



Testimony on T2014-1905 before the New York City Council Committee on Local Law 55, 2011
October 2014

Good morning, Chair Rose and members of the City Council Committee on Waterfronts. My name is Illya Azaroff AIA, and I am the founding co-chair of the Design for Risk and a Reconstruction committee and on the board of directors at the American Institute of Architects (AIANY). I am here to offer testimony in support of the Clean Waterfront Plan, Local Law 55, 2011.

AIANY is the largest AIA component in the country with more than 5,000 members. AIANY and its members are dedicated to the sustainable and resilient efforts needed for our waterfront not only for today but for the future. The integrity, regulation, and restoration of the waterfront impacts not just New York City but the entire region. By protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public through design, we can achieve the goals set forth by PlaNYC, Vision 2020, and the Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability's SIRR report. We believe that Local Law 55, 2011 can help advance resilient efforts and safeguard the environment we are so dependent upon.

Since Super Storm Sandy, we have recognized the vulnerabilities and potential risks associated with the various waterfront conditions in and around New York City. Those vulnerabilities include former and current industrial sites in the flood zones, storm water runoff and treatment facilities along with the extensive history of building using materials now known to be harmful to the environment and public at large. AIANY commends the Council and City Agencies for focusing attention on our waterfronts through legislation, such as Local Law 55.

The Clean Waterfront Plan recognizes these risks and many more and calls for cross agency data sharing to ensure enforcement, testing, and remediation; however, in order to respond to ongoing climate change, we advise that the 500 year flood levels plus a factor of safety become a minimum Benchmark rather than the 100 year flood levels. We also suggest that inland flooding and subsequent runoff be considered in greater detail as these areas do not appear on any 100 or 500 Flood Maps.

AIANY reinforces that architects and allied professionals are committed to continue to work alongside city agencies in these and future efforts to achieve our collective goals of a secure, sustainable future. We recognize the important role that architects, planners, and engineers have in ensuring a clean and healthy waterfront. Furthermore, we strongly suggest that this and other waterfront initiatives to be shared with other governing bodies and jurisdictions outside of New York City yet are contiguous with the same hydro-cycle such as the State of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

As one of the world's largest freshwater estuaries we must recognize all of the regional parameters that govern water quality and use. The findings of the Clean Waterfront Plan recognize the geographies at play yet do not reinforce the "downstream" effects on the city of New York. Additionally, existing waterfront neighborhoods, commercial areas, and industrial sites are sources of ongoing water pollution and clean water risk by proximity and age.

We support the proposed green ways and soft urban edges described in the summary of the Clean Waterfront Plan recognizing the public good these spaces provide. Such amenities reinforces the movement of New York City to re-engage the waterfront and describe a civic spirit and civic vision for the future.

AIANY members are committed to resilient and sustainable design. We look forward to working with you on this Local Law and continuing to educate all stakeholders to the importance of a clean and healthy waterfront.

Respectfully submitted,

Illya Azaroff, AIA