Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am Louis Kleinman and I am speaking for Roland Lewis, President of the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance. The Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance is a coalition of over 560 organizations working together to transform the New York Harbor and its waterways into a world-class resource for work, play, transit and education.

Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance supports the completion of the East River Greenway. I am personally thrilled that the completion of the East River Greenway is finally within reach. Building an East River Greenway will finally give our community the waterfront access it deserves – with an unbroken promenade for biking, walking and being outdoors. We can give the East Side access to their waterfront for the first time in more than a half a century and add needed open space to the East Side, which has the lowest ratio of park land to residents and workers in the City.

The legislation Gov. Cuomo signed in July authorizing the UN to expand its campus unlocks the revenue needed to build the missing portion of the East River Greenway between 38th and 60th Streets. Without this revenue – the new promenade along the East River from 38th to 60th
Streets—the last remaining gap in the East Side greenway—and other park investments in the community would otherwise go unfunded.

We have the opportunity to increase the overall open space on the East Side by close to 130,000 square feet. That’s more than four times the 29,000sf patch of asphalt at Robert Moses Playground and includes the development of the ODR Esplanade, the UN Esplanade, the ConEd Waterside Pier, and the expansion of Asser Levy Playground.

With your approval we can make the East River Greenway become a reality – we urge you to support this proposal so we can close the gap in the Greenway and take advantage of all the quality of life benefits it will provide. We applaud the work of the Friends of the East River Greenway but we continue to encourage the City to ensure community involvement throughout the entire process. When the time comes, the maritime community’s recommendations should be incorporated into the plan so that the necessary infrastructure is developed for docking boats. MWA recommends that pier and public access designs are of high quality, reflect the goals of the newly released NYC Comprehensive Waterfront Plan and incorporate attention to detail required to ensure docks and piers are useable by a variety of boats and are equitable and beneficial for communities and the city at large.