enrolled in a year-long technology  
training program that gives them skills to enter the

3 technology industry. The Wi-Fi network serves as a  
4 training ground and platform for the stewards to  
5 showcase their work. Just as important, the digital  
6 steward program serves as the mechanism for community  
7 support, engagement and governance of the Wi-Fi  
8 network. Should another emergency occur in Red Hook,  
9 we have a roster of 20 young adult that live in the  
10 neighborhood who we can contact, who can work to  
11 restore and create content for the network.

12 The digital stewards go through a six-  
13 month tech training, which includes skills in  
14 workplace technology, hardware and software  
15 installation and troubleshooting, computer networking  
16 and media production, including video production, web  
17 design and social media strategy. They then use  
18 those skills in community projects and enter into an  
19 internship at a technology business. Graduated  
20 stewards have had success entering the job market,  
21 the tech industry has an overload of job  
22 opportunities as well as a need to diversify, so  
23 we're seeing good results.

24 Since Sandy, through the support of  
25 foundations, private individuals; government  
volunteers, the Red Hook Initiative has engaged in a

3 variety of projects with community members and  
4 outside groups. On December 6 you all are invited to  
5 -- we will help launch the Red Hook Hub, which is a  
6 system of analog and digital bulletin boards that  
7 share local information that can be submitted in  
8 multiple modes; residents could feed information to  
9 the hub via written forms, a hotline, using social  
10 media or using the Red Hook Hub website. The website  
11 then displays all this local information, sends out  
12 email bulletins, disseminates through social media  
13 and then is also mirrored on branded physical  
14 bulletin boards throughout the community.

15 Information more relevant to the health and well-  
16 being of the residents, most especially emergency  
17 information, is featured more prominently, according  
18 to guidelines created by a community advisory board.

19 I will finish in a moment by telling a  
20 story about how all the technology, training and  
21 community engagement comes together to work towards  
22 resiliency preparedness. Just last month a Red Hook  
23 arts and science nonprofit known as Pioneer Works  
24 hosted a hack-a-thon that our digital stewards  
25 attended; the digital stewards are often invited to  
work at or attend events at Pioneer Works, bridging

3 the divide between public housing residents and local  
4 Red Hook artists. At this hack-a-thon the digital  
5 stewards developed and prototyped a neighborhood  
6 alert system, and their system, devices installed in  
7 area businesses, connect to the local Wi-Fi network  
8 and they are able to receive emergency and non-  
9 emergency bulletins from the network. The devices,  
10 known as beacons, communicate over Bluetooth to users  
11 and mobile devices. It would function similar to the  
12 city's alert system where residents receive messages  
13 pushed onto their devices. It is most certainly a  
14 great idea, but I mention it only to illustrate that  
15 these young adults given access to technology and  
16 support from the community took it upon themselves to  
17 create an emergency response system. Through their  
18 technology training and exposure to community issues,  
19 they used those skills to create a solution for their  
20 neighbors and I think this is the best system that we  
21 could design. So thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So my only question  
23 is; how do we get this amazing hub to the rest of the  
24 city? I mean it's -- kudos to you and to the Red  
25 Hook community for taking it upon yourselves, not

3 waiting for the government to act; you were light  
4 years ahead and before Sandy; is that correct?

5 TONY SCHLOSS: That's right.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So can you just  
7 tell us about the efforts to, you know, share best  
8 practices?

9 TONY SCHLOSS: Yeah, I'm glad you asked  
10 about the hub. We're taking the Wi-Fi a step  
11 further, because the Wi-Fi still relies on power for  
12 your device or for the network or for you to have a  
13 device, you know which not everyone in Red Hook may  
14 have, you know. But if you live in Red Hook and the  
15 hub works as it's supposed to, you won't be able to  
16 ignore the local information 'cause you'll pass it on  
17 your way to work or on your way to the store and  
18 there's multiple ways for you to get in your own  
19 information, right. So it happened through a grant  
20 that was given to AIGA, which is an association of  
21 graphic designers and they had a place-making grant  
22 and so they worked -- the reason why it developed so  
23 well, in my opinion, is because they worked across  
24 the community, they worked with us, young adults, the  
25 Red Hook Initiative, with Good Shepard Services; we  
had a volunteer communication working group that came

2 out of the Red Hook Coalition, so you know, that was  
3 an instance where a group was given a grant to come  
4 into our neighborhood and they spoke.. they made great  
5 effort to speak to the community and identify the  
6 needs. And so I.. yeah I mean, again, like I really  
7 love the hub because if it works -- again, it's  
8 launching on the 6th -- is that it covers all the  
9 bases, right; you're gonna see it if you don't have a  
10 device, you're gonna see it if you have a device,  
11 you're gonna get emails, you're gonna get -- you  
12 know, you're gonna see it in the store. So I think  
13 it's critical to think about all components of those  
14 systems whether you have power, whether you don't  
15 have power, analog, digital; all that stuff.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I'll just finish by  
17 saying that I think that this should be a part of  
18 capacity-building in other neighborhoods, because not  
19 everyone is very tech savvy, but those that are, that  
20 can mean the difference getting information to save  
21 lives and help other people. So I like the fact that  
22 they are in talks with you guys now about how to  
23 really get this up and running beyond just Red Hook,  
24 I think that's great, of course strengthen the Red  
25 Hook community, but of course shared amongst the rest

2 of the city and I thank you for your innovation and I  
3 know you're doing this for the right reasons, to  
4 really help and empower people and I thank you very  
5 much for that.

6 TONY SCHLOSS: Thanks.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Next please.

8 ELIZABETH MALONE: Good morning.. so I  
9 have to hit my little red button here. Hi. I'm  
10 Elizabeth Malone; this morning.. this afternoon I'm  
11 representing the Board of Directors for the Brooklyn  
12 Long-Term Recovery Group; I'm a vice-chair for that  
13 and also a resident of Gravesend.

14 We did do a written testimony which has  
15 been distributed; I'm not going to read it; it is in  
16 fact more like a white paper, a rather dense but  
17 brief overview of the insurability issues that we are  
18 facing all along the coast of New York, which you  
19 know are complicated and extremely important. But  
20 what we wanted to bring forward today, besides our  
21 agreement that community-based information,  
22 community-centric information would be very useful,  
23 is that the insurance information should be one of  
24 the information deemed relevant and needs to be  
25 timely, concise and useable.

3 Historically insurance provides 80  
4 percent of the disaster recovery funds; Sandy was  
5 atypical, it was... we estimate it was only about 50  
6 percent because of the lack of flood insurance, of  
7 course, but it is the primary resource for recovery  
8 is the private insurance market. Telling people to  
9 check their policy is like telling me -- is like the  
10 check engine light going on in my car, I lift the  
11 hood, uh there's an engine, okay. It needs to be  
12 more specific and it needs to be more timely. One of  
13 the things that we observed at the Brooklyn Long-Term  
14 Recovery Group regarding Sandy was that people did  
15 not know what to do with their stuff; some people  
16 just removed all of their debris and had nothing to  
17 show for proof of loss, other people kept stuff  
18 around, increasing their damage; I had a number of  
19 people call me months after Sandy that still had  
20 holes in their roof; they did not know that one of  
21 their responsibilities was to protect the rest of the  
22 property as best possible, thereby complicating and  
23 sometimes diminishing the amount of claim proceeds  
24 that they would be able to get. So knowing how to  
25 handle your claim is a crucial piece of information;  
it cannot be delivered while they're standing in a



3 shelter; this is not the time to explain the National  
4 Flood Insurance program increased costs of compliance  
5 coverage; they need to know what to throw away, what  
6 to keep and how to file a claim.

7 The timing of these pamphlets it also  
8 important; you have to understand the insurance  
9 process. As a coastal storm approaches an area, the  
10 insuring companies will close down binding, which  
11 means that when a hurricane is predicted for New York  
12 City every area south of Albany is shut down; that is  
13 not the time when you can add water backup coverage  
14 to your policy. So what information goes out when is  
15 going to be crucial to what resources people have for  
16 recovery.

17 And again, just in basic information on  
18 this sheltering issue; many people don't understand  
19 when they do have a policy that their loss of use  
20 coverage would have a big impact on their sheltering  
21 options, depending on the disaster. You know in a  
22 fire, if they had that loss of use coverage they can  
23 go to a hotel; for windstorm damage they'll be able  
24 to get out of the shelter almost immediately, because  
25 they will have the resources to rent an apartment or

2 rent a hotel room, it's covered by their policy. Who  
3 knows, okay.

4 So basically, what we wanna be sure is  
5 that people understand in a timely basis the very  
6 specific, very usable and very concise; we cannot do  
7 all of the quirks of an insurance policy; I know it's  
8 quirky and murky, but there are very specific pieces  
9 of information which would deeply impact the ability  
10 of people to recovery from disaster. A resilient  
11 community doesn't prepare for a disaster, they  
12 prepare for recovery and identifying what you need to  
13 know and when you need to know it is a crucial part  
14 of that recovery. So timely, concise and usable  
15 insurance information can significantly reduce the  
16 impact of a disaster. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you very much  
18 and I thank the Brooklyn Long-Term Recovery Group for  
19 really.. they've been really consistent and persistent  
20 -- you know after Sandy, they meet regularly, they  
21 hold crucial meetings and gatherings to share  
22 important; I thank you and your group for the work  
23 that you're doing.

24 ELIZABETH MALONE: Yeah, we have also got  
25 a very functional disaster case manager and volunteer

2 committee going with recovery happening and people  
3 getting their stuff done and we're also focused on  
4 the transition as the current disaster case program  
5 from New York State sunsets, we've already started  
6 training for... [crosstalk]

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Great work.

8 ELIZABETH MALONE: dealing with that.

9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, thank  
11 you very much. And Ann Valdez from Coney Island.

12 ANN VALDEZ: Yes. Thank you, Chair  
13 Treyger, thank you Chair Crowley and everyone else  
14 who is listening in; who will be listing. I really  
15 wasn't planning on speaking today, but when I seen  
16 and started to hear just how much this affects my  
17 community, I realized I must say something. I did  
18 appreciate when Hurricane Sandy occurred; the fact  
19 that we did have CERT come and check us at the  
20 shelters also. You're absolutely right and it's been  
21 said over and over, this was not handled properly,  
22 there should have been more of an importance to  
23 evacuate, people took it for granted and thought when  
24 we had evacuated for Irene and it seemed because  
25 Irene made a turn that it wasn't such a big and

3 people didn't see how serious it was and the Mayor  
4 himself and his administration didn't make it look or  
5 seem like it was gonna be that bad, so I did see.. I  
6 live in public housing in Coney Island, in Gravesend  
7 Houses, which is also right on top of the water, but  
8 the developments that got hit the worst are the two  
9 developments that face the Atlantic Ocean, which is  
10 Coney Island Houses -- had substantial damage -- and  
11 Haber Houses, which also got severe damage and Haber  
12 Houses is all seniors. So when we were put into the  
13 evacuation site -- my sister works for the City and  
14 therefore she had already signed up to be one of the  
15 workers during an emergency and then when our  
16 wonderful mayor at the time said everyone who's a  
17 city worker has to find their way to get to work,  
18 well we lived in Coney Island; there was no  
19 transportation, there was nothing, okay, so even  
20 before the storm my sister got her alert that she had  
21 to call in, she called in, found out where her center  
22 was gonna be, and she had to begin that Saturday  
23 evening before the storm and we were allocated to go  
24 to a -- I think it was a junior high school over in  
25 Dyker Heights. It didn't seem fully accessible for  
everyone, but we had a lot of seniors there, so it

2 was she, myself and my son at the time, who was 13  
3 years old, went there, we went with my sister's  
4 minivan, we were not -- you know, no one took us that  
5 way; we went there and we started to set up. When we  
6 got there to set up, there was no one there from  
7 recovery to help us, to show us how to set up; there  
8 was one other person who was sent there to do the  
9 same thing as my sister was going and we just kind of  
10 made friends; the people there were like workers in  
11 the school's cafeteria and they were just looking at  
12 us like we were a bunch of crazy people, but we made  
13 it work. Okay, we said you know what, we don't need  
14 communication, we know what has to get done. And  
15 then some of the CERT workers came in a little bit  
16 afterwards, other city workers came in, but we  
17 basically got this off the ground as quickly as we  
18 can and it already started on that Saturday evening  
19 and people started coming in and we all started  
20 putting the beds together -- there was no one there  
21 but us, so we started setting up the beds and things  
22 like that and it was really chaotic. But as the days  
23 went on, it became more and more serious and more and  
24 more people were forced to be evacuated and that's  
25 when the seniors started coming in and so many

3 seniors came in and they were rushed out of their  
4 homes, that a lot of them had forgotten their  
5 medication, ran out of their medication, we missing a  
6 dosage of their medication -- excuse me -- not  
7 feeling well, feeling ill. So the first thing we  
8 did, since we had no medication and no actual medical  
9 on the grounds, we immediately started to send these  
10 people, with the police department, we got ambulances  
11 over there, and sent them to a hospital so that they  
12 could be checked, reviewed and then we can get a  
13 report back so we know how to maintain them. Like I  
14 said, my sister is a city worker, so she was getting  
15 paid for this; the other young lady that was there as  
16 a city worker, she was getting paid for this; I am  
17 not a city worker; I did not get paid for this;  
18 [bell] my 13-year-old son is not a city worker; he  
19 did not get paid for this and he wasn't even allowed  
20 to have credit given to him in school because it was  
21 so mismanaged they didn't want it to be known that it  
22 took a 13-year-old to have to help them get the  
23 equipment together to house these people. We took an  
24 entire classroom, two entire classrooms and filled it  
25 with elderly and disabled and people with high  
incidences of illnesses, we took two rooms to fill

3 them up and my son back and forth every couple of  
4 minutes checking on them to make sure they were okay,  
5 bringing them water, tending to them, you would think  
6 my son at the time was a doctor or nurse and every  
7 other field that's possible; then we had a separate  
8 room for dogs. My son was running up and down the  
9 staircases to the classroom where we, you know we  
10 pushed the furniture aside; he set up beds over  
11 there; I mean so much was going on. In Coney Island,  
12 when we came... then from there we were sent to FDR,  
13 after the mayor wanted to mush everyone together, we  
14 went to FDR; it was a madhouse over there. We even  
15 got afraid because there was no organization -- once  
16 all of us were being pushed together, there was no  
17 organization on which was family, which were singles,  
18 so you had single people in room with families, with  
19 young children, with male, female and -- I said no,  
20 no, no, this is no good. But we managed to wait out  
21 the storm in the original center; then we went to FDR  
22 and then we finally came home. When we came home,  
23 Coney Island looked like -- I can't even think of the  
24 words, it just looked like a storm... you could see a  
25 storm hit there, but it looked so deserted and so  
much mismanagement and debris all over the place.

2 And when I got home -- we were told we had  
3 electricity; that's why we went home -- when I got  
4 home we had electricity, but we had no hot water, no  
5 heat; we were freezing... [interpose]

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: That I know very  
7 much about and... [crosstalk]

8 ANN VALDEZ: Yeah, but this is only a few  
9 days after the storm.

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Yeah.

11 ANN VALDEZ: So my son and I, once again,  
12 looked at each other and said I'm not staying home to  
13 freeze under the covers, if we're gonna be cold we're  
14 gonna be moving around and get something done. So my  
15 TA president, Deborah Carter, had already -- she  
16 stayed for the storm, from what I was told, so she  
17 was already getting together a site and giving out  
18 food and clothing and trying to help people and a lot  
19 of people were telling me that still more help needed  
20 to be done. A friend of mine in another development  
21 called me and asked me to come help her over there  
22 and that the Red Cross was giving out food and stuff  
23 like that. So we tried helping and then there was  
24 mismanagement there, where we wound up in the street  
25 giving out the same supplies and stuff like that. My



2 friend is Evangeline Pew [sp?]. And then we got  
3 together with some organizations that came out of  
4 nowhere; we had People's Coalition come out and they  
5 were giving out... helping with medication and Occupy  
6 Sandy got in touch with me... [interpose]

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I'll tell you what  
8 Ann; we're actually gonna have a hearing on this  
9 very.. I mean this is the beginning of a series of  
10 hearings on the entire emergency plan preparedness;  
11 as mentioned before, I know of a number of  
12 organizations and groups, including houses of worship  
13 that provided life-saving work, individuals like  
14 yourself; Eric [background comment] and believe me,  
15 I'm not saying that you or Eric or anyone, your son,  
16 are asking for a dime, but my goodness, we heard  
17 before that they contracted with organizations where  
18 they did get paid, but we didn't see many of them.

19 ANN VALDEZ: Right.

20 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: So that's the  
21 problem that I have, that there were many groups,  
22 individuals, such as yourselves, who actually helped  
23 people, saved lives and I don't even think you got a  
24 thank you from those above, but I'm thanking you and  
25 we're telling you that this is going to a series of

2 hearings, we're gonna continue to shed light on this  
3 very important topic, making sure that our plans are  
4 updated and actually meet the needs of a very diverse  
5 city. You know each neighborhood has different  
6 geographic issues and challenges and we have to have  
7 a plan that meets the individual needs of each of  
8 those neighborhoods and I cannot thank you all enough  
9 for waiting this out at this hearing here to speak;  
10 your input, your suggestions, your innovation, your  
11 courage is very much appreciated by both of our  
12 committees and this is the beginning of a process  
13 where we're gonna continue to get input and press to  
14 make changes to make sure that our city is really  
15 prepared to confront all challenges and I thank you  
16 all... [crosstalk]

17 ANN VALDEZ: Can I just make two big  
18 points?

19 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Sure.

20 ANN VALDEZ: At the time that this was  
21 happening, I was dealing with an issue with HRA  
22 closing my case and trying to sanction me, so at the  
23 time I had no cash or anything, so I was literally  
24 running around not just handing out the food, but  
25 trying to save some for myself and down the block

2 they were giving out checks; I couldn't even take the  
3 time to get online to get the monetary help that I  
4 did need because it was more important to give to the  
5 people who didn't have and who were falling apart, to  
6 try and keep them together and at the same time, what  
7 I'm saying is, even when we turned to NYCHA, there  
8 was nobody, no one set person from 250 Broadway there  
9 to tell us what we're supposed to do, so we had to  
10 truly ban together as a community and I have got to  
11 say over and over, that is the one good thing about  
12 Hurricane Sandy is that when it occurred, no matter  
13 what walk of life people came from, Seagate had no  
14 choice but to come out of that gate and meet the rest  
15 of us and we all worked together and we dealt with  
16 people who came from your development, where your  
17 office is, all over the place and we had no problem,  
18 no one looked at anyone differently, we all looked at  
19 each other as a person in need, people from  
20 Sheepshead Bay, from all over working together and I  
21 commend you for coming up with these two initiatives  
22 because they really are important. Communication is  
23 the most important thing when it comes to an  
24 emergency, because when a person is seriously  
25 concerned and possibly panicking and needs help, you

2 cannot look in that person's eyes, be calm and say I  
3 don't know; you have to know. I was not trained to  
4 do any of this, all my training to keep these things  
5 together comes from three -- my mother, god almighty,  
6 my organization -- oh and four, my experience at  
7 being a mother.

8 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [laugh] Thank you  
9 very much Ann. And again, I think only in  
10 partnership will we really I think right the ship and  
11 you heard before from Chair Crowley, her committee  
12 and she has done a great job of really exposing the  
13 issues with the emergency response system; before you  
14 heard disagreements over the term shutdown of the  
15 system or [background comment] as far as I'm  
16 concerned, when people can't get through and it's  
17 always busy, [background comment] shut down, but I..  
18 this is the beginning, this is certainly not the end  
19 and we thank you all for your powerful and  
20 informative testimony here today. And with that; no  
21 further questions, we will adjourn this hearing.

22 ANN VALDEZ: Thank you.

23 [gavel]

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you.

25 [background comment]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date December 1, 2014