

COMMITTEE ON RESILIENCY AND WATERFRONTS

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON RESILIENCY AND
WATERFRONTS

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Monday, June 13, 2022

Start: 01:08 p.m.

End: 02:31 p.m.

HELD AT: HYBRID HEARING - COUNCIL CHAMBERS -
CITY HALL

B E F O R E: HONORABLE ARI KAGAN
CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Joann Ariola
James F. Gennaro
Christopher Marte
Sandy Nurse
Vickie Paladino

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

Nate Grove
Chief of Waterfront and Marine Operations
Department of Parks and Recreation

Kevin Burns
Section Chief
Bureau of Wastewater Treatment of the New York City
Department of Environmental Protection

Andrew Schwartz
Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel
New York City Department of Small Business Services

Demetrius Katehis
Director or Regulatory Compliance
Bureau of Wastewater Treatment of the New York City
Department of Environmental Protection

Anthony Miranda
New York City Sheriff
New York City Sheriff's Office

Robert Markuske
Instructor
New York Harbor School

Marcel K
Student
New York Harbor School

Daniel Mundy
Vice President
Jamaica Bay Ecowatchers

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

Roger Gendron
President
New Hamilton Beach Civic Association

Mauricio Gonzalez
Instructor
New York Harbor School

Anna Sheehan
Student
New York Harbor School

Arlo Kane
Student
New York Harbor School

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS 1: All sergeants please start
3 your recordings.

4 RECORDING VOICE: Recording in progress.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS 1: PC recording is done. Cloud
6 recording is done. Good afternoon, everyone.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS 2: Starting live stream. Just
8 give me a second, Pedro. (INAUDIBLE)

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS 1: Okay, live stream is up.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS 2: Live stream is on.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS 1: Thank you. Good afternoon,
12 everyone. Welcome to today's hybrid New York City
13 Council meeting of the Committee on Resiliency and
14 Waterfronts. At this time, can all panelists please
15 turn on your videos? To minimize disruption, please
16 place electronic devices to vibrate or silent.

17 If you wish to submit testimony, you may send it
18 to testimony@council.nyc.gov. Again, that's
19 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you for your
20 cooperation. Chair, we are ready to begin.

21 [GAVEL]

22 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Good afternoon. My name is Ari
23 Kagan and I have the privilege of chairing the
24 Committee on Resiliency and Waterfronts. I would like

2 to welcome each one of you to today's hearing on
3 abandoned boats along the waterfront.

4 The New York Harbor has a long history of
5 abandoned vessels. Boats are abandoned for many
6 different reasons including structural damage from
7 storms, collisions, and accidental groundings,
8 commercial obsolescence, and the financial burden of
9 maintaining these boats. Once abandoned, these
10 vessels may become navigational and safety hazards,
11 can be a source of environmental contamination, pose
12 a health hazard to those who are near them, may
13 become an attractive illegal dump sites, and may even
14 harm the (INAUDIBLE) quality of surrounding area.

15 This is the start of what is predicted to be a
16 very active hurricane season. This problem could
17 become even worse. I saw firsthand the state of our
18 water ways and shorelines after Super Storm Sandy
19 including in Coney Island, Seagate, Sheepshead Bay
20 and many other areas in south of Brooklyn and
21 citywide including in Howard Beach, and was involved
22 with the effort to remove some derelict boats and
23 marine debris. We want to ensure that city waterways
24 are there for the public to use and to enjoy, not as
25 a receptacle for garbage.

2 The New York City Department of Parks and
3 Recreation estimated that upwards of 500 abandoned
4 boats are located now along the City shorelines, but
5 as recreational boaters, elected officials, and
6 environmental advocates have stated, it is a nearly
7 impossible task to determine the exact number of
8 abandoned boats, partly because there is no single
9 agency that is responsible for their removal. I
10 remember my own efforts, too many agencies involved
11 and sometimes they do not coordinate with each other
12 in these efforts. That's why we need this hearing in
13 the first place. This can cause confusion when
14 determining who to contact to report an abandoned
15 boat issue.

16 The US Army Corps of Engineers coordinates its
17 wreck removal program with the US Coast Guard and
18 removes wrecked and sunken vessels that pose a hazard
19 to navigation. The US Coast Guard on behalf of the
20 Secretary of Homeland Security can also remove barges
21 from federal waters if this barge is greater than 100
22 gross tons and is abandoned for more than 45 days.
23 But the Coast Guard generally will not remove these
24 barges unless it is an emergency, or the removal can
25 be done at no cost to Coast Guard.

1 The New York State Mitigation Law authorizes the
2 Sheriff to take possession of wreck property in the
3 name of the state, but this authority is primarily
4 directed at the property found within the wrecks, not
5 the vessels themselves.

6 The New York City Department of Small Business
7 Services has primary jurisdiction over the city's
8 waterfront and is authorized to remove any floating
9 or sunken vessels obstructing a wharf, to sell it, if
10 it is unclaimed for 40 days, and usually, they're
11 much more than 40 days, and to destroy or dispose of
12 unclaimed vessels.

13 The NYPD Harbor Unit also deals with abandoned
14 boats or boats that have broken away from their
15 moorings. If the boat is derelict and has little
16 value, then the Harbor Unit arranges with Department
17 of Sanitation to have the boat delivered to one of
18 the Department of Sanitation facilities for disposal.

19 Removing abandoned or wrecked boats is also very,
20 very expensive and can cost \$7,000 or more depending
21 on the type of boat. Some states have a dedicated
22 funding source to pay to remove or dispose these
23 abandoned boats. New York is not one of these states,
24 unfortunately.

2 Even with all of these challenges surrounding
3 removing abandoned vessels, agencies at each level of
4 government as well as private citizens and advocacy
5 groups like the American Littoral Society have helped
6 to remove boats and debris from the City's waterways.

7 The Council and this Committee look forward to
8 continuing this important work to make our City more
9 livable, more beautiful, and more enjoyable. Today,
10 you'll hear Intro number 210 by Council Members
11 Ariola and Brooks-Powers. This bill will require the
12 creation of the Office of Marine Debris Disposal and
13 Vessel Surrendering. Thank God we had this idea and
14 our great colleagues.

15 We will also hear Intro number 461 by Council
16 Members Ariola and Borelli. This bill will require
17 the Department of Small Business Services to create
18 and maintain a log of abandoned boats and their
19 locations in the City littoral waters. This bill will
20 also require the removal of abandoned boats from the
21 City's littoral waters.

22 We look forward to hearing from the Sheriff, the
23 Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of
24 Small Business Services, and the Department of
25 Environmental Protection during today's hearing, and

2 working together to help ensure that City waterways
3 are safe and beautiful.

4 Before we begin, I would like to thank my
5 Committee Staff, Senior Committee Counsel, Jessica
6 Steinberg Albin. Thank you so much. Policy Analyst,
7 Patrick Mulvihill, Senior Finance Analyst, Jonathon
8 Seltzer and my Legislative and Budget Director, Ather
9 Tirmizi, for all their hard work putting this hearing
10 together.

11 I will now turn it over to Council Member Ariola
12 to talk about her bills.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Thank you, Chair and thank
14 you for being a sponsor on this bill as well. Thanks
15 to the hard work and dedication of groups like the
16 Jamaica Bay Ecowatchers, the American Littoral
17 Society, and many others, we've begun to see a
18 renaissance in our waters. On any given day, at
19 Rockaway Beach, you're sure to catch a glimpse of a
20 bottlenose dolphin flipping through the ocean near
21 the shoreline as marine life returns to the area.
22 Water quality is better than it's ever been at any
23 point in living memory and residents and visitors
24 alike are able to engage in our bays and rivers in
25 ways previously thought impossible.

1 These Intros seek to build upon this rebirth of
2
3 New York's waterways and ensure that we can continue
4 moving forward to make the City a better, cleaner
5 place for all of us to enjoy.

6 They would create a brand-new Office of Marine
7 Debris Disposal and Vessel Surrendering which would
8 be responsible for coordinating cleanup efforts
9 across the City, removing abandoned boats, marine
10 debris from our beaches and our shorelines.

11 Additionally, this Office would develop programs to
12 encourage boat owners to dispose of their vessels
13 responsibly through the City's programs rather than
14 abandon them as many have had in the past. The City
15 would then recycle these boats or use them for
16 educational programs or auction them off, at least
17 the ones that are in good condition.

18 520 miles of shoreline around New York City has
19 been plagued with derelict vessels and littered with
20 marine debris for decades. There has been little
21 enforcement in the past and I'm hoping for an Office
22 of, or Division, in the current agency dedicated, or
23 creating an agency, that can deal with this problem
24 and decipher which agency or government purview it
25

2 falls under so that the proper fines for dumping
3 could be given to the owner of the vessels.

4 I look forward to working with the New York City
5 Parks Department, the Department of Small Business
6 Administration, and the Office of the City Sheriff to
7 create a comprehensive, dedicated program to deal
8 with the issues that are polluting our waterways.
9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you Council Member
11 Ariola. I also would like to acknowledge my great
12 colleagues, Council Member Marte and Council Member
13 Nurse. Thank you for joining us today.

14 I would like to now to turn it over to our
15 Committee Counsel, Jessica Steinberg Albin, to go
16 over some of procedural items.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL STEINBERG ALBIN: Thank you,
18 Chair. I am Jessica Steinberg Albin, Counsel to the
19 Resiliency and Waterfronts Committee of the New York
20 City Council. Before we begin, I want to remind
21 members of the public who are testifying remotely
22 that you will be on mute until you are called on to
23 testify, when you will be unmuted by the host. Please
24 listen for your name to be called. The first panelist
25 to give testimony today will be from the

2 administration, New York City Sheriff Anthony
3 Miranda, Nate Grove, Chief of Waterfront and Marine
4 Operations of the Department of Parks and Recreation,
5 Andrew Schwartz, Deputy Commissioner and General
6 Counsel for the New York City Department of Small
7 Business Services, Kevin Burns, Section Chief for the
8 Bureau of Wastewater Treatment of the New York City
9 Department of Environmental Protection, and Dimitrius
10 Katehis, Director of Regulatory Compliance for the
11 Bureau of Wastewater Treatment of the New York City
12 Department of Environmental Protection.

13 I will now administer the oath to the
14 administration. Please raise your right hands. Do you
15 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and
16 nothing but the truth before these Committees [VOICE
17 BREAK], excuse me, and to respond honestly to Council
18 Member questions? Sheriff Miranda? Is your mic on?

19 SHERIFF MIRANDA: Yes.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL STEINBERG ALBIN: Thank you.

21 Nate Grove?

22 CHIEF GROVE: Yes.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL STEINBERG ALBIN: Deputy
24 Commissioner Andrew Schwartz?

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHWARTZ: Yes.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL STEINBERG ALBIN: Kevin Burns?

3 SECTION CHIEF BURNS: Yes.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL STEINBERG ALBIN: Okay. Can you
5 just speak into the microphone? I don't know if, we
6 have to register it on the Zoom.

7 SECTION CHIEF BURNS: Yes.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL STEINBERG ALBIN: Thank you.

9 And Dimitrius Katehis?

10 DIRECTOR KATEHIS: Yes.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL STEINBERG ALBIN: Thank you. You
12 may begin when ready.

13 SHERIFF MIRANDA: Okay. Good afternoon Chairman
14 Kagan and Members of the Committee for Resiliency and
15 Waterfronts as well as City Council Members that are
16 present. I am Sheriff Anthony Miranda. My testimony
17 today relates to Intro 461 of '22, the role of
18 Navigation Law, article 10 and the City's current
19 practices of marine debris removal.

20 Intro 461 of '22 would require the City's
21 Department of Small Business Services to create a log
22 of abandoned vessels and their location within the
23 City. The proposed legislation would also require the
24 Department of Finance to the New York City Sheriff's
25 Office to inspect and identify abandoned vessels in

1 the City's littoral waters and develop a system to
2 which Deputy Sheriff assesses and removes these
3 abandoned vessels.
4

5 As I will describe in further detail, Sheriffs in
6 New York state engage in certain vessel recovery
7 operations, pursuant to navigation law. Navigation
8 law, article 10: a subset of vessels and their cargo,
9 referred to as wrecks or shipwrecks, are subject to a
10 detailed state law framework with respect to the
11 salvage under article 10 under New York state law.

12 The state legislature enacted article 10 of the state
13 navigation law in 1941. Article 10 has remained
14 substantially unchanged since that time. Earlier
15 (INAUDIBLE) suggested the predecessor provisions of
16 the law now codified in article 10 date back to 1871.
17 In total, the disposition proceedings of shipwrecks
18 set forth in navigation law appear to have remained
19 substantially the same for the past 150 years.

20 Article 10 statutory framework includes details
21 regarding the seizing, storing, appraising,
22 advertising, and disposing of proceeds of wrecks. The
23 wreck provisions are indeed archaic, time consuming,
24 and cumbersome. The age in which these types of
25 commercial vessels is operated ended long ago, but

the state legislator has not made adjustments to account for the disposal of pleasure vessels, which are much more common today.

Today's pleasure boats have none of the value of the cargo from the time in the legislation conceived. The modern reality has disrupted the equilibrium calibrated by article 10 in which the salvage costs of the sale of a vessel compensated the public for the recovery. However, the Sheriff still is required by law to follow the article 10 statutory framework for the disposal and applicable, for applicable shipwrecks.

Even among cargo vessels, the economics of article 10 appear to be unfavorable for the City. For example, the Office seized the MB, the John B Caddell on December 11, 2012. The Caddell wreck was a 185-foot tanker discovered hard aground on October 29, 2012 in Richmond County as a result of Hurricane Sandy. The Caddell wreck was ultimately sold by the Sheriff pursuant to a court order at a net loss of \$10,501.89. This loss would have been greater in the, if the Coast Guard had not towed the wreck at its own expense as an environmental hazard. The sea tow costs

bored by the Coast Guard were estimated over \$400,000.

If the City, if the City were to seek to expand the range of vessels that the Sheriff must collect, it would require additional resources in order to be successful. The City has facilitated the removal of marine debris from the water bodies within its jurisdiction to provide context, the City as a municipal corporation is the single largest owner of shoreline throughout New York City and handles much of the marine debris that is not removed by the Federal Army Corps of Engineers or private property owners.

Of course this work is dependent on our ability to identify available resources and funding. In the wake of Super Storm Sandy, the City worked with the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency to secure funding for the removal of maritime debris throughout the five Boroughs. The City was also the single largest recipient of a national competitive grant administered by the United States Department of Commerce, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for Sandy related marine debris

removal. This grant allowed the City to complete millions of dollars of marine clean up work citywide.

To speed up work, the City's Department of Parks and Recreation secured a Borough-wide marine debris removal permit from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in 2015 which has enabled the Department of Parks and Recreation and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection to remove over 4,500 cubic yards of marine debris over the last few years. Much of it is located throughout the southern Brooklyn and Jamaica Bay.

A significant portion of this work has been made possible through discretionary funding provided by local City Council Members, for which we are very grateful. In addition, to accomplish this work, the City, via the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, established the City's first ever marine debris removal requirements contract in 2014.

As funding becomes available, the standing contract with predetermined costs and requirements provides an intimate mechanism, and immediate mechanism for any City agency to manage marine debris removals throughout the City as needs arise.

2 I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak
3 in front of you and I want to turn it over now to my
4 colleague in the Park Department.

5 CHIEF GROVE: Thank you, Sheriff Miranda. Um, that
6 was very convenient, uh. You've basically covered my
7 testimony as well, so thank you for that. You've
8 saved me for, uh, more Q and A, but, uh, I think, uh,
9 Sheriff Miranda summed that up well, and, uh,
10 incorporated both our testimonies. So, if there's,
11 uh, anything from SBS, otherwise we look forward to
12 your questions and answers.

13 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: That was good and quick. I
14 also would like, uh, to acknowledge, uh, the presence
15 of my colleague, Council Member and Majority Whip,
16 uh, Selvena Brooks-Powers. I also wanted to give her
17 a chance here to talk about Intro number 210.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you, Chair,
19 and good afternoon everyone. Um, thank you also to
20 Committee staff for facilitating today's hearing. I'm
21 glad to be here, um, to speak in support of the bills
22 we are discussing today. New Yorkers deserve a clean
23 coastline. Our City consists of islands and coastal
24 communities, 75% of Council districts are on the
25 City's shorefront.

2 Maintaining a clean waterfront is a universal
3 issue that benefits all of us, impacting our climate,
4 public health, and tourism alike. Councilwoman Ariola
5 and I are proud to represent the Rockaway Peninsula
6 in City Hall. Our districts share Jamaica Bay, a gem
7 among New York's natural preserves.

8 Unfortunately, there are some bad actors that see
9 the waters of Jamaica Bay as the perfect to abandon
10 their old boats and barges. Some owners just punch a
11 hole in the hull and let the vessel sink. This marine
12 debris is dirty and unsightly and it destroys our
13 local environment. New York needs a better way to
14 keep our marine ecosystems clean.

15 One of the main issues that my community has
16 encountered when trying to remove boats is that the
17 cost and logistical requirements of boat removal can
18 be substantial. And multiple agencies at all levels
19 of government have difficulty coordinating with each
20 other to get the job done. We need to make it easier
21 for boat owners to surrender their boats, but we also
22 need to make it much clearer which agency is
23 primarily responsible for the job.

24 So, I'm pleased to partner with Councilwoman
25 Ariola on Intro 210 which will establish an office to

1 coordinate the removal and recycling of marine debris
2 from our City's waters and to recommend new programs
3 for people to surrender their boats for disposal. I
4 believe this bill is an important step in tackling
5 such a pervasive issue that impacts the environmental
6 wellbeing many of our City's coastal communities, um,
7 face, all while offering educational opportunities.

9 I look forward to hearing from the agencies on
10 their perspectives and have a few questions. Um, and
11 ask the agencies to describe the challenges that they
12 currently face in coordinating boat removal. And boat
13 abandonment occurs across the shorelines of all five
14 boroughs. Do the agencies foresee in, any obstacles
15 to implementation like the wide geographic spread of
16 the problem, establishing a central disposal site, or
17 any other issues? And thank you, Chair.

18 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you Majority Whip and
19 Council Member, uh, Brooks-Powers. I have a few
20 questions to administration, if you don't mind. So,
21 my first question is about statistics, pure
22 statistics. Do you have an approximate number how
23 many abandoned vessels right now in our City's
24 waterways?

2 CHIEF GROVE: Sure, I can speak to that Council
3 Member. Thank you, Chair. Again, I'm Nate Grove,
4 Chief of Citywide waterfront and marine operations
5 for New York City Parks. SO, um, as, as we all know
6 New York City is an archipelago. We've got over 520
7 miles of linear shoreline here in New York City.
8 That's more than Boston, Miami, Los Angeles, and San
9 Francisco combined.

10 Um, so, waterway debris finds its way onto our
11 shores on an ongoing basis, particularly after
12 extreme weather events. While there is no singular
13 agency or entity with the resources to consistently
14 track the issue of marine debris citywide, the City
15 does collaborate among its sister agencies, partner
16 groups, as well as our counterparts at the state and
17 federal levels in tracking issues as they arise.

18 Parks, as stewards of 160 miles or over 30% of
19 New York City's shoreline, records waterway and
20 shoreline debris throughout our park system. Our
21 natural resources group who care for and maintain
22 many of our natural areas as well as our partner
23 groups such as Jamaica Bay Ecowatchers, Jamaica Bay
24 and Rockaway Parks Conservancy, Coney Island Creek
25 Beautification Project, and the American Littoral

2 Society report instances of marine debris to us on an
3 ongoing basis for tracking as well.

4 Finally, we also communicate consistently with
5 our partner agencies at the City, state, and federal
6 levels. We are frequently in contact with US Army
7 Corps, Coast Guard, and the National Parks Service
8 regarding marine debris issues. New York State
9 Department of Environmental Conservation performs
10 some (INAUDIBLE) patrolling for environmental issues
11 as well. We also receive reports from our emergency
12 response agencies, NYPD Harbor Patrol and FDNY Marine
13 Unit. So, there are quite a few eyes and ears out on
14 New York City waterways with whom we remain in
15 frequent contact on these issues.

16 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: So you cannot give approximate
17 number right now?

18 CHIEF GROVE: Well, um, sure, Chair. We, we, we
19 get asked that quite a bit. Um, unfortunately most of
20 it's just anecdotal. When you take into account,
21 again.

22 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: But hundreds or thousands?
23 We're talking about hundreds or thousands?

24 CHIEF GROVE: Uh, when you talk about marine
25 debris, um, you've got thousands of cubic yards of

2 debris, of, of debris out there, sure, um, and other
3 large floatables.

4 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: So, I will, so the next
5 question is, if someone notices floating barge or
6 floating vessel for the, for many weeks, months, and
7 sometimes years, what is the next step? Probably
8 calling 311. And then what agency, Parks, Sanitation,
9 Small Business Services, Sheriff? So, what's going to
10 happen next after this call by someone who see,
11 because I was involved myself and it was a very long
12 and tedious process.

13 CHIEF GROVE: Sure, and I think, uh, Sheriff
14 Miranda, um, summed it up well, or, or gave some of
15 the, the landscape out there on our waterways, but,
16 um, I want to be clear as it relates to our
17 waterways, it's the US Army Corps of Engineers who's
18 responsible for responding to any floatables or
19 obstructions that might pose a hazard to federally
20 maintained navigation channels.

21 We also discussed US Coast Guard. They are
22 mandated and have resources to address leaking fuels
23 and oils. Coast Guard, however, does not remove nor
24 dispose of vessels. So while the Army Corps maintains
25 the aquatic highways, as, as it were, um, items

2 outside of the federal channels, on the aquatic off
3 ramps, side roads, driveways are the responsibility
4 fo the property owner. So you'll find City agencies
5 including Parks, Sanitation, and DEP coordinate
6 marine debris removals from all City owned properties
7 when possible, either via existing in-house resources
8 or via private vendor contracting when funding
9 becomes available.

10 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: I would like to acknowledge
11 another, uh, colleague, uh, Council Member Vickie
12 Paladino. She is present online and she's
13 participating in our hearing as well. Um, my next
14 question is like, after vessel is removed from the
15 water, what happens next?

16 CHIEF GROVE: Sure, um, I can speak to that.
17 Marine debris and other large floatables once on land
18 need to be properly drained of all oils, antifreeze,
19 and other synthetic fluids. This work must be done
20 while preventing any fluids leaking onto water or
21 land. Marine debris is typically compacted into 30
22 yard dumpster containers and brought to a DEC
23 certified waste disposal location.

24 So, do you know approximately how much would it
25 cost to remove one boat and do you know, like, um,

2 funding from what agency would be used, uh, again,
3 Parks and Recreations, Sheriff's Office, Sanitation,
4 cause money involved, so who is paying for this?

5 CHIEF GROVE: Well, the cost depends on the means
6 and methods that are employed. Like, like I
7 described, much of the debris removal performed by
8 the City is accomplished by in-house labor so the
9 Parks Department and Department of Sanitation, for
10 instance, will, when possible, remove items that are
11 reachable by land. In other instances, for larger
12 items that are not reachable by land and require
13 mobilization of on-water equipment, the City will
14 seek to have the removals performed by a private
15 contract, funding provided.

16 The cost and duration of the removal efforts are
17 dependent on the scope of the work. For a single item
18 that is lodged on Pelham Bay Park Shoreline and is
19 threatening Orchard Beach swimmers, for instance,
20 Parks can often remove such items with existing in-
21 house resources.

22 For a larger cleanup effort, like the One Parks
23 Natural Resources Group recently completed as part of
24 the Four Sparrow Marsh Preserve Restoration in Mill
25 Basin, the work can take many weeks and will often

involve outside vendors with specialized equipment.

One project that we, we, uh, teamed up with DEP, uh, they were the lead agency, uh, was due to a state-mandated environmental benefit project on order of consent which involved the removal and disposal of several thousand cubic yards of marine debris and other large floatables throughout Coney Island Creek and multiple inlets off Jamaica bay several years ago.

CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: How much is the fine to the owner of the boat, if you can identify whose boat is floating for, for months or maybe years? So, how much is the fine today to this person if you know already the name and you identified who is owner of that floating boat?

CHIEF GROVE: Sure, well, I, I want to be clear, whenever marine debris is discovered, the first thing we do is seek to locate the owner. Uh, if we can locate a registration number, for instance, we seek to identify the owner through the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles. Um, but unfortunately, there are usually complicating factors that render it difficult to find an owner, so including that often people will physically remove any identifying

2 markings or such markings have just worn off
3 naturally.

4 Um, so you asked about the fines, on City Park
5 land, for instance, we have our Parks Enforcement
6 Patrol, which can order, um, issue, uh, environmental
7 control board summons, or ECBs and they start at
8 \$1,100 depending on the number of infractions.

9 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Okay, so. So, it looks like a
10 lot of agencies involved, but how many employees are
11 involved in taking away, to remove one abandoned
12 vessel, talking about like five people, 10 people or
13 more?

14 CHIEF GROVE: Well, take you out into the field at
15 some point and you can get a look yourself. But it
16 really, again, Chair, depends on what the scope of
17 the work is, how difficult the item is to reach.
18 There's, there's all kinds of, um, factors that you
19 need to take into account, the ecological sensitivity
20 of the area. So, a simple item like I described on,
21 say, on Pelham Bay Park, where our Park's crews can
22 get up there with their wreckers and their packers,
23 hip waders, and drag it off, you know, the shoreline
24 there, uh, that can take maybe four, five, six, six
25 of our crew members to get that off the shoreline.

2 Other more delicate work that might, uh, require
3 on water mobilization in ecologically sensitive
4 areas, you can see a crew as big as 12 people, often
5 private vendors working on that sort of, uh, job
6 site.

7 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you. And do you do any
8 out, do you make any outreach to boat owners today so
9 they would know the dangers of abandoning the boat,
10 the price they will pay, that is creates not just
11 inconvenience to everybody, but they will pay hefty
12 fine? DO they know about it? Do you send some kind of
13 notices, information, outreach?

14 CHIEF GROVE: We do. Um, Parks, and I think that's
15 why I, I tend to be the one speaking the most here,
16 but, uh, um, Parks, you know, we have a dozen plus
17 marinas located citywide. We also have dozens and
18 dozens of kayak launches and human powered boat
19 launches, um, so we're the primary agency providing
20 public boating opportunities here in New York City.

21 Each year we distribute clean marina and boating
22 best practices to hundreds of our boating permittees.
23 These materials are also available to the boating
24 public via Park's boating and marina section of our
25 website. We also provide a list of vendors that can

2 perform marine debris removal and disposal for anyone
3 who requests it.

4 So I would like to ask a question to Small
5 Business Services, because not everybody knows that
6 Small Business Services is involved in this process,
7 especially when we are talking about selling these
8 boats, getting some kind of money, not just spending
9 taxpayers money, but, uh, selling these boats,
10 either, uh, eligible to be, to be sold. So, what is
11 the process? How does it work? How much money a year
12 for example, uh, Department of Small Business
13 Services, uh, in revenue bring in to the City of New
14 York from selling these, uh, boats?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHWARTZ: Uh, thank you
16 Council Member and Small Business Services certainly
17 shares the goals here of the clean waterfront. I
18 would say we have not been in the business of doing
19 those sales of boats. So, um, you probably know Small
20 Business Services for, uh, workforce development,
21 neighborhood and helping small businesses, but there
22 is this last piece that, uh, we're successor to the,
23 the old Department of Ports and Trade which was, uh,
24 dissolved about 30 years ago that left us with a

2 waterfront permitting process and jurisdiction over
3 city-owned, uh, waterfront property.

4 And we do have some revenue from the permitting,
5 but it's, uh, through this process, that occasionally
6 we will be made aware of, uh, debris, and we want to
7 assist any way we can. And usually it's by con, uh,
8 contacting our, uh, sister agencies, I think as the
9 Sheriff's testimony, and, uh, Nate Grove has, has
10 made out here, it's a complicated, uh, process.

11 Um, we certainly have property under management,
12 too. If the property is on it, we'll work with our,
13 uh, property managers at the Economic Development
14 Corporation to address it, much in the way Parks
15 does, and in the same way that, uh, the City does
16 control a lot of the property, whether it's DEP,
17 Sanitation, SBS, Parks, so, as, as, responsible
18 property managers, they will generally address it.

19 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: As you know, Intro number 461
20 requires Department of Small Business Services to
21 create and maintain a log of abandoned boats and
22 their locations. Would you be able to do so? How
23 difficult is it to, to have this information, you
24 know, like public information, specific log of all
25

2 these abandoned boats, I would say inventory of
3 abandoned boats.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHWARTZ: Yeah, that, that
5 would be a new one for us, certainly. Um, you know,
6 certainly we want to assist in, uh, achieving the
7 goals here. Uh, something on the details though of
8 that maintaining that log that we do want to talk
9 further with the other agencies and maybe with
10 Council staff as well as how we can best accomplish
11 the goals of that in terms of, um, you know, how much
12 follow up there is on that type of log, whether it
13 would raise any of the questions that have been laid
14 out under the state navigation law and possibly, you
15 know, don't want it to complicate what we are already
16 doing or, or having more agencies involved in the
17 mix, but.

18 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: But do you support the idea of
19 this main goal of this bill is to, to create such a,
20 a log of abandoned boats and their locations in New
21 York City.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHWARTZ: Chair, we support
23 the overall goal of getting the waterfront clean of
24 this problem. But I don't know yet whether this is,
25 uh, the best thing for it.

2 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: And do you have an idea how
3 much it would cost to do it, like, because, I know
4 it's expensive proposition, but still, you, you, it's
5 much easier to have, much cheaper to, to do
6 everything in order today than to, you know, to
7 create, to create the situation when you cannot say
8 what is going on and where and how much?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHWARTZ: Yeah, that, that
10 would have to assessed in terms of personnel or OTPS
11 and also, I guess it reflects going out into the
12 water a bit which is a capability we don't have at
13 the current time.

14 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you. So, one more
15 question, of course, about Intro 210 which it
16 requires, uh, Mayor to create an Office of Marine
17 Debris Disposal and Vessel Surrendering. Do you
18 support this bill, in general? Do you support this
19 bill?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SCHWARTZ: Um, well, I'll,
21 I'll say that it's, um, to, to be frank, it, it's,
22 it's, uh, it's a bit beyond, the creation of a new
23 Mayoral Office is a bit beyond the purview of Parks,
24 the Sheriff's, or SBS, um. We wouldn't be
25 specifically involved in the establishment of a new

2 Mayoral office. That said, I'm thinking as you've
3 heard today, we've demonstrated a clear commitment to
4 this issue, and we look forward to further
5 collaboration and ideas on how to continue to improve
6 this, on this good work that we're doing.

7 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you. I strongly believe
8 that we need coordination of all agencies and all
9 efforts. It will help tremendously to coordinate not
10 just inside the City of New York but even these
11 federal and state agencies that you mentioned today.

12 SHERIFF MIRANDA: Coordination is extremely
13 important for all the activities. Again, we are all
14 in keeping with the goals. The goals are very
15 important to clean the waterways. We understand that
16 the, um, the challenges that we're facing, it does
17 require us to, uh, again, we're coordinating as it is
18 on the issues on an ongoing basis, on a case to case
19 basis as they develop. And we'll continue that
20 relationship in building forward.

21 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Okay. So, now I wanted to ask
22 questions about skim boats. So, do you know how, how
23 many skim boats are currently clearing up city's
24 waterways? I saw some of them working in,
25 particularly I saw at Sheepshead Bay. But maybe you

2 can tell us how many skim boats, I know that not so
3 much?

4 SECTION CHIEF BURNS: Good afternoon. Yeah, we, we
5 have, uh, three skimmer vessels. Uh, one's a 45 foot
6 vessel. The other two are 60 feet, um, that work
7 pretty much seven days a week. Um, we skim, uh, CSO
8 containments, uh, one to two times a week. So, what
9 we have is, uh, 23 dedicated CSO sites, that's, uh,
10 combined two overflows that we boom or have nets at.
11 Uh, and, and this all came about, um, after the ocean
12 dumping ban of the late '80s, early '90s. You know,
13 we, we, we stopped dumping in the ocean in the summer
14 of, uh, '92, was, uh, the end of June '92.

15 Um, you know, we have one problem, uh, licked,
16 but there is still is a lot of floatables in the
17 water. So, we did an analysis in the early '90s and
18 we found that if we dedicated, uh, booms at 23 of
19 these sites, we would cover about 83,000 acres of
20 drainage area around New York City. So, uh, since,
21 since '92 when we started, uh, it certainly decreased
22 the amount of floatables that we now capture with the
23 skimmer vessels. Um, I'll say the skimmer vessels
24 don't do open water skimming so much. It's really for
25

2 the dedicated CSO sites that we do some open water
3 skimming.

4 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: But, so, how many total skim
5 boats do we have today?

6 SECTION CHIEF BURNS: Three, three skimmer
7 vessels.

8 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Three?

9 SECTION CHIEF BURNS: And we have, uh.

10 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: That's exactly what I say.

11 SECTION CHIEF BURNS: Yeah.

12 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Like, definitely not enough.

13 So, how much is each skim boat, how much does it cost
14 to operate one?

15 SECTION CHIEF BURNS: Well, we have one in
16 procurement right now. It's, uh, almost \$2 million.

17 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: \$2 million to operate one skim
18 boat.

19 SECTION CHIEF BURNS: Yeah.

20 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Because I saw how they
21 operate, specifically I saw myself at Sheepshead Bay
22 I saw, and it's very effective. So, three skim boats
23 for the entire City of New York, it's clearly not
24 enough.

25 SECTION CHIEF BURNS: No.

2 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: So, clearly not enough.

3 SECTION CHIEF BURNS: No, no, and, and, they're
4 just dedicated to very small areas, um, you know.
5 It's a giant waterway system. You know, it wouldn't
6 be enough.

7 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: So, the next question is like
8 already practically answered. How often are these
9 boats are conducting their clean up operations? If
10 you have only three skim boats, so how often can they
11 clean a specific area?

12 SECTION CHIEF BURNS: So, it depends on the site.
13 Some sites have more debris than others. Uh, it
14 depends on, uh, you know, weather, rain fall mainly.
15 Um, so I, I would say one to two times a week we
16 would do a cleanup at one of the 23 sites.

17 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Two times a week in one area.

18 SECTION CHIEF BURNS: In all the areas, it would
19 go out twice a week to clean.

20 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Twice a week.

21 SECTION CHIEF BURNS: Yeah.

22 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Three skim boats all over the
23 New York City (INAUDIBLE).

24 SECTION CHIEF BURNS: In, in just in the dedicated
25 23 CSO sites.

2 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: You want to add something?

3 DIRECTOR KATEHIS: Yes, I, I just wanted to, um,
4 make sure we, um confirmed to Council that these are
5 target facilities. The skim boats, uh, the skim boats
6 only target the combined sewer overflow netting or
7 boom sites. These are very specialized vessels as you
8 most probably have seen yourself.

9 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Yes.

10 DIRECTOR KATEHIS: With really small mouths.
11 They're not really intended to pick up debris in open
12 water. They're intended to go into the boom, raise
13 their platform, and collect the material that's in
14 the boom itself.

15 They're also very long vessels. They're 60 foot
16 long vessels, so they're not really maneuverable, so
17 they're very targeted for these CSO facilities to
18 remove those floatables and they've been very
19 effective in terms of targeting their mission.

20 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Uh, do, do you have any
21 statistics? I'm a little bit biased because I'm from
22 southern Brooklyn, and I represent Coney Island,
23 Seagate. How many times did you clean up in Coney
24 Island there, if ever?

2 SECTION CHIEF BURNS: There are some sites that,
3 that really do not have any floatables and we're
4 within an agreement right now, uh, with the DEC to
5 remove four booms, uh, within the next year, and
6 we're going to do open water skimming at these sites.

7 Uh, to answer your question, we, we collected
8 2,000 cubic yards, uh, up until about 10 years ago
9 and now we're averaging closer to 350 cubic yards.
10 So, uh, the CSOs don't collect floatables like they
11 did in the past and, and, and, that's for a lot of
12 reasons, mainly the street cleaning is much better
13 now and our catch basins are cleaned, uh, more often
14 so they don't have a chance, uh, for floatables to
15 get out into the waterway.

16 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Have you ever raised this
17 issue with Council, with Mayor, that you need more
18 skim boats than three for New York City?

19 DIRECTOR KATEHIS: Uh, well, if you'll allow me.

20 SECTION CHIEF BURNS: Yeah.

21 DIRECTOR KATHEIS: If you don't mind, Kevin. Um,
22 the, the, the skim boats that we do have are really
23 targeted for the CSO facilities so the number of skim
24 boats, the number of skim boats we currently have are
25 adequate to meet our CSO clean up needs. Um, part of

2 the challenge with the, the waters around New York
3 City, uh, with, um, skimming vessels is that a lot of
4 these skimming vessels are intended for lakes, or
5 streams, relatively calm waters.

6 Uh, we're interesting here in New York that we
7 don't really have those very calm water. We have an
8 estuary environment, and, um, as a result, the, the
9 technologies that are out there right now for
10 skimming large surfaces, are not really applicable to
11 us.

12 However, we do have an active research and
13 development pilot that we started and we're in the
14 stages of procuring now, to test, uh, these smaller
15 vessels that are far more maneuverable and can
16 attempt to collect material, that, as you can
17 imagine, collects because of current, because of the
18 wind, in specific areas where these larger vessels,
19 uh, cannot even enter those spots. So, we look
20 forward to telling you more as, uh, this, uh, pilot
21 program matures.

22 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Got it. Probably last
23 question. So, if someone see abandoned boat floating
24 in, in any of the waterways in New York City and the
25 person calls 311, what's, what's happening with this

2 call? Does it go to Parks and Recreation? Does it go
3 to Sheriff's? Where, if person calls 311 to say, "Oh,
4 I see a floating, old, abandoned boat," what's
5 happening next?

6 CHIEF GROVE: Not to usurp our friends at DEP, but
7 I tend to be the recipient. Even on the train ride
8 over, I was getting an email from southeast Bronx.

9 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Oh.

10 CHIEF GROVE: Where we've done some work up there.
11 Um, so, they, they, um, ultimately 311 knows, and I
12 do encourage the public to call 311, um, the
13 appropriate City agency, the property owner, it gets
14 routed to them. More often, it probably gets routed
15 to Parks, um, and then we can work with our
16 counterparts at the appropriate City agency to, uh,
17 look into the issue.

18 I also want to say, while we're in the, the
19 public messaging, uh, domain, if it is, if it does
20 seem to be a navigation risk, I'm also going to point
21 out, again, Army Corps. They are, they are great
22 partners in this, even if it isn't immediately, but
23 it could present a risk if it were to come loose,
24 they can be responsive. And then DEC has a 24 hour,
25 uh, emergency hotline, for any things in our

2 waterways that are going to be an environmental risk
3 as well.

4 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you. I would like to
5 give a chance to my great colleagues to ask question
6 is you want.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: So, Council Member Ariola,
9 please.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Thank you. I'd also like
11 to thank Council Members Nurse, uh, Council Member
12 Marte, and Council Member Paladino for signing on to
13 this bill as well. 25 Council Members in all, thus
14 far, have signed on with Majority Whip Powers and
15 myself as co-sponsors. That's how important this,
16 this bill is to our waterways and to our City.

17 Um, Sheriff, you mentioned, you mentioned
18 navigational law article 10. So, to anyone of your
19 knowledge, has the City ever reached out tot eh state
20 to make revisions to the state navigation law that
21 would allow the state to delegate municipalities to
22 do the work? I'll take that as a no.

23 SHERIFF MIRANDA: No.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Okay. From what I'm
25 hearing, each of you have a responsibility for the

1 waterways. Each of you has your own part in making
2 sure that those waterways are cleaned, maintained,
3 enforced, and logged, even though some may not be
4 doing it, you're still currently getting funding to
5 be attentive to those waterways. Would that be a yes
6 or a no?

8 I know Parks does that. Nate, we've worked
9 together on projects and I want to thank you for the
10 work that you do. I know a lot falls on you. So,
11 Sheriff's Office, DEP, Small Business Services, you
12 are receiving funding because you are responsible for
13 your portion of those waterways.

14 CHIEF GROVE: Well, uh, thank you, um,
15 Councilwoman Ariola, um, and I, I do want to
16 underscore how appreciative we are for the assistance
17 we have gotten from Council. Um, your predecessor,
18 yourself, uh, it's, it's really been a boost to our
19 ability to get out there when we can find some of
20 that funding available.

21 But I, but I want to be clear, um, and I think I
22 can speak for my colleagues here, uh, when you say
23 we've received funding, it's, again, we, we, I think
24 we deliver good results with the resources we have.

1 I, I mentioned a lot of the in-house labor that we
2 deploy to these sites.

3
4 Um, when you see big scale projects happen, it's
5 usually through federal funding. Hurricane, Hurricane
6 Sandy, of course, was an instance, and, and, uh,
7 Sheriff Miranda mentioned the, the NOAA competitive
8 grant that we won lion's share for. So, um, we really
9 try and use whatever resources are available. We
10 think we do good work with that, with those
11 resources, and we appreciate the partnership with
12 Council throughout this as well.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Alright, but although
14 funding, that, well, takeaway funding, budgeted.
15 You're budgeted, all your different agencies are
16 budgeted for your portion of the responsibility to
17 take care of the waterways, and yes, the Council has
18 been, uh, generous with discretionary money, which is
19 the whole reason why we wanted this to become a
20 dedicated program, so this way, you would, you would
21 have the necessary capabilities.

22 So, although no one from the agencies have
23 reached out to the state about navigation law, does
24 anyone know if there's anything that prohibits the
25 City from, from, from forming a vessel turn-in

2 program? Is there any law that prohibits us from
3 doing that?

4 CHIEF GROVE: Uh, I, I do want to, I do want to
5 say that, you know, with respect to, to Sheriff
6 Miranda's role, I, I don't think he's been, he's been
7 part of any conversations at the state level, nor
8 have I. But I don't, I don't want to characterize or
9 speculate on what current administrations or previous
10 administrations, how they may or may not have engaged
11 the state level on this. So, I just want to be clear.

12 I would imagine at some point, um, at a, at a
13 legislative level, this issue has been discussed. Uh,
14 no one here, unfortunately, has been part of those
15 conversations. But I want to, I want to at least
16 speak for, for Parks Department, we are happy to be
17 part of any discussions at that level. Um, I just
18 don't want to speculate or, or speak for the
19 administration or any previous administration.

20 Um, to your, to your second question, uh, Council
21 Member, look, um, you know, in, in my involvement on
22 the waterways, and, uh, working directly with the
23 public, um, the boating public, uh, almost on a daily
24 basis, I, I face this issue a lot, where people run
25 into, um, the challenge of maintaining a boat. The

2 boats tend to be the last thing people get in good
3 times and the first thing they get rid of in bad
4 times. Uh, it's, it's, um, as we've testified, it,
5 it's, it's a complex issue. It touches many agencies
6 and many parties.

7 Uh, we're certainly, the, the idea of, uh, a
8 vessel turn-in program, there's nothing in New York
9 state like that. Would it be a benefit to the public
10 when they're struggling to maintain these things
11 rather than have them, you know, end up in our
12 waterways, potentially reduce that? Sure, it would.
13 Uh, but again, you know, it, it, it has its
14 complexities. It has its nuances. So, we are, we're
15 certainly supportive of proactive measures, such as
16 the ones we've been taking to date. I think anything
17 that helps our waterways should be explored, should
18 be discussed. Um, and like any project, the more
19 tools in the toolbox, the better. And we're always
20 looking for ways to improve our operations and
21 deliver better customer service.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Right. But, maybe, uh.
23 [BEEPING] It's okay. So, just, just, um, and if
24 anyone does know, I mean, is there anything that
25 prohibits us? Perhaps that's something that we need

2 to look into with Counsel to see if anything that
3 prohibits us.

4 SHERIFF MIRANDA: I just wanted to say one thing.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Performing of that.

6 SHERIFF MIRANDA: We get no funding for the
7 waterways and that project. We get involved in very
8 particular circumstances, the Sheriff's department is
9 getting involved, so we don't receive any additional
10 funding for any project on the water. But there are
11 specific things in the law that require the
12 intervention of the Sheriff's department when it
13 comes to, uh, the vessels and shipwrecks.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: So, it is part of your
15 responsibility, then?

16 SHERIFF MIRANDA: For a very particular part of
17 the navigation law. Because of the way it's written,
18 we have a particular role to play only in those
19 circumstances. But we don't get any funding for, uh,
20 waterways whatsoever.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Okay. Thank you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KAGA: Thank you, Council Member
23 Ariola. It looks like we also can play a role in
24 pushing, uh, state legislature, Governor, to allocate
25 funding for, more funding for this purposes, you

2 know, to help this important effort. I would like to
3 give a chance to, to ask questions to Majority Whip,
4 Council Member, um, Selvena Brooks-Powers. Thank you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you again,
6 Chair. Um, just to reiterate the questions asked
7 before, um, can the agencies describe the challenges
8 they have faced in coordinating boat removal? Also,
9 boat abandonment occurs across the shorelines of all
10 five Boroughs. Do the agencies foresee any obstacles
11 to the implementation of Intro 210 like the wide
12 geographic spread of the problem, establishing a
13 central disposal site, or other issues?

14 CHIEF GROVE: So, I'll, I'll, um, well, thank you
15 for the question, Councilwoman Brooks-Powers. Um,
16 I'll, I'll, I'll just reiterate, um, that when you
17 look at the, the layout of New York City, the
18 archipelago that it is, that's 520 miles of
19 shoreline. So, in a quick, in a quick answer, it's
20 yes. Um, you know you've got property owners
21 depending on which city agency. Uh, Parks Department,
22 we have, we have ultimately 30%, more than 30%, 160
23 miles of shoreline. So, while, as I described that,
24 and, and, Sheriff Miranda, um, in his opening
25 testimony, uh Army Corps is really the primary go to.

2 But when it falls to the local property owner, it's
3 typically the City.

4 So, in the spirit of, uh, us feeling like we have
5 the obligation to mitigate any environmental or
6 public safety risks, we, we, we mobilize to our
7 shorelines and, uh, and remedy these situations to
8 the extent we have, uh, the resources to do so.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Um, in that
10 statement, also kind of underscores the challenge
11 that I've seen first-hand. Like, right now, there's a
12 barge in Far Rockaway that actually is my viewpoint
13 out of my own window that I get a lot of calls about
14 it from the community, and we have literally
15 attempted to engage the state, the Corps, the Army
16 Corps of Engineers. Um, all levels of local
17 government locally are working together, but it just
18 seems like a lot of finger pointing from the
19 agencies.

20 So, the intent behind this bill is to help better
21 streamline that process, to have a, uh, much more
22 expedient response to these barges and, and boats in
23 the waterway that's abandoned. So, um, I'm interested
24 in understanding a little bit deeper, like, what
25 those challenges you foresee in the coordination of

2 that, because, I think, the intent with the bill
3 would pretty much create this Office that would
4 triage these matters, and where it's a City matter,
5 handle it, obviously, and then working across the
6 different agencies.

7 CHIEF GROVE: So, um, I don't want to steal from
8 the Sheriff's thunder, but, um, again, as, as Sheriff
9 Miranda, you, mentioned in his opening testimony,
10 ultimately, you know, we, we're, we're, we're still,
11 um, bound by these somewhat anachronistic navigation
12 laws at the state level. Um, that's just, that's just
13 the reality. We're certainly open to discussions on
14 these topics.

15 You just hit upon it as well, uh, Councilwoman.
16 I've been on some of those calls. I know the Vernam
17 Barbadoes barge is, um, it's, it's a challenge. Uh,
18 we agree with you. Uh, you've got, uh Coast Guard
19 involved. You've got Army Corps, state DEC on an
20 environmental level. SO, um, our waterways, I, I'm
21 going to steal from, from your, your colleague, are,
22 are, are, experiencing a renaissance like we haven't
23 seen. Uh, I think as we continue to discuss these
24 issues and look at solutions, we are going to
25 continue to see improvements in these areas.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. And, um,
3 okay. So, I look forward to working with the various
4 agencies on this, and we hope to get some of these
5 barges out of the water, uh, sooner than later. Thank
6 you.

7 CHIEF GROVE: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you, Majority Whip,
9 thank you. So, it looks like, uh, we are wrapping up
10 our testimony from administration. I would like to
11 thank each one of you for your testimony. It was very
12 educational and very useful, and I hope it, it shows
13 to the public and to each one of us, what should be
14 done to make sure that our waterways are much cleaner
15 than today. Everybody has a job to do. Thank you.

16 CHIEF GROVE: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: So now I would like to turn to
18 public testimony, the public testimony. So, I have
19 some folks who came in person. I'm very glad that
20 today they have this opportunity, uh, to do it in
21 person. So, I would like to give a chance to speak.
22 By the way, for every person who wants to testify
23 today, thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you.

24 So, every, uh, panelist who wants to speak now,
25 will be given three minutes to speak. Uh, correct,

1 three minutes to speak. So, I would like to call
2 Robert, uh, Markuske, New York Harbor School. Uh,
3 okay, before you speak, I want everybody to come
4 also, uh, Marcel Kernizan, also, please. Anybody
5 else, also? No, that's all. Two people. Okay. This
6 way we will save your time and our time. You will be
7 able to testify. Okay. So, I would like Robert
8 Markuske from New York Harbor School to testify. You
9 have three minutes, please.

11 MISTER MARKUSKE: Yeah. Uh, the Committee on
12 Resiliency and Waterfront, uh, good to see you. Uh,
13 some of you, I have seen before. Uh, my name is
14 Robert Markuske. I teach marine affairs, policy, and
15 advocacy at the New York Harbor School. Uh, the
16 course I facilitate, uh, studies our natural
17 resources and human's impact on said resources with
18 the end goal of students creating a sustainable
19 solution to complex intersections of the environment,
20 culture, and the economics.

21 I am speaking in support of 210, uh, specifically
22 in support of the last section: coordinate with,
23 promote organizations and volunteer groups involved
24 in removing marine debris from the City's beaches and
25 shores. In addition, I head a lot about, uh, debris

1 we can see today. We didn't really talk about much
2 that we couldn't see. Uh, so I also believe that
3 should be a focus as well. Um, in addition, uh,
4 thinking about the behavior on land which causes
5 debris in the first place.

6
7 So, my recommendation is this, uh, all across the
8 City, specifically where I teach, uh, we have young
9 people collecting data, creating solutions to
10 facilitate the success of bills like this. Uh,
11 literally, uh, you have a community of young
12 scientists, advocates, and future policy makers, uh,
13 doing this work already. I ask that City Council
14 consider, uh, consulting stakeholders that have no
15 other vested interest in making this work but for the
16 environment, creating STEM education, and creating
17 cultural and social equity. We have the duty to
18 listen to young people doing the work of adults,
19 nonetheless, the problems they inherit. Moreover,
20 often done before the government takes any action.

21 Governor's Island is in development of a climate,
22 uh, solution center. I say this bill would be a
23 perfect addition to this development. Implementing
24 this law using the physical and intellectual
25 infrastructure of Governor's Island and New York

1 Harbor School has endless potential to engage the
2 community and institutions already doing this vital
3 work.
4

5 Over the last few years, I've attempted to
6 partner with government agencies and the Council
7 Members. It's proven difficult for a variety of
8 reasons. I do understand the complicated process this
9 holds, but I urge New York City Council, agencies, to
10 reevaluate the capacity to have young people beside
11 them doing the work, uh, and engaging the public.

12 As I read my testimony, one could argue I am
13 selfishly trying to take resources for my
14 institution, uh, to do a pilot program. What I am
15 saying is this, since the students at New York Harbor
16 School do this work, Governor's Island is building a
17 climate solution center, one would argue the stars
18 are aligned, and that's a perfect place, uh, to have
19 this office.

20 Uh, thank you for your time. Also, I'll end with
21 this. Uh, it seems that coming to hearings and
22 testifying at hearings with, alongside my students,
23 is becoming a great alternative, uh, to the
24 classroom. So, you'll be seeing us frequently.
25

2 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you so much. As I
3 understand, you were talking about students, correct?
4 So, we're talking about Marcel Kernizan, your student
5 at New York Harbor School. Welcome.

6 MISTER KERNIZAN: Uh, thank you and good afternoon
7 Members of the Committee of Resiliency and
8 Waterfronts. My name is Marcell Kernizan. I'm one of,
9 I'm a student of marine affairs. I'm one of Rob's
10 students. And I came to speak in support of number
11 210.

12 From my experience at the Harbor School, it has
13 come to my attention that the amount of marine debris
14 in the Harbor is astounding. From bottles to ship
15 lines to hypodermic needles and endless pieces of
16 pack, of Styrofoam. Thankfully, we do have some
17 students that are part of harbor School after school
18 club picking up some of this stuff, and writing data
19 on it. But, unfortunately, it's not enough.

20 The amount of debris will most likely just keep
21 rising and washing back up on New York City shores
22 especially as sea levels rise due to climate change.
23 By creating an Office of Marine Disposal, it could
24 begin to change this crisis and begin to control the
25 amount of debris in the Harbor, bring our city a

2 little bit closer to where it belongs, a world leader
3 in sustainability.

4 Many people are invested in restoring the Harbor
5 and starting from scratch would be silly. Governor's
6 Island is, Governor's Island has the space and the
7 people to complete all sections of this local law.
8 Students, teachers, island partners, are, are already
9 heavily engaged in this work. There is an afterschool
10 club that has been working on collecting marine
11 debris since March and collecting data on said
12 debris.

13 This law can enhance STEM education, job
14 creation, and community building, and also engage our
15 most important stakeholders, the youth engaged in
16 scientific research and political advocacy. Even non-
17 profits like Earth Matter and Beam Center can help
18 facilitate art repurposing projects. In addition,
19 this will aid ideas for recycling.

20 New York Harbor School has seven CTE programs and
21 several of them are engaged in sustainability and
22 cleaning our City. Thus far, an implementation would
23 both benefit our City and its educational pathways.
24 Even nonprofits like Earth Matter and Beam Center,
25 among many of our other partners, can help facilitate

2 are and repurposing projects. You have organizations
3 doing this work. Invest in them and pass the law.

4 I have quote, "coordinate with and promote
5 organizations that and volunteer groups involved in
6 removing marine debris from the City's beaches and
7 shores." This is the most important part of the law,
8 at least to me, anyway. Working with the community
9 and having stakeholders who will make this a success.

10 My testimony may seem like we are trying to get
11 exclusive rights to fund a pilot program. What I am
12 saying is that over, all over the City you have youth
13 and nonprofits doing this work. It would be wise to
14 consult them and consider Governor's Island as a
15 testing ground for doing initial work. Thank you for
16 your time and consideration.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KAGAN: Thank you so much. Council
18 Member?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: I just wanted to say I
20 represent the Harbor School in my district and they
21 do phenomenal maritime work, uh, whether it's with
22 the Billion Oyster Project, or even, uh, with
23 reusable and recycling compost with Earth Matters,
24 and so, they would be a great partner with any City
25 agencies to help us, not only pass this legislation,

2 but once it's enacted to work in partnership with
3 City. Uh, so, I agree with what they said and I'm,
4 I'm a supporter of their initiative in this. Thanks.

5 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you, Council Member
6 Marte. Thank you very much.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: We appreciate the work
8 that you do.

9 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: And thank you for your
10 testimony

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Thank you.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: And I think you have some
13 more that are virtually going to testify.

14 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Yes. In person is much better,
15 of course. And I can say that, um, I often attend
16 events, uh, in my district, in Coney Island, in
17 Kaiser Park, we have Coney Island Creek, that, uh,
18 Congressman Hakeem Jeffries is pushing, advocating
19 to, to make as a superfund from federal government
20 and I see very often young students from all over the
21 City coming, trying to clean up both Park and Creek
22 but Creek is like, Coney Island Creek is, uh, like
23 decades, you know, like, of, uh, neglect, I would
24 say. A lot of stuff is on the bottom, and it requires
25 a lot of money and a lot of efforts by many agencies

1 to clean up Coney Island Creek, including federal
2 government.
3

4 I would like to come back to some, uh, (primary
5 school) registered for our hearing. This time
6 (INAUDIBLE), so I would like to give a chance to
7 speak to Daniel Mundy, Jamaica Bay Ecowatchers. Your
8 time.

9 VICE PRESIDENT MUNDY: Hello, can you hear me?

10 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Yes.

11 VICE PRESIDENT MUNDY: Okay. Thank you very much,
12 uh. Appreciate the opportunity to testify. Um, and
13 I'll try to keep it brief. My name is Dan Mundy. I'm
14 the vice president of Jamaica Bay Ecowatchers. We're
15 the longest serving not for profit working to
16 preserve and, uh, protect Jamaica Bay. We were formed
17 in 1998 when we had a major issue going on in the Bay
18 with water quality and we brought a Clean Water Act
19 lawsuit against the City which ended up being the
20 nitrogen agreement. This is a massive, \$100 million
21 agreement with the City of New York to make them
22 bring the four treatment plants in Jamaica Bay up to
23 speed. DEP's done a fantastic job with that.

24 Much of the clean-up that went on in Coney Island
25 Creek with DEP, and it was mentioned before, was a

2 side note to that, when they were, uh, imposed a
3 consent order by the DEC.

4 When we started to restore the wetlands and build
5 out the loss of marsh that we had here with some of
6 those funds, we started to notice this marine debris
7 issue. Marine debris for us, is defined as very large
8 items. We do cleanups, but this beyond the ability to
9 do a normal clean up. This is large issues like boats
10 and docks and floats that need cranes and, and big
11 equipment to remove.

12 At the time, in 2004, 2008, between that period
13 of time, we created a volunteer program to remove
14 these large items. And we would go out with chainsaws
15 and tow boats that we would hire and we would drag
16 these boats over tot eh National Park Service, uh,
17 hangar, uh, they have an airplane ramp over there,
18 and they agreed to tow those boats up. We removed 300
19 boats that way. It's the most that's ever been done
20 in a voluntary program. It's extremely intensive, and
21 labor intensive and became almost too much.

22 At that time, Congressman Anthony Weiner stepped
23 in with funding and said, "This is a great program,
24 but I'm going to fund it." And he did, so we backed
25 out. When the funding dried up, there was no program

1 left in place, and Parks Department, and US Parks
2 Department, National Parks Department, did not want
3 to reengage with this volunteer program because of
4 the fact that debris was ending up in Floyd Bennett
5 Field and they thought it was going to be a, uh,
6 hindrance there for the kayakers. So, nothing
7 happened.

9 After Hurricane Sandy, and I live in Jamaica Bay.
10 I've been a resident of Broad Channel, the only
11 inhabited island, uh, within Jamaica Bay, for 57
12 years. We had thousands and thousands of boats and
13 docks and oil tanks and gas tanks out on the islands
14 and shorelines. We worked with the American Littoral
15 Society to document them. We didn't know how to get
16 them removed.

17 To the question posed by the Chair before, if you
18 call 311, for 99% of these vessels, nothing will
19 happen. I've worked with the Corps of Engineers for
20 25 years. I've gotten two boats removed. They don't
21 want to get involved with it. I don't really see a
22 role for SBS, or the Marshall Service in here,
23 although history points to their involvement many
24 years ago when there was a reason for it.

2 We wanted to remove these vessels. I have
3 thousands of pictures of huge boats and floats on
4 these islands. We reached out to Councilman Ulrich,
5 Councilman Constantini, and they became aware of the
6 fact that the answer to the question is, of who
7 addresses this, is no one. It's mind boggling to me
8 that we're out doing oyster restoration, and wetland
9 restoration.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

11 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: You, you can finish, yes.

12 VICE PRESIDENT MUNDY: Okay, I'm sorry. So, it,
13 it, there is no one. So, the Councilman then said,
14 "Well, how do we do it?" So, Nate Grove has a
15 fantastic program, it, with this contract that he has
16 that allows us, if we put money into it, to pay per
17 linear foot to remove these vessels. And we did that
18 with the Councilman three times and then when
19 Councilwoman Ariola came on board, we explained it to
20 her and she jumped right in. And I've, I've met with,
21 uh, Councilwoman, uh, Selvena Brooks, who's a big
22 advocate for the waterfront as well, and we, we are
23 very aware of this giant barge that's out there.

24 So, so we should build on the success that we
25 have. In my view, and work to see that we could

2 create this agency. This is a fantastic step forward
3 and it's like the last area in the environmental
4 world that we see that nobody addresses. So, if we
5 could get this funded with line items for ..., whether
6 it's working under Nate within the City Parks, we
7 could address these big issues like that massive
8 barge down there.

9 That's an environmental justice issue. That's
10 disgusting to see that's in the water down there and
11 it needs to be addressed, but we could address the
12 entire City has this problem. I fly over the City on
13 a regular basis as Battalion Commander for the New
14 York City Fire Department. My role at times is to fly
15 in a helicopter. The north shore of Staten Island,
16 it's amazing. It's a graveyard of vessels that are
17 out there.

18 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you. Thank you so much
19 for your testimony. Thank you so much.

20 VICE PRESIDENT MUNDY: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you very much.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: And Dan, I'd just like to
23 thank you for your partnership and the partnership of
24 the Jamaica Bay Ecowatchers.

25 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you. Thank you.

2 VICE PRESIDENT MUNDY: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you. So, the next
4 panelist is, uh, Juliana Ventresca, Riverkeeper.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time will begin.

6 MS VENTRESCA: Thank you, Chairman Kagan and
7 Members of the Committee on Resiliency and
8 Waterfronts, for your leadership and concern in
9 addressing the pressing issue of abandoned boat and
10 watercraft disposal and for the opportunity to
11 testify on behalf of Riverkeeper. I'm Juliana
12 Ventresca. I'm a legal intern for Riverkeeper.

13 Riverkeeper is a member supported watchdog
14 organization dedicated to protecting and restoring
15 the Hudson River from source to ssea and safeguarding
16 drinking water supplies through advocacy rooted in
17 community partnerhipsh, science, and law. We
18 appreciate the Committee's attention to the issue
19 presented by abandoned vessels along the waterfront.
20 This situation demands action in order to remedy the
21 economica and ecological impact that these abandoned
22 vseeesels are causing for New York's waters and
23 surrounding communities.

24 Riverkeeper has had difficulty garnering
25 attention and resources to remove marine debris in

2 the apsty and we fully support the enactment of both
3 Intros 210 and 416 to decrease navigation hazards and
4 improve water quality of local waterways.

5 These watercraft can range from small dinghys to
6 much large commercial crafted fishing vessels with
7 steel hulls, and even large bulk goods transport
8 barges. Unattended boats and barges can be dangerous
9 and damaging as they have the potential to destroy
10 habitats, leak pollutants, and present a hazard to
11 human health and safety.

12 Abandoned vessels in the City have been a hazard
13 to boat travel, making navigation especially
14 dangerous when the abandoned vessels are submerged
15 and difficult to see beneath the water or when they
16 were left afloat in the navigational channel.

17 Abandoned boats and barges are also a significant
18 source of pollution, releasing plastics, heavy
19 metals, oil related hydrocarbons, and other
20 pollutants in the water. Certain chemicals and
21 materials used to construct, protect, or ... the
22 vessels pose health risks when disturned or whent hey
23 become airborne.

24 These chemicals also have the potential to
25 contaminate local sediment, interstitial waters, and

1 the water column. And ultimately, they can harm
2 important species in the ecosystem. Removing these
3 structures would provide numerous environmental and
4 community benefits essential to maintaining the
5 health and safety of New York's waterways.
6

7 In the past, Riverkeepers had difficulty betting
8 abandoned barges removed. In 2015 and 2017, we
9 mounted removal efforts that led to a lot of agency
10 finger pointing and no clear path to getting these
11 removed. Therefore, legislative clarity is important
12 in this instance. These situations can take years to
13 remedy as a result of the complicated legal framework
14 posing an unnecessary burden on City Officials and
15 community members in effecting swift removals.

16 Clearly, the situation demands legislation that
17 will aid the process of removing abandoned vessels.
18 There are already numerous abandoned barges and boats
19 impeding navigation and actively contributing to
20 pollution. It is essential that the City Officials
21 develop effective programs for dealing with these
22 vessels quickly, without unnecessary legal hurdles.

23 Therefore, Riverkeeper enthusiastically supports
24 the passage of Intro 461 and Intro 210. Thank you for
25 your consideration of Riverkeeper's testimony. We

2 look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure
3 that New Yorkers' health and waterways are protected
4 against the effects of abandoned boats, barges, and
5 marine debris.

6 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you so much, Juliana
7 Ventresca. Thank you very much for your work and for
8 your testimony. So, the next speaker is panelist, is
9 Roger, uh, Gendron, the New York Hamilton Beach Civic
10 Association, the New Hamilton Beach Civic
11 Association.

12 PRESIDENT GENDRON: Thank you very much. Thank you
13 everyone. My name is Roger Gendron the President of
14 the New Hamilton Beach Civic Association and I'm
15 speaking today in support of Intro 210, a local law
16 to create a marine debris disposal and vessel
17 surrendering office.

18 So, imagine you're driving down the highway,
19 littered with broken down vehicles, spread willy
20 nilly all across the roadway. This is the exact
21 situation in and around waters, New York City waters
22 such as Jamaica Bay and all throughout the City. The
23 abandoned and sunken boats we see in these areas are
24 more than just an eyesore. The environmental effect
25 they cause may not be measured for quite some time.

2 The proposed legislation that would create the
3 Office of Marine Debris Disposal and Vessel
4 Surrendering would be a great step forward in helping
5 keep our waters safe for the boating community to
6 enjoy and to keep the push going for cleaner and
7 healthier waterways throughout the City, most
8 especially our beaches where debris can wash up along
9 the shore and, as it's seen right now.

10 To have an office that would be responsible for
11 disposing of abandoned vessels while at the time
12 developing a program to encourage owners to dispose
13 of their boats through the City rather than abandon
14 them in the water, is a win for everyone who enjoys
15 boating or swimming at the beach.

16 We are all aware that the boats constructed using
17 various synthetic materials and solutions, and in
18 time, many of them leak chemicals to create a toxic
19 environment. Here are a few examples. Cleaning
20 agents, like detergents, accumulate in the sediment
21 which are broken down by, by microorganisms. These
22 reduce the oxygen content in water, impairing
23 wildlife growth. Battery acid easily dissolves in
24 water, increasing an environment's natural acidity or
25 alkalinity, and most marine wildlife requires a

2 specific pH, and challenging, and changing that level
3 can decimate an entire region.

4 Oil, gasoline, and other fuel products affect
5 wildlife in dozens of ways from killing environments
6 outright, to causing cancer, birth defects, and
7 behavioral changes to both aquatic and human life.

8 Zinc, copper, and other metals that make up the boats
9 can chip off and dissolve in water, and they are
10 impossible to remove from the environment that they
11 contaminate. When ingested, they can decimate marine
12 life and, and plants.

13 When abandoned vessels decompose, they release
14 these substances and more substances that can destroy
15 natural environments such as marshes and marine
16 forests, which are natural defenses that coastal
17 communities like mine rely on to protect us from
18 coastal storms. Without this protection, we are
19 endangering humans in these areas.

20 It's a simple scenario. Someone owns a boat. They
21 decide it costs too much money to maintain it, to
22 keep it docked, so they set it free. They just let it
23 float out, because they figure it'll sink and it'll
24 become a reef and they've managed to convince
25 themselves that this is good. But we all know that it

2 isn't Just imagine if they could bring it somewhere
3 or call somewhere and dispose of it safely.

4 So, safety on the water is utmost importance. Any
5 boater will tell you any obstacle in the water poses
6 a serious threat. Human debris can get tangled in
7 motors and other debris in or on the water destroy a
8 boat that hits it. Abandoned boats are particularly
9 dangerous since they move without rhyme or reason
10 while drifting on the surface, or worse, when bobbing
11 beneath the water and they can't be seen.

12 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you so much.

13 PRESIDENT GENDRON: Uh, thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you so much for your
15 testimony. Thank you.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ARIOLA: Thank you, Roger, for all
17 you do in the community and for being such a
18 wonderful partner.

19 PRESIDENT GENDRON: Thank you, Joanna, and thank
20 you to City Council.

21 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you. So, and the next
22 panelist is Mauricio Gonzalez. Mauricio Gonzalez.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time will begin.

24 MISTER GONZALEZ: Okay, can you all hear me?

25 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Yes. Please.

2 MISTER GONZALEZ: Okay, I have two students with
3 me and I'm going to ask them to present first and if
4 there's a little bit of time, then, uh, I'm going to
5 jump in. I work at the Harbor School, and I'm going
6 to introduce to you Anna Sheehan and Arlo Kane.

7 MS SHEEHAN: Hello Chairman. Sorry. Um, my name is
8 Anna Sheehan and I'm a junior at the New York Harbor
9 School within the Marine Biology and Research
10 Program. I work as a junior leader and analyst with
11 the Harbor SEALS, the civic science afterschool
12 program. I am testifying in favor of the Intro number
13 210 bill.

14 Our current project within Harbor SEALS is the
15 RIP RAP project, a data-oriented, a data-collection
16 and environmental clean up procedure. The goal of the
17 project is to gain a data-oriented understanding of
18 the trash that washes up on Governors Island's rocky
19 coast.

20 We have developed methods for cleaning,
21 collecting, organizing, and storing samples compiled.
22 This includes weighing the samples, classifying the
23 materials and later, disposing of them. This project
24 originated through a collaborative effort between the
25 Harbor SEALS and Earth Matter. After years of

1 noticing the overwhelming amount of debris on
2 Governors Island, students took initiative to clean
3 and record debris washed up on this historic land
4 sights border.
5

6 Without an accessible office to organize
7 (INAUDIBLE) and to collect marine debris and without
8 strict enforcements of laws, waste will continue to
9 wash up on our shore and will be detrimental to the
10 health of our Harbor and surrounding inhabitants.

11 Since Harbor SEALs began collecting debris one to
12 two times a week in March, we have been overwhelmed
13 by the amount of debris, especially white foam and
14 plastic. The time and the resource of this, resources
15 of this project, only allowed for a minimal amount of
16 Governors Island to be searched for debris, and the
17 tide often affected whether or not debris could be
18 picked up.

19 Keeping my last statement in mind, it is critical
20 to realize that hundreds of plastic bottles,
21 thousands of pieces of foam were found, and hundreds
22 of plastic (INAUDIBLE) floating by. It's disturbing
23 that marine debris continues to be a plastic issue,
24 but I can confidently say that it is through this law
25 that environmental education can be promoted and that

2 New York Harbor can get (INAUDIBLE) closer to being
3 restored. Thank you for your time.

4 MISTER KANE: Good afternoon. My name is Arlo
5 Kane. I am a junior in the Marine Biology Research
6 program at Harbor SEALS after, at Harbor SEALS
7 afterschool program at New York Harbor School. I work
8 in communications and data analysis for the marine
9 RIP RAP project. I am speaking in support of Intro
10 number 210.

11 In my experience collecting and organizing marine
12 debris as a part of the Harbor SEALS RIP RAP project,
13 we have encountered the result of an excessive and
14 unjust (INAUDIBLE) waste from government and
15 independent property, for example fishing boat lines,
16 (INAUDIBLE) apparatus, and branded cups and bags.
17 Without the creation of an office responsible for
18 marine debris disposal, there will be an alarming
19 increase in trash washing up on New York shores.

20 One of the most overwhelming categories of debris
21 the Harbor SEALS managed, or measured were boat
22 lines. These boat lines, boat and fishing lines can
23 be very harmful to local ecosystems and animals. For
24 example, one piece of debris found, was a dead bird
25 wrapped in fishing line.

2 However, above all else, it's important to pay
3 attention to the kind of debris we cannot see with
4 our own eyes. Microplastics will affect the Harbor's
5 ecosystem on a fundamental level and will continue to
6 be introduced along with marine debris like ropes,
7 single use plastic bags, and other single use
8 plastics are in our Harbor.

9 Through the marine biology research program, we
10 have found that microplastics.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

12 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: You can finish the sentence.
13 You can finish.

14 MISTER KANE: Thank you.

15 MS SHEEHAN: Thank you.

16 MISTER KANE: Uh, through the marine biology
17 research program, we have found that microplastics
18 outnumber phytoplankton (INAUDIBLE).

19 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you so much. And thank
20 you for being such tireless and passionate advocates
21 for our marine lifes, for our waterways, for our
22 environment. Thank you.

23 MS SHEEHAN: Thank you.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you. So, now I want to,
3 I would like to, uh, turn over to our, uh, Counsel to
4 our Committee, Jessica Steinberg Albin.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL STEINBERG ALBIN: Thank you,
6 Chair. If we have inadvertently missed anyone that is
7 registered to testify today and is yet to have been
8 called, please use the Zoom raise hand function and
9 you will be called in the order that your hand has
10 been raised.

11 Seeing none...

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Mauricio, excuse me. Mauricio
13 Gonzalez has his hand up.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL STEINBERG ALBIN: Oh. Thank you.
15 Mauricio Gonzalez, you may begin when the Sergeant
16 calls time.

17 MISTER GONZALEZ: Did they call time?

18 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: I saw him before.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL STEINBERG ALBIN: Oh.

20 MISTER GONZALEZ: Okay, so I'm just going to dig
21 in here. We thank you and the Council for doing the
22 hard work of keeping our democracy and great city
23 alive and healthy. My name is Mauricio Gonzalez and I
24 have marine biology at the Urban Assembly New York
25

1 Harbor School and the Frederick Douglass Academy
2 since 2001.

3
4 I started teaching in New York City to do the
5 heavy lifting of empowering the next generation of
6 environmental stewards and change the culture of
7 excess and disposability that has plagued the natural
8 environment and City for the last century. Our
9 students monitor the Harbor for contaminants such as
10 microplastics and their impact on plankton. We're
11 literally eating our fashion as the microplastics go
12 up the food chain. They monitor chemicals in the
13 water. They recover marine debris washing up on the
14 shores of Governors Island, and much, much more.

15 The ocean has a really strange way of covering up
16 all of our debris. We do the impossible work of
17 teaming up with dozens of organizations in these
18 endeavors while preparing our scholars for college
19 and career. What better hope for a young person than
20 to be able to make a difference in their world so
21 that they can have hope and a reason to look forward
22 to their own futures. We deeply believe in our work
23 and the role of our City as a beacon of responsible
24 business and environmental stewardship for the world.

1
2 I ask the City Council to consider in addition to
3 the aforementioned initiatives and resolutions which
4 I support, one, to consider adding the term
5 externalities to the list of terms and setup a
6 vehicle by which to study how to tackle to issue of
7 marine debris from this perspective. In other words,
8 once debris is found and we can identify the
9 producers, you may want an avenue by which to
10 approach them to become a visible part of the
11 solution. Handing of externalities to the public or
12 the government in the form of volunteer work and
13 other measures, does, is insufficient to change the
14 tide.

15 And two, to address the assumption that consumers
16 are knowledgeable and capable on their own to dispose
17 of all the forms of waste that run off into our
18 waters every second of the day. Dedicating resources
19 to public outreach for the creation of campaigns and
20 signage that strengthens consumer responsibility
21 would be critical for such an office.

22 So, we look forward to the creation of the Center
23 for Climate Solutions on Governors Island so we can
24 take our City and region to the next level of climate
25

2 solutions and empower our next generation of climate
3 stewards.

4 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you so much.

5 MISTER GONZALEZ: So, thank you all for hearing
6 this testimony and for a clean Harbor.

7 CHAIRPERSON KAGAN: Thank you so much. So, I would
8 like to, um, make my closing remarks. First of all, I
9 would like to thank, uh, all members of
10 administration for appearing today, testifying,
11 informing the public about this important topic of
12 making sure we have clean waterways, clean,
13 beautiful, and safe.

14 I also would like one more time, to praise my
15 amazing colleagues. Majority Whip Brooks-Powers,
16 Council Members Ariola, Marte, Nurse, Paladino for
17 participating in hearings today.

18 I also would like to thank our Senior Committee
19 Counsel Jessica Steinberg Albin, Senior Policy
20 Analyst Patrick Mulvihill, Senior Finance Analyst
21 Jonathon Seltzer, and my Legislative and Budget
22 Director Ather Tirmizi for all their hard work to
23 prepare, to put together, to support in the hearing.

24 The, in conclusion, I would like to say that it's
25 a goal for everyone, and it looks like, uh,

1 everybody's in favor of, uh, this new bill that my
2 colleagues are introducing. I'm talking about Intro
3 number 210 and 461, uh. It will approve our
4 coordination between City agencies and elected
5 officials, between City and state and federal
6 agencies. As everyone suffered, we live in a
7 beautiful city in the capital of the world and we
8 have so many miles of waterways and we all have
9 responsibility to make sure gain, they are clean,
10 beautiful, and safe.

12 So, I would like to thank each one of you for
13 participating in today's hearing and I would like to
14 close this hearing.

15 [GAVEL]

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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 July 20, 2022