

**TESTIMONY OF THE MAYOR'S OFFICE OF RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY  
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE ON WATERFRONTS**

*Tuesday, May 3, 2016*

**INTRODUCTION**

Good morning. My name is Daniel Zarrilli and I am the Senior Director of Climate Policy and Programs and Director of the Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency. I would like to thank Chairperson Rose and the members of the Committee on Waterfronts for inviting me to testify today on Introduction 507, regarding the role of the Waterfront Management Advisory Board (WMAB). I would also like to thank Councilmember Kallos and the sponsors of this bill for their commitment to the city's waterfront.

**ONENYC: SHAPING OUR WATERFRONT**

New York City's waterfront is one of the city's greatest natural assets. Its vibrant coastal communities, critical maritime jobs, the presence of critical infrastructure, and many cherished natural and cultural resources make our waterfront essential to understanding our past, and also essential to understanding New York City's future. As we saw from Hurricane Sandy in 2012, our vulnerability to climate change and sea level rise is here now and the decisions we are making to adapt our coastal communities to face these risks will define our city and its waterfront for decades to come. That's why the administration is committed to the city's waterfront and we look forward to working with the City Council through the WMAB to focus on building a more inclusive and equitable waterfront across the five boroughs.

In fact, through our OneNYC program, the administration has made significant progress across the city's waterfront as we pursue a more equitable, more sustainable, and more resilient city. Less than two weeks ago, we released our first annual OneNYC progress report, detailing the strides we've made in building a strong and just city over the last year, which includes significant progress across the city's 520 miles of waterfront.

To strengthen our growing and thriving city, we are:

- Investing in a new citywide ferry service that will launch starting in 2017 – providing much needed public transportation alternatives to neighborhoods that are underserved by transit, all for the price of a single subway ride, while connecting waterfront communities throughout our city.
- Increasing service on the Staten Island Ferry to 30-minute frequencies around the clock.
- Initiating a project to design and construct the Brooklyn-Queens Connector (BQX), which will connect growing job hubs and residential neighborhoods along the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront.
- Bringing high speed broadband through a public-private partnership to serve businesses in industrial areas along the Brooklyn and Queens waterfront.
- Developing new housing and open space on the 35-acre Homeport facility in Stapleton, Staten Island.

We are fostering a more inclusive and equitable waterfront by:

- Investing over \$3 billion of Sandy recovery funds into NYCHA, helping to strengthen our public housing, particularly in flood-prone areas.
- Expanding waterfront access and recreation opportunities throughout the five boroughs, such as yesterday's announcement at the former Homeport site on the North Shore of Staten Island.
- Supporting climate education programs, such as Billion Oysters, to educate the next generation of environmental stewards in our public schools.

We are increasing the sustainability of our waterfront by:

- Investing over \$900 million into green infrastructure to improve water quality and reduce combined sewer overflow discharges into the harbor.
- Activating our waterfront freight facilities and infrastructure to enable more goods to move by water, including at the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal and at the 65<sup>th</sup> Street railyard.
- Continuing the use of the waterways for our municipal solid waste movement, eliminating thousands of truck trips in many over-burdened neighborhoods.
- Incorporating the revised Waterfront Revitalization Program into our citywide environmental review process, thereby also considering natural resource, open space, hazardous materials and other environmental factors during project development.

And we are making our waterfront more resilient by:

- Investing in new coastal defense projects across the five boroughs, including the Lower East Side, Lower Manhattan, Red Hook, in Jamaica Bay and along the Rockaway peninsula, in Sea Gate and across the public beaches in Coney Island and Brighton Beach, and along the East and South Shores of Staten Island to protect against coastal storms and the long-term risk of sea level rise.
- Investing \$86 million in Sandy-impacted small businesses to create and retain thousands of jobs.
- Inspecting the city's waterfront assets and investing over \$100 million in rehabilitation to ensure the continued use and safety of our piers, docks, and other infrastructure.
- Investing in the Resilient Neighborhoods place-based planning initiative to identify neighborhood-specific strategies, including zoning and land use changes, to support the vitality and resiliency of communities in the floodplain.
- Securing savings from FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program, saving thousands of households in coastal communities approximately \$5 million in annual premium hikes.

## **MAKING THE WMAB MORE EQUITABLE**

These investments and actions are each supported by extensive community collaboration to make sure that local community voices help drive our projects and initiatives forward. Broad public engagement has been a hallmark of our waterfront planning, from Edgemere in Queens to the East Shore of Staten Island, and the administration seeks out elected officials, community boards, and neighborhood groups in all project phases from concept to construction to ensure our waterfront investments are anchored to community priorities.

Therefore, the City is excited by this opportunity to work with the City Council to strengthen the WMAB and ensure that a diverse range of voices continue to inform our work. We see the board as an important opportunity to deepen public participation in efforts to improve the development and management of our waterfront and coastal assets while simultaneously making them more accessible and useful to all New Yorkers.

To accomplish this, we offer several measures the City Council, through a revised Introduction 507, could take to strengthen the WMAB. For example, the council could:

- Increase the number of board members and seek out a more diverse set of perspectives on the city's waterfront.
- Ensure an appointment process that facilitates an inclusive, committed, and representative board, similar to other City advisory boards.
- Allow the head of each City agency serving on the WMAB to designate an employee to act as agency liaison to the board thereby giving the board more flexible agency representation.
- Increase the WMAB's flexibility as its mission and priorities will evolve over time. This will ensure the board's continuity, increase transparency, and allow it to execute its duties while remaining relevant and vital as a guiding force for waterfront projects.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, I would like to thank Chairperson Rose and the Waterfronts Committee for holding this hearing today and Councilmember Kallos for his sponsorship and support of this bill. As we continue to work through the challenges of being a coastal city in an era of climate change, the WMAB can play an important role in advising the City how to best revitalize and protect our waterfront and coastal communities, and I look forward to working with the Council as we move forward.



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STATEMENT PREPARED FOR NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON  
WATERFRONTS MEETING, MAY 3 2016  
Int 0507-2014, Expanding the Role of the Waterfront Management Advisory Board

The Historic Ships Coalition is pleased that the Committee on Waterfronts is seeking to revive the Waterfront Management Advisory Board to provide expert guidance on development of our waterfronts.

**The Historic Ships Coalition celebrates and supports historic and distinguished vessels in New York City's Harbor.** The Coalition brings together owners and operators of historic vessels, maritime museums, and organizations that advocate for preservation of New York's historic vessels in an alliance to address common concerns. We seek better and more numerous berths and enhanced resources to engage the public in our maritime heritage. We are a group of professionals representing over 20 vessels and sites in the New York metropolitan area that enable visitors to make exciting and educational connections with our waterways.

**As you consider expanding the membership of the Waterfront Management Advisory Board, we ask that you look to the water and those people with expertise on and over it.**

**The majority of Board members should represent maritime users of wharves and waterfront infrastructure, to fulfill the mandate to advise on those matters.** Housing and restaurants can be built anywhere, but the waterfront is a critical zone for vessels, which cannot operate without accessible, affordable, appropriately equipped and well-maintained piers. Our waterfront infrastructure needs to be flexibly designed to meet the needs of a variety of vessel types and sizes. New York's citizens need diverse and plentiful connections to the water for transportation, for recreation, for education and for evacuation in emergencies.

**We ask that instead of adding the Commissioner of Housing Preservation and Development to Waterfront Management Advisory Board that you include the Commissioner of Transportation among its ex officio members.** The Commissioner of Transportation oversees city ferries and bridges and is better equipped to advise the City Council on the development of wharves and waterfront property and infrastructure in the city.

**Add the categories of "vessel operators" and "maritime museums" to the list of included appointees in Section 1303a.** The large number of industries to be represented could result in a Board that lacks membership from those most familiar with our city's waterfront. Including appointees from the "maritime industries" does not guarantee the diversity of constituents actually working on the water. Ideally, the categories of appointees from industries that are not water-dependent would be fewer in number or removed.



**Hearing regarding expanding the role of the Waterfront Management Advisory Board, May 3, 2016  
Testimony by Ana Orozco, Climate Justice Policy and Programs Coordinator, UPROSE**

Good morning, my name is Ana Orozco, I am the Climate Justice Policy and Programs Coordinator at UPROSE. We are an environmental and social justice organization based in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, and for decades have mobilized the Sunset Park community around issues of sustainable and just development, participatory planning practices, and governmental accountability. Sunset Park is a waterfront community, and home to the largest Significant Maritime and Industrial Area in New York City, we are also the largest walk-to-work community in the City. Because our waterfront is such a vital part of our community, it is of utmost importance that we protect it and ensure its existence as an industrial waterfront that pays livable salaries to the diverse community that surrounds it, therefore we are happy for the opportunity to weigh in on the issue of expanding the role of the waterfront management advisory board.

Over the years, we have seen many of the city's waterfronts develop into green spaces for family outings and community events, which are positive developments, however when our industrial waterfronts are becoming scarce, it becomes important to preserve what's left for the future of industry as we transition from traditional dirty and polluting manufacturing to the new wave of industry, which is the production of clean and renewable energy.

While we are generally supportive of the proposed new language in section 1303 of chapter 56 of the New York City charter regarding the role of the waterfront management advisory board, we also have some concerns and questions about some particular new additions to this section. Namely, we are concerned about the specific inclusion of representatives from the real estate and hospitality industries as appointed members to the waterfront management advisory board. As previously stated, not all waterfronts serve the same purpose. When it comes to plans for industrial waterfronts, such as ours in Sunset Park, we want to make sure that any recommendations made about our waterfront come from members that represent the current industrial uses our waterfront is zoned for. It is unclear to us whether all appointed members of the board will have an equal say in every matter pertaining to every NYC waterfront. It makes sense to us that recommendations that come from members of the board that represent the current uses of the waterfront in question hold more weight than recommendations coming from representatives from sectors that do not exist in the waterfront in question. In the case of the Sunset Park waterfront, for example, it would only make sense that recommendations coming from representatives of labor and maritime industries hold more weight than recommendations coming from the real estate and hospitality industries, since these are not industries that exist in our industrial waterfront.

With the fast paced commercialization of our Significant Maritime and Industrial Areas, the city is putting our community at risk of losing good paying union jobs and the opportunity to build a climate adaptable future. In short, it is putting our lives at stake to accommodate the needs of a few shortsighted developers who care more about profit than people. The composition of the advisory group will reflect the city's priorities and values.

We are confident that this committee will agree and we look forward to a continued dialogue that will address these concerns and clarify the role of the waterfront management advisory board with regards to each specific waterfront in NYC. Thank you.

**Testimony of Roland Lewis, President and CEO  
New York City Council Legislative Hearing  
Committee on Waterfronts  
May 3, 2016**

**Re: Int. No. 507 Expanding the role of Waterfront Management Advisory Board**

The Waterfront Alliance is a bi-state coalition of more than 900 community and recreational groups, educational institutions, businesses, and other stakeholders committed to restoring and revitalizing the New York and New Jersey waterways. Our waterways have been revitalized with active recreation, environmental education, and waterborne transportation, and the harbor has for centuries been a vital conduit for commerce and an engine of economic development.



The Waterfront Management Advisory Board (WMAB) has a critical role to play to advise the City of New York on waterfront planning and policy. From 2009, when it was re-established by City Council legislation, until late 2013, when it last met, the WMAB served to monitor progress on achieving the City's Waterfront Action Agenda, the 130 priority projects enumerated *Vision 2020: New York City Comprehensive Waterfront Plan*. The WMAB has been a tool to for City agencies to work cooperatively with waterfront stakeholders and civic organizations. It has provided leadership and vision to help transform New York City's waterfront into a vibrant place that supports the needs of our residents, the sustainability of our environment, and the growth of our economy. The WMAB can help ensure that the commitments made by the previous administration are either carried forward or reconsidered and strengthened by the current administration.

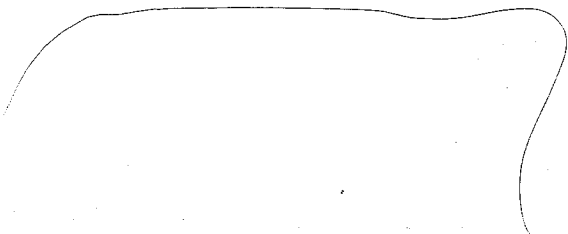
**We call on the de Blasio administration to seize this opportunity to work with the City Council to reconvene the WMAB**, to advise on the implementation of key waterfront initiatives, including the coastal resiliency measures included in the OneNYC sustainability plan and the launch of Citywide Ferry Service set to begin next year. The WMAB must serve as a forum to address some of the other key challenges facing our harbor and waterfronts, including: expanding access to the waterways, protecting and preserving maritime industrial uses, and improving water quality. Moreover, the WMAB can be a focal point for generating solutions to improve governance of our waterfront. The aforementioned challenges cut across multiple, overlapping jurisdiction of City, State, and federal oversight. Our twenty-first century waterfront demands new and better governance that eliminates duplicative functions and provides better coordination and funding to maintain public waterfront infrastructure.

**We support, with caveats, the expansion of the Board to include three new members of the private and non-profit sectors, an additional member of the City Council, and other agency-level ex-officio members.** As currently constituted, the WMAB comprises twelve (12) members, appointed by the Mayor, and represent business and civic leaders and community advocates. Members must represent each borough and include "representatives of labor, the maritime industries, the transportation industries, the real estate industry, and the hospitality industries, as well as environmental and community advocates." These guidelines, as well as the screening process for appointing new members, constrain the possibilities for membership on the board. We recommend that the legislation be revised so that these guidelines are considered advisory, rather than binding, ensuring that the broader community of stakeholders and water users can be represented. In particular, the community of water users—recreational boating clubs, historic vessel operators, and environmental educators, among others—must be considered for membership.

**In order to take full advantage of its diversity of expertise, the WMAB should take an active role in shaping work in progress,** rather than respond to presentations or plans that are more fully formed. From a process standpoint, that may require building capacity within the WMAB itself to meet more frequently than the semi-annual (once every six months) meetings now currently required under the law. The law currently permits the WMAB to create "committees or subcommittees consisting of at least one board member" but no such actions have yet been taken. The WMAB should create a number of subcommittees as well as a steering committee that serve on its behalf to advise administration officials in a more regular capacity. It would be impractical to assert that the WMAB as currently constituted could tackle every single issue facing our harbor and waterfronts. However, a few issue-focused subcommittees or working groups may help focus the activity of the WMAB on a series of key issues, not only to track progress, but to produce better outcomes.

**The waterways do not adhere to political boundaries, and the WMAB should explicitly acknowledge this by taking a regional approach to waterfront management.** In addition to senior representatives of City agencies serving as ex-officio members, representatives from State and federal agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation are invited to participate at WMAB meetings. The proposed legislation codifies this important step, by permitting "representatives of federal, state, or multi-state agencies, authorities, or other instruments to participate as non-voting members." We support the inclusion of bi-state institutions such as the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, as well as other State, municipal, and civic representatives from New Jersey that have a stake in our shared waterways. Mayor de Blasio's OneNYC plan sets out a series of goals for regional planning led by the City of New York.

**We urge the Council and the administration to work together ensure that the WMAB can shape the future of our waterfront as an economic engine and environmental resource for all.** If we fail to provide the WMAB with the necessary tools to leverage the expertise of a broad network of waterfront stakeholders, we will be missing a critical opportunity.



Thank you, Chair Rose for this hearing, for being the co-prime sponsor on Introduction 507, and for the work this committee has done on a broad topic that is important to me and my constituents as well as the City as a whole. I represent Council District 5, which covers 42 blocks of the eastern half of the Upper East Side along the East River as well as Roosevelt Island. Whether it's ensuring the area doesn't flood during hurricanes, to preparing for expanded ferry service, to reviving a crumbling East River Esplanade, waterfront policy is critically important to my district.

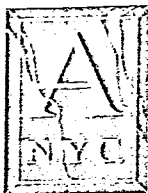
That is why having a strong and functioning Waterfront Management Advisory Board (WMAB) is so important. The Board is a place where every City agency that affects our waterfronts can convene with civic partners to discuss and advance proposals related to flood prevention, park space, tourism, housing, transportation, and amenities. The board was first established in 1977. As best we can tell based on the few records we have, it met infrequently and then fell dormant until this Council revived it via local law in 2009. It unfortunately lies dormant once again, which is why we're here discussing Introduction 507. Although the Board has not met since the beginning of this Administration, I understand from discussions with the Office of Recovery and Resiliency that there is interest in having a fully constituted and active Board.



Introduction 507 expands the membership of the Board to include one additional council member, three additional mayoral appointees, the commissioner of parks and recreation, and the commissioner of housing preservation and development. Recognizing that input from non-city officials is valuable, the bill also permits representatives from federal, state, and bi-state entities to attend and participate in meetings as non-voting members.

I'm looking forward to working alongside our Waterfronts chair and the Office of Recovery and Resiliency to ensure we have a diverse Board that is playing an active role in shaping waterfronts policy for the City.

Thank you again, Chair Rose.



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May 3, 2016

New York City Council's  
Committee on Waterfronts  
250 Broadway, NYC.

Re: Int. No. 507 - Waterfront Management Advisory Board (WMAB)

Dear Council's Committee on Waterfronts,

The Architects Council of New York (ACNY) in our capacity as an umbrella organization in support of the various professional societies within New York City is hereby writing with comments on Council's Committee on Waterfronts.

Resilient sustainable waterfront plan for New York City is an important goal. We support the Council's efforts to promote a comprehensive waterfront plan.

In support of our mutual goals, the ACNY recommends the specific inclusion of professionals in the requirements for the appointed members. Architects, Landscape Architects, Engineers and Environmental Engineers can provide advice and direction into the long term sustainability and resiliency of waterfront development uses and infrastructure issues.

Professionals currently practicing in New York City have invaluable experience and insight into the processes involved with development. The community of Professionals are available to offer candidate members for consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert Strong, RA  
ACNY Vice President  
Director of Legislative Impact

**FOR THE RECORD**

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: May 3, 2016

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ana Orozco  
Address: 166A 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, Brooklyn 11232  
I represent: UPROSE  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 5/3/16

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Name: Roland Lewis  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
I represent: Waterfront Alliance  
Address: 217 Water Street

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
I represent: Waterfront Alliance  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 5/3/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Daniel A. Zarrilli

Address: 253 Broad Way, 10<sup>TH</sup> Fl

I represent: Administration

Address: 253 Brood way 10<sup>TH</sup> Fl

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 5/3/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sean Dixon

Address: 20 Secor Rd, Ossining, NY 10502

I represent: Riverkeeper

Address: same

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: EDWARD KELLY

Address: 17 BATTERY PLACE, NYC, NY 10004

I represent: Maritime Association of the Port of NY/NJ

Address: 17 BATTERY Pl NYC, NY 10004

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Michael Marcella (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 170 B'way

I represent: NYC DCP

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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**THE COUNCIL  
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Appearance Card

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 5/3/16

Name: MAX TAFFET (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 42 CARLTON AVE APT 4R, BK 11205

I represent: NYCEDC

Address: 110 William St., NY, NY

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 507 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 3 May 2016

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARY HABSTRITT

Address: 40 W 77TH ST NYC 10024

I represent: HISTORIC SHIPS COALITION

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rob Buchanan

Address: 251 clermont Ave

I represent: NYC Water Trail

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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