



City Council Committee on Resiliency and  
Waterfronts: Hearing on Abandoned Boats  
along the Waterfront.

Testimony of Anthony Miranda,  
Sheriff of the City of New York  
New York City Department of Finance

June 13, 2022

Good afternoon, Chairman Kagan and members of the Committee on Resiliency and Waterfronts. I am Sheriff Anthony Miranda.

My testimony today relates to Intro 0461 -2022, the role of Navigation Law Article 10, and the City's current practice of marine debris removal.

### **Intro 0461 of 2022**

Intro 0461 of 2022 would require the City's Department of Small Business Services to create a log of abandoned vessels and their location within the city. This proposed legislation would also require the Department of Finance, through the New York City Sheriff's Office, to inspect and identify abandoned vessels in the city's littoral waters and develop a system through which Deputy Sheriffs assess and remove these abandoned vessels.

As I will describe in further detail, Sheriffs in New York State engage in certain vessel recovery operations pursuant to the Navigation Law.

### **Navigation Law Article 10**

A subset of vessels and their cargo referred to as "wrecks" or "shipwrecks" are subject to a detailed State Law framework with respect to salvage under Article 10 of the Navigation Law.

The State Legislature Enacted Article 10 of the State Navigation Law in 1941. Article 10 has remained substantially unchanged since that time. Earlier treatises suggest that predecessor provisions of the law now codified in Article 10 date back to at least 1871. In total, the disposition proceedings for shipwrecks set forth in the Navigation Law appear to have remained substantially the same for the past 150 years.

The Article 10 statutory framework includes details regarding the seizing, storing, appraising, advertising, and disposing of the proceeds of wrecks. These wreck provisions are indeed archaic, time consuming, and cumbersome. The age in which these types of commercial vessels operated ended long ago, but the State Legislature has not made adjustments to account for the disposition of pleasure vessels, which are much more common today. Today's pleasure boats have none of the value or the cargo from the time that this legislation was conceived. This modern reality has disrupted the equilibrium calibrated by Article 10 in which salvage costs or the sale of the vessel compensated the public for the recovery. However, the Sheriff is still required by law to follow the Article 10 statutory framework for the disposal of applicable shipwrecks.

Even among cargo vessels, the economics of Article 10 appear to be unfavorable for the City. For example, this office seized the M/V *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 the result of Hurricane Sandy. The *Caddell* wreck was ultimately sold by the Sheriff pursuant to court order at a net loss of \$10,501.89. This loss would have been greater if the Coast Guard had not towed the wreck at its own expense as an environmental hazard. The sea tow costs borne by the Coast Guard were estimated at \$400,000.

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.

### **Marine Debris**

The City has facilitated the removal of marine debris from 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 Superstorm Sandy, the City worked with the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency to secure funding for the removal of marine 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's 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 located throughout 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 I am very appreciative.

In order 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, this standing contract, with pre-determined costs and requirements, provides an immediate mechanism for any City agency to manage marine debris removals throughout the City, as needs arise.

Thank you for your time. I will now take questions.

## **City Council Committee on Resiliency and Waterfronts Hearing**

**Hearing Topic:** Marine Debris and Abandoned Boats Along the Waterfront  
Ints. 210 & 461

**Date:** June 13, 2022, 1:00 pm

**Panel:** Nate Grove, NYC Parks Chief of Waterfront and Marine Operations; Anthony Miranda, Sheriff of the City of New York; Small Business Services; Department of Environmental Protection

**Resiliency & Waterfronts Committee Members:** Ari Kagan CHAIR, Joann Ariola, James F. Gennaro, Christopher Marte, Sandy Nurse, Vickie Paladino

### **NYC Parks Testimony:**

Though the regulatory landscape regarding certain shipwrecks and marine debris is nuanced, the City has been able to take action to address marine debris in recent years, in the interest of public and environmental safety. The City has facilitated the removal of marine debris from water bodies and shorelines within its jurisdiction. To provide context, the City Of New York is the single-largest owner of shoreline throughout the city, handling 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 Superstorm Sandy, the City worked with FEMA to secure funding for the removal of debris located throughout the five boroughs. New York City was also the single-largest recipient of a national competitive grant administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for Sandy-related marine debris removal. This grant allowed us to complete millions of dollars of marine clean-up work citywide.

In order to accomplish this work, Parks and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, established New York City's first-ever marine debris removal requirements contract. As funding becomes available, this standing contract provides an immediate mechanism, including pre-determined costs and requirements, for any City agency to manage marine debris removals throughout the City, as these needs arise.

To speed up work, the Parks Department secured a borough-wide marine debris removal permit from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in 2015, that has enabled New York City Parks to remove thousands of cubic yards of marine debris and large floatables over the last seven years, much of it located throughout Jamaica Bay and southern Brooklyn. A significant portion of this work has been made possible through discretionary funding provided by local City Council Members, for which we are very appreciative.

As for Intros. 210 and 461, the legislation being heard at today's hearing, the Administration supports the intent of the bills and looks forward to further discussions with the Council to identify additional ways in which we can collectively advance our shared goal of keeping our City waterways clean and addressing the issue of marine debris.



## **PUBLIC TESTIMONY OF WATERFRONT ALLIANCE**

**June 13, 2022**

**New York City Council Committee on Resiliency and Waterfronts**

**RE: Oversight: Abandoned Boats Along the Waterfront**

**Submitted by Cortney Koenig Worrall, CEO and President, Waterfront Alliance**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the following testimony for the record. Waterfront Alliance, an alliance of more than 1,100 organizations, businesses, and individuals, is the leader in waterfront revitalization and climate resilience advocacy for the New York-New Jersey Harbor region.

We are committed to sustainability and to mitigating the effects of climate change across the region's hundreds of miles of waterfront. We spearhead the Rise to Resilience coalition of 100+ groups advocating for policy related to climate resilience and we run the Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines (WEDG) program for promoting innovation in climate design.

Abandoned boats can leak gasoline and other toxic substances, can break apart posing navigational hazards, and can make it impossible to enjoy and use waterfront and coastal areas of the city for recreation and enjoyment. During intense storms, abandoned boats can cause property damage or loss of life if they are dislodged and are caught in high winds or waves.

Though the New York City Parks Department has made major progress to remove boats, there are not sufficient programs or funding to prevent the continued illegal disposal and dumping of boats, nor the funding to remove boats soon after they are illegally dumped. The incentive to abandon boats illegally is strong, as cost efficient and readily available programs for the legal disposal of boats are few.

Without a coordinated, well-funded, and long-term commitment to solving the issue, the city's waterfronts, coastlines, and recreational areas will continue to suffer the ecological, recreational, and safety hazards associated with boats that are illegally discarded by their owners. One important step is Intro 0461 which would help identify and maintain a log of abandoned boats and their locations. Another important provision is included in Intro 210 to create a program through which persons may surrender boats to the city for disposal.

The Waterfront Alliance is calling on the administration, the City Council, and New York State to finally work together for a long term and permanent solution to a crisis that has only worsened in the last decade and a half. We look forward to working with the city and the state to support real and permanent solutions. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



**Testimony of Juliana Ventresca, Legal Intern, Riverkeeper, Inc.**

**before the Committee on Resiliency and Waterfronts**

**on**

**Removing Abandoned Boats and Barges Along the Waterfront**

**June 13, 2022**

Thank you, Chairman Kagan and Members of the Committee on Resiliency and Waterfronts for your leadership and concern in addressing the pressing issue of abandoned boat and watercraft disposal and for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of Riverkeeper.

I am Juliana Ventresca, a Legal Intern for Riverkeeper. Riverkeeper is a member-supported watchdog organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the Hudson River from source to sea and safeguarding drinking water supplies through advocacy rooted in community partnerships, science, and law.

We appreciate the Committee's attention to the issue presented by abandoned vessels along the waterfront. This situation demands action in order to remedy the economic and ecological impacts that these abandoned vessels are causing for New York's waters and surrounding communities. Riverkeeper has had difficulty garnering attention and resources to remove marine debris in the past and **we fully support the enactment of both Intros 210 and 416** to decrease navigation hazards and improve water quality of local waterways. Riverkeeper recognizes the necessity of working together with the City, State and Federal agencies to remedy the issues posed by abandoned watercraft. Such coordination, along with effective planning and sufficient funding, will be crucial to removing bureaucratic obstacles.

### **I. Navigation and Water Quality Hazards of Abandoned Barges**

Abandoned boats and barges present a hazard to navigation, water quality, and environmental and human health. These watercraft can range from small dingys to much larger commercial craft and fishing vessels with steel hulls and even large bulk goods transport barges.<sup>1</sup> Unattended boats and barges can be dangerous and damaging as they have the potential to destroy habitats, leak pollutants, and present a hazard to human health and safety.<sup>2</sup> They are eyesores and can block access to the shore or water, as well as access to privately owned

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<sup>1</sup> Nat'l Oceanic & Atmospheric Admin., *Derelict and Dangerous: When Vessels Become Marine Debris*, <https://response.restoration.noaa.gov/derelict-and-dangerous-when-vessels-become-marine-debris> (last visited June 9, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

facilities or industries.<sup>3</sup> These effects are compounded when the abandoned vessels are clustered.<sup>4</sup> Abandoned vessels in the city have been a hindrance to boat travel, making navigation especially dangerous when the abandoned vessels are submerged and difficult to see beneath the water or were left afloat in the navigational channel.<sup>5</sup>

Abandoned boats and barges are a significant source of pollution, releasing plastics, heavy metals, oil-related hydrocarbons, and other pollutants into the water.<sup>6</sup> Certain chemicals and materials used to construct, protect, or decorate vessels pose health risks when disturbed or become airborne.<sup>7</sup> Chemicals shed from the vessels have the potential to contaminate local sediment, interstitial waters, and the water column, and may consequently accumulate in macroalgae, invertebrates, and birds.<sup>8</sup> Many species essential to ecosystem function and environmental health suffer from vessel abandonments.

Leaked pollutants are only one way in which abandoned vessels can affect ecosystem health. Abandoned boats and barges can also crush native marsh grasses and infaunal and epifaunal communities, and disrupt important aquatic habitats, displacing resident biota.<sup>9</sup> The long-term presence of decaying boats and debris leads to habitat loss and loss or reduction in sunlight reaching aquatic organisms beneath the water.<sup>10</sup> Sunken barges that are rusting and deteriorating also commit environmental harm. They contribute to the general state of neglect and intentional pollution plaguing New York's waterways.<sup>11</sup> Removing these structures would provide numerous environmental and community benefits essential to maintaining the health and safety of New York's waterways.

## **II. Riverkeeper's Past Difficulties Removing Barges and Other Vessels**

It is common for derelict boats and barges to remain in city waterways or on public lands for extended periods, contributing negatively to environmental and human health. In 2015, Riverkeeper embarked on a campaign to remove two abandoned barges from the East River at Flushing Bay. The barges presented an obstacle to navigation in the river and were contributing to pollution as they drifted and broke apart. Chunks of polystyrene foam could be seen breaking off and floating in the waterways. Riverkeeper encountered some difficulty in seeking the barges' swift removal. The complicated legal framework led to months of finger pointing, after which the Army Corps of Engineers finally agreed to remove the derelict barges.

Again in 2017, Riverkeeper collaborated with New York State and City officials to remove an abandoned barge from the Upper East River. Riverkeeper's involvement followed

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<sup>3</sup> Andrew Turner, *The Environmental Impacts and Health Hazards of Abandoned Boats in Estuaries*, 6 REG'L STUD. IN MARINE SCI. 6-7 (2016).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at 7.

<sup>5</sup> Nat'l Oceanic & Atmospheric Admin., *supra* note 1.

<sup>6</sup> Turner, *supra* note 3, at 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* at 7.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at 8-9.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* at 8.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> Letter from the Newtown Creek Alliance to Janno Lieber, Chair & CEO, Metro. Transp. Auth. (Feb. 17, 2022) (on file with author).

years of community advocacy in response to its initial abandonment. At that point, the barge was deteriorating, much like those in Flushing Bay. It was impeding navigation and actively discharging polystyrene pollution into the river, jeopardizing ecosystem health and blighting the viewshed.

These are just two examples of Riverkeeper's efforts in getting abandoned barges removed from New York's waterways. These situations can take years to remedy as a result of the complicated legal framework posing an unnecessary burden on City officials and community members in effecting swift removals. This new legislation is essential to remedying these situations and improving the health and navigability of New York waterways.

Riverkeeper has documented dozens of abandoned vessels throughout New York and New Jersey. This includes over fourteen wrecks in Weehawken Cove in Hoboken. These abandoned vessels were conglomerating in the cove, blocking access to the shore and waterway. Riverkeeper worked in collaboration with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the city of Hoboken to remove these wrecks last month. The Hoboken wrecks are germane to similar issues in New York City and it should be noted that these wrecks become more hazardous when they break apart and move freely throughout the waterway. Riverkeeper has documented a multitude of similar abandoned vessels in Jamaica Bay and the Hudson River north of the GW Bridge. We have surveyed an additional three in the upper estuary we are now actively working to remove. In Newtown Creek, a deteriorating barge hampers the ecological restoration of the Dutch Kills tributary, and other commercial and pleasure craft have been left unoccupied and moored to bulkheads. There is currently no process by which these vessels would be removed.

### **III. Riverkeeper Strongly Supports Passage of Intro 461 and Intro 210**

Riverkeeper supports Intro 461 and Intro 210, which would create a program to dispose of or, if appropriate, reuse marine debris left on public beaches, including abandoned boats and barges. This program would create the Office of Marine Debris Disposal, responsible for developing a program to encourage boat owners to dispose of boats through the city rather than abandon them. Beyond this, the new legislation would require the maintenance of a log of abandoned boats in New York City's waterways and authorize the office of the City Sheriff to remove these boats and barges.

In the past few years, New York City officials have successfully removed hundreds of these vessels. Yet there is still some confusion about agency authorities and procedures, so we support this council's action to create legislative clarity on the issue. For instance, when sunken vessel removals are funded by NOAA, agency officials must gather ownership information before a barge can be removed. This can prove to be a problem as many times the marks signifying ownership have been scrubbed off when the vessels were purposely sunken. A clear procedure to deal with these and other situations is warranted, and adequate city funding for the removal of sunken vessels will be crucial for implementation.

Riverkeeper also recommends collaboration of city agencies with state and federal agencies to outline respective authorities and funding streams for boat removal. Where jurisdiction is unclear, boat removals are delayed, potentially worsening the situations and increasing removal costs.

Clearly, the situation demands legislation that will aid the process of removing abandoned vessels. As there are already numerous abandoned barges and boats impeding navigation and actively contributing to pollution, it is essential that the City officials develop effective programs for dealing with these vessels quickly, without unnecessary legal hurdles. Therefore, Riverkeeper enthusiastically supports the passage of Intro 461 and Intro 210.

\* \* \*

Thank you for your consideration of Riverkeeper's testimony. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that New Yorkers' health and waterways are protected against the effects of abandoned boats and barges and marine debris.

Contact:

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ELIZABETH BRATON  
*Chairperson*

## COMMUNITY BOARD 10

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KARYN PETERSEN  
*District Manager*

Written Testimony  
To NYC City Council Committee on Resiliency & Waterfronts  
June 13, 2022

My name is Betty Braton. I am the Chairperson of Community Board 10 Queens. Thank you for this opportunity to submit comment to the Committee. The following constitutes my comment to the Committee in regard to Intro 210.

Community Board 10 is located in Southwest Queens. Our district abuts the northern shoreline of Jamaica Bay. Within our district are 2 tributaries of Jamaica Bay, Shellbank Basin and Hawtree Basin.

The removal of derelict boats as well as other marine-related debris such as docks and floats has long been an issue in our area due to the difficulty working with numerous agencies to get derelict boats and other debris removed. Our entire shoreline both abutting Jamaica Bay and both tributaries were devastated by Superstorm Sandy in 2012. A case in point as to why this legislation before you today is important is our area's experience in getting one particular large derelict, partially sunken vessel removed from a narrow location in Hawtree Basin. The effort to get it removed began immediately following Superstorm Sandy in 2012. It took almost 10 years to accomplish as it was finally removed just this Spring.

It is not a unique situation. Our city needs an effective means to effect removal of derelict boats and other marine debris in order to protect our shoreline. Intro 210 is a step in the right direction.

Community Board 10 supports Intro 210, sponsored by Councilmember Ariola. Councilmember Ariola represents the section of Community Board that abuts our district's waterways. Prior to being elected to the Council she was a member of CB10 as well as the president of a local civic association in our waterfront area. She was part of the long-standing efforts by our elected officials, community groups, residents, and business owners to deal with marine debris and derelict vessels for years. That experience led to the proposed legislation that is before the committee.

This proposed legislation would require that the mayor create an Office of Marine Debris Disposal and Vessel Surrendering. The office would be responsible for, among other things, coordinating the disposal of, or if appropriate, reuse marine debris left on public beaches, and developing a program to encourage boat owners to dispose of boats through the city rather than abandon them in the water. Having such an office, in Community Board 10's opinion, will help to make it easier to get derelict boats and other marine debris removed in a far timelier manner. We urge you to move this proposed legislation forward.

Joint Statement by Earth Matter, Marine Affairs, Policy,  
Advocacy, Harbor SEALs of Marine Biology Research  
Program, New York Harbor School

**Int. No. 210**

**A Local Law to amend the New York city charter, in relation  
to creating marine debris disposal and vessel surrendering  
office**

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## **Int. No. 210**

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Chapter 1 of the New York city charter is amended by adding a new section 20-o to read as follows:

20-o. Office of marine debris disposal and vessel surrendering. A. Definitions. As used in this section, the following terms have the following meanings: Abandon. The term “abandon” means the permanent relinquishment of possession or control.

Director. The term “director” means the director of the office of marine debris disposal and vessel surrendering.

Littoral waters. The term “littoral waters” means any waters within or bounding a city to a distance of fifteen hundred feet from the shore.

Marine debris. The term “marine debris” means any garbage, refuse, debris and other materials or substances which are discarded or abandoned in the city’s littoral waters or shores or which have made their way to the city’s littoral waters or shores, but not include boats or similar vessels.

b. The mayor shall establish an office of marine debris disposal and vessel surrendering. Such office may, but need not, be established in the executive office of the mayor and may be established as a separate office, within any other office of the mayor or within any department, the head of which is appointed by the mayor. Such office shall be headed by a director who shall be appointed by the mayor.

c. Powers and duties. The director shall have the power and duty to:

1. Liaise and collaborate with relevant offices in the executive office of the mayor and with agencies including, but not limited to, the department of small business services, the department of finance, the department of sanitation, and the department of parks and recreation, to:

(a) coordinate the removal of marine debris in the city’s littoral waters or shores,

(b) develop a plan to recycle or reuse plastic, wood, and metal marine debris, and dispose of nonrecyclable marine debris,

(c) develop recommendations for enforcement against persons who illegally deposit or abandon marine debris, boats, or other vessels within the city’s littoral waters or shores, and

(d) develop recommendations for a program through which persons may surrender boats to the city for disposal.

2. Coordinate with and promote organizations and volunteer groups involved in removing marine debris from the city’s beaches and shores.

§ 2. This local law takes effect immediately.

## Student 1 - Marcel Kernizan

**TO:** Committee on Resiliency and Waterfronts

**FROM:** Marcel Kernizan and New York Harbor School

**DATE:** June 13th, 2022

Dear Ari Kagan,

Hi, my name is Marcel Kernizan. I am a Marine Affairs student at the Urban Assembly New York Harbor School (NYHS). The school is located on Governors Island in upper New York Bay. I am speaking in support of the INT. NO 210.

From my experience in the Harbor School, it has come to my attention that the amount of marine debris in the harbor is astounding. From bottles and ship lines to hypodermic needles and endless pieces of packing foam (Styrofoam). Thankfully the students that are a part of the harbor seals after-school club have taken initiative to collect this debris at a small part of the Governors Island coast but it isn't enough. The amount of debris will most likely just keep rising and washing up on New York City Shores especially as sea levels rise due to climate change. By creating an office of marine disposal, it could begin to change this crisis and begin to control the amount of debris in the harbor, bringing our city closer to where it belongs - a world leader in sustainability.

Many people are invested in restoring the harbor, and starting from scratch would be silly. Governors Island has the space and the people to complete all sections of this local law. Students, teachers, and Island partners are already heavily engaged in this work. There is an after-school club that has been working on collecting Marine Debris since March and collecting data on said debris. This law can enhance stem education, job creation, and community building, and engage our most important stakeholders, the youth engaged in scientific research and political advocacy. Even nonprofits like Earth Matter and Beam Center can help facilitate art and repurposing projects. In addition, this will aid in ideas for recycling.

New York Harbor School has 7 CTE Programs, and several of them are engaged in sustainability and cleaning our city. This law and implementation would both benefit our city and its educational pathways. Even nonprofits like Earth Matter and Beam Center among many of our other partners can help facilitate art and repurposing projects. You have organizations doing this work, invest in them, and pass the law.

I quote “ **Coordinate with and promote organizations and volunteer groups involved in removing marine debris from the city's beaches and shores.**” This is the most important part of this law, working with the community, and the stakeholders will make this a success.

My testimony may seem like we are trying to get exclusive rights to fund a pilot program. What my testimony is saying, is all over the city you have youth and nonprofits, doing this work. It would be wise to consult them and consider Governors Island as a testing ground for doing initial work. Thank you for your time and consideration.

## Teacher Testimony - Robert Markuske

**TO:** Committee on Resiliency and Waterfronts

**FROM:** Robert Markuske, New York Harbor School Teachers

**DATE:** June 13th, 2022

Dear *Committee on Resiliency and Waterfront*,

My name is Robert Markuske, I teach Marine Affairs, Policy, and Advocacy at New York Harbor School. Although this is my first time appearing in front of this committee, some of you have seen my student's faces. The course I teach studies our natural resources and humans' impact on said resources. With the end goal of students creating a sustainable solution to complex intersections of the environment, culture, and economics. I am speaking in support of the Int. No 210 law, specifically, in support of the section; “ *Coordinate with and promote organizations and volunteer groups involved in removing marine debris from the city’s beaches and shores.*” In addition, I heard a lot about what debris we can see, equal concern should go for what we don’t see. In addition, changing behavior on land must be taken seriously.

My recommendation is this, all across the city, specifically where I teach. We have young people collecting data, and creating solutions to facilitate the success of laws such as 210. Literally, you have a community of young scientists, advocates, and future policymakers, doing the work that's proposed today. I asked the city council to consider consulting stakeholders that have no other vested interest in making this work but for the environment, creating STEM education, and creating cultural and social equity. We have a duty to listen to young people doing the work of adults. Nonetheless on problems they inherit. Moreover, often done before the government takes action.

Governors Island is in the development of a Climate Solutions Center. I say this law would be a perfect addition to this development. Implementing this law using the physical and intellectual infrastructure of the New York Harbor School has endless potential to engage community organizations and institutions doing this vital work.

Over the last few years, I’ve attempted to partner with many government agencies and council members. It's proven difficult for a variety of reasons. I do understand the complicated process this holds but I urge the NYC council to reconsider their capacity to have young people beside them when working on implementing these laws and engaging the public. As I read my testimony, one could argue I am selfishly trying to take resources for my institution to do this work. What I am saying is that, since the students at NYHS do this work, Governors Island is building a Climate Solution Center, and it seems the stars are aligned.

Thank you for your time. You will be seeing me frequently with the stakeholders I mentioned above. Testifying at your hearings may become our new classroom, it's time their ideas get beyond the walls of our classroom. Have a great day.

## Student 2 - Anna Sheehan

**TO:** Committee on Resiliency and Waterfronts

**FROM:** Marcel Kernizan and New York Harbor School

**DATE:** June 13th, 2022

Dear Ari Kagan,

Good afternoon, my name is Anna Sheehan. I am a junior at the New York Harbor School within the Marine Biology and Research Program. I work as a Junior leader and analyst within Harbor SEALs, a civic science after-school program. I am testifying in favor of the intro Number 210 bill.

Our current project within SEALs is the Rip-Rap project, a data-collection, and environmental cleanup procedure. The goal of the project is to gain a data-oriented understanding of the trash that washes up on Governors Island's rocky coast. We have developed methods for collecting, organizing, and storing samples compiled. This includes weighing the samples, classifying the materials, and later disposing of them. This project originated through a collaborative effort between Harbor SEALs and Earth Matter, after years of noticing the overwhelming amount of debris on Governors Island students took initiative to clean and record debris washed up on this historic land sights border.

Without an accessible office or organization to collect marine debris and without strict reinforcements of laws, waste will continue to wash up on our shores and be detrimental to the health of the harbor and its surrounding inhabitants. Since Harbor SEALs began collecting debris one to two times a week in March, we have been overwhelmed by the amount of debris, especially foam and plastic. The timeline and resources of this project only allowed for a minimal amount of Governors Island to be searched for debris and the tide often affected whether or not debris could be picked up. Keeping my last statement in mind, it is critical to realize that hundreds of plastic bottles, and thousands of pieces of foam were found, and hundreds of plastic scraps and pounds of boating line have been found.

It is disturbing that marine debris continues to be a pressing issue, but, I can confidently say that it is through this law that environmental education can be promoted and that the New York Harbor can get steps closer to being restored. Thank you all for your time.

## Student 3- Arlo Kane

**TO:** Committee on Resiliency and Waterfronts

**FROM:** Arlo Kane, New York Harbor School

**DATE:** June 13th, 2022

Dear Ari Kagan,

Good afternoon, my name is Arlo Kane. I am a junior in the marine biology research program and Harbor SEALs after-school program At the New York Harbor School.

I work in communications and data analysis for the Marine Rip-Rap project. I am speaking in support of the Int. No 210 law

In my experience collecting and organizing marine debris as a part of the Harbor SEAL's Rip Rap project, we have encountered the result of excessive and unjustified waste from government and independent property. For example fishing boat lines, smoking apparatus, and branded cups and bags. without the creation of an office responsible for marine debris disposal, there will be an alarming increase in trash washing up on New York shores.

One of the most overwhelming categories of debris that the Harbor SEALs measured were boat lines. These boat and fishing lines can be very harmful to local ecosystems and animals. For example, one piece of debris found had a dead bird wrapped in a fishing line on it. However, above all else it is important to pay attention to the kind of debris we can not see with our own eyes. Microplastics affect the harbor's ecosystem on a fundamental level and will continue to be introduced as long as marine debris like rope, single-use plastics, bags, etc are in our harbor. Through the marine biology research program, we have found that microplastics outnumber phytoplankton very consistently.

Through the creation of a marine debris office, there will not only be a great reduction in animals being killed or injured but will also help to reduce microplastics and give us new more thorough ways to analyze the crisis.

In conclusion, the benefits of passing this law will greatly outweigh the negatives as the office will create new jobs, allow for further analysis of marine debris, open opportunities for students, and help save our local ecosystems.

## Teacher Testimony - Mauricio Gonzalez

**TO:** Committee on Resiliency and Waterfronts

**FROM:** Teacher Mauricio Gonzalez and New York Harbor School

**DATE:** June 13th, 2022

Dear Ari Kagan,

We thank you and the council for doing the hard work of keeping our democracy and great City alive and healthy. My name is Mauricio Gonzalez, I've taught Marine Biology Research at the Urban Assembly New York Harbor School and the Frederick Douglass Academy since 2001. I started teaching in NYC to do the heavy lifting of empowering the next generation of environmental stewards and change the culture of excess and disposability that has plagued our natural environment for the last century. Our students monitor the Harbor for contaminants such as microplastics and their impact on plankton; they monitor chemicals in the water, they recover marine debris washing up on the shores of Governors Island, and much, much more. We do the impossible work of teaming up with dozens of organizations in these endeavors while preparing our scholars for college and careers. What better hope for a young person than to be able to make a difference in their world so that they can have hope and a reason to look forward to their futures. We deeply believe in our work and the role of our City as a beacon of responsible business and environmental stewardship for the world.

I ask the city council to consider in addition to the aforementioned initiative and resolutions which I support: 01) to consider adding the term "externalities" to the list of terms and set up a vehicle by which to study how to tackle the issue of marine debris from this perspective. In other words, once the debris is found and we can identify the producers, we may want an avenue by which to approach them to become a visible part of the solution. Handing off externalities to the public or the government in the form of volunteer work is insufficient to change the tide, and 02) Address the assumption that consumers are knowledgeable and capable on their own to dispose of all the forms of waste that run off into our waters every second of the day. Dedicating resources to public outreach for the creation of campaigns and signage that strengthens consumer responsibility would be critical for such an office.

Lastly, we look forward to the creation of the Center for Climate Solutions on Governors Island so that we can make our city and region to the next level of climate change solutions and empower our next generation of climate stewards.

For a clean harbor,  
Mauricio



6/13/2022

Imagine driving along a highway littered with broken down vehicles spread willy-nilly across the roadway. This is the exact situation around New York City waters such as Jamaica Bay and its canals as well as other area waters throughout the city. The abandoned and sunken boats throughout these areas are more than just an eyesore, the environmental impacts may not be measured for quite some time.

The proposed legislation that would create the Office of Marine Debris Disposal and Vessel Surrendering would be a great step forward in helping to keep our waters safe for the boating community to enjoy and to keep the push going forward for cleaner and healthier waterways throughout the city, most especially our beaches where debris can be seen washing up along the shore.

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

We are all aware that boats are constructed using various synthetic materials and solutions, and in time, many of them leak chemicals to create a toxic environment. Here are a few examples:

- Cleaning agents like detergents accumulate in sediment which are broken down by microorganisms. These reduce the oxygen content in water, impairing wildlife growth.
- Battery acid easily dissolves in water, increasing an environment's natural acidity or alkalinity. Most marine wildlife requires a specific pH and changing that level can decimate an entire region.
- Oil, gasoline, and other fuel products affect wildlife in dozens of ways, from killing environments outright to causing cancer, birth defects, and behavioral changes in both aquatic and human life.
- Zinc, copper, and other metals that make up boats can chip off or dissolve in water, and they are impossible to remove from the environments they contaminate. When ingested, these metals can decimate marine plants and animals.

When abandoned vessels decompose, and they release these substances and more. Substances that can destroy natural environments such as marshes and marine forest which are the natural

defenses that coastal communities rely on to help protect them from coastal storms. Without this protection we are endangering humans in these areas.

Here's a simple scenario:

A boat owner, who doesn't use their boat as often now, realizes that it's starting to cost more in docking and maintenance fees than it is worth. Instead of worrying about pulling it out of the water and doing something with it like selling it or scrapping it, they decide to just let it float away figuring it will sink somewhere and become a reef. Now, whether they managed to convince themselves that doing this is good. Now imagine for a minute if there was a way that they could decide to have the boat disposed of safely and properly through the Office of Marine Debris Disposal and Vessel Surrendering. This would keep those harmful chemicals out of our waters and our waterways safer!

Safety when on the water is of utmost importance. Any boater will tell you, any obstacle in the water poses a serious threat. Human debris can get tangled in motors and other boats on or in the water can destroy a boat that strikes it. Abandoned boats are particularly dangerous since they move without rhyme or reason while drifting on the surface or worse, while bobbing beneath it without being seen. Because boating accidents are often deadly, we should strive to do as much as you can to keep waterways safe, which means finding alternatives to abandoning unwanted vessels.

For the past few years, coastal communities have worked closely with New York City Parks in having facilitated the removal of many abandoned boats. Much has been accomplished but there's much more to do and creating the Office of Marine Debris Disposal and Vessel Surrendering would be a huge step in the right direction.

Thank you to my Councilwoman Joann Ariola and to the entire city council for understanding the impact that these derelict boats have to our coastal communities, and I hope you will provide the necessary funding to help continue making Jamaica Bay and all New York City waters, cleaner and more environmentally safe. The sight of these abandoned boats is not pretty. America's waterways should be stunning places of ecological and geological splendor, but litter and debris of any size threatens the natural beauty.

Best,



Mr. Roger Gendron

President, New Hamilton Beach Civic Association

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

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

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: KEVIN BYRNES

Address: CHIEF, MARINE OPERATIONS

I represent: DEP

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: 6/13/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nate Grove

Address: Arsenal, Central Park

I represent: NYC Parks

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

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

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

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ANDREW SCHWARTZ

Address: 1 LIBERTY PLAZA

I represent: Small Business Services

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

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

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor  in opposition

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

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DIMITRIOS KATEHIS

Address: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I represent: NYC DEP

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

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**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 0461 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

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

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Anthony DiGirolamo Sheriff NYC

Address: State Ave 110th St NYC

I represent: NYC Sheriff's Office

Address: 125th St NYC

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

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 210 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 6-13-22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Marilyn Kerzner

Address: 1578 east 51 Street BK NY 11254

I represent: New York Harbor School

Address: 10 South Street 5017

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THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 210 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 6-13-22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Robert Mark Kuschel

Address: 615 Van Buren St. BK NY 10011

I represent: New York Harbor School

Address: 10 South St. NY, NY 10004

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