



Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance

May 16, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT INFO:

Roland Lewis (c) 917- 696-3139; (w) 935-9831x101; rlewis@waterfrontalliance.org

Ian Douglas (c) 917-684-9890; (w) 212-935-9831 x103; idouglas@waterfrontalliance.org

Christopher Ward, Christine Quinn, and Key Congressional and Waterfront Leaders Come Together to Promote Visionary Regional Waterfront

Launch of the New Harbor Coalition

At Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance Floating Follow-Up Conference— An Unprecedented Gathering to Promote Visionary Regional Waterfront

New York, NY: On Monday, May 16, senior NY/NJ metropolitan region political and civic leaders came together to move forward New York City’s new Comprehensive Waterfront Plan and celebrate the designation of the NY-NJ Harbor as one of the country’s official Great Waters at the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance’s Waterfront Conference Floating Follow-Up.

Christopher O. Ward of the Port Authority of NY & NJ; New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn; U.S. Representatives Maloney, Nadler, Tonko, and Velazquez; and New Jersey Department of Transportation Commissioner James Simpson, New York City Planning Commissioner Amanda M. Burden, and other key waterfront officials joined hundreds of waterfront advocates for the unprecedented event.

“This is an extraordinary gathering of business, government, and civic leaders,” said Roland Lewis, President and CEO of the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance. “Together we are taking the far-reaching waterfront plans that have been developed and starting the hard work of making them reality—transforming our harbor into a sustainable, 21st century resource for recreation, education, and economic development.”

The conference focused on implementation of New York City’s Vision 2020, a comprehensive plan for the future of the waterfront over the next ten years.

“The greatness of New York City grew directly from our connection to our water,” said Council Speaker Quinn. “But at some point in our history, we turned our backs on the waterfront. The Council is proud to have contributed to the new vision for our city’s waterfront, first passing legislation requiring that the Mayor create a waterfront plan every ten years and also working with the New York City Economic Development Corporation to bring comprehensive ferry service to our waterways. Working together, with groups like the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance, New York City’s 520 miles of waterfront will grow into a premiere place to live, work, play and travel.”

"I am delighted to see that just two months after the release of Vision 2020: the New York City Waterfront Plan, advocates have convened with a commitment to implement the recommendations of this landmark strategic, sustainable blueprint for our waterfront and waterways," said Commissioner Burden. "Over the next three years, the City has committed \$3.3 Billion in investments to advance the plan, from improving public access to strengthening our working waterfront, to cleaning our waters and making it easier to navigate the waves of regulations for improving waterfront properties. This broad base of support for the plan will be essential to ensure that our 10 year framework for action will continue to strengthen New York City's identity as a world class harbor city and make our waterfront and waterways part of New Yorkers' everyday lives."

"The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers stands ready to work together with all of the regional partners to advance the actions and goals outlined in the New York City Comprehensive Waterfront Plan, the Hudson Raritan Estuary Comprehensive Restoration Plan and the other Corps' missions in order to contribute to the economic and environmental sustainability of the metropolitan region," said Col. John R. Boulé, II, the Army Corps' New York District Commander. "This conference is yet another opportunity for the region to tackle issues and seize opportunities to further our vision of a World Class Harbor Estuary."

"Access to the waterfront is one of the most important issues facing our city of islands. I thank Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance President Roland Lewis, Chair John Watts, and everyone at MWA for their leadership in helping bring New York's waterfront into the 21st century. I look forward to working with MWA on a number of projects underway in my district to improve the waterfront: cleaning up Newtown Creek, fixing the East River esplanade above 60th Street, creating a new esplanade from 38th to 60th Streets, repairing seawalls along Roosevelt Island and in Western Queens, and increasing water taxi service along the East River. Working together, we can make sure that our waterfront finally begins to live up to the promise of this great city," said Maloney.

"I look forward to working with my colleagues in New York and across the Hudson to create a healthy, accessible and dynamic waterfront," said Representative Nydia Velazquez.

"It's wonderful to join with so many advocates and leaders on waterfront issues at the MWA's conference" said Congressman Jerrold Nadler. "The port is extremely important to the economic well-being of our city and region, and the City's comprehensive waterfront plan provides an excellent blueprint for the future growth of our maritime economy and infrastructure. We can all be proud that the waterfront plan reaffirms the City's commitment to preserving, protecting and investing in our precious maritime and industrial infrastructure, including the efficient movement of goods by rail through the region."

"I am thrilled to join the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance for their 2011 Conference," said Congressman Tonko. "Throughout New York State, our waterways represent the ink that wrote our history. 200 years ago, New York City's historic harbor and working waterfronts connected with the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers and Erie Canal to give rise to our Empire State as a global economic powerhouse. It's a tremendous opportunity to join with the MWA today to discuss the importance of our historically connected waterways and pursue a comprehensive strategy that recaptures their potential as a catalyst for economic development and community renewal."

The event also marked the launch of the new Harbor Coalition a bi-state effort to generate the resources needed to restore and improve the region's harbor and waterfront.

“A thriving waterfront on both sides of the Hudson River is the primary goal of Harbor Coalition,” said Christopher Ward, Executive Director of the Port Authority of NY & NJ. “The Port Authority is proud to support this worthy undertaking and looks forward to working with our partners to enhance the waterfront for the people of New York and New Jersey.”

“New Jersey and New York are immensely fortunate to have extensive waterfront resources,” said New Jersey Department of Transportation Commissioner James Simpson. “Regional cooperation and planning efforts can help us maximize the value of these assets in a sustainable way that creates new transportation, commerce and recreational opportunities.”

They will be joined by experts from San Francisco, Seattle, and Portland, who will share their ideas and expertise.

The Waterfront Conference Floating Follow-Up was held on the *Spirit of New Jersey*, a vessel provided by sponsor Entertainment Cruises. “It is critical that waterfront policy-makers, businesses, and advocates to have the chance to come together and work out what needs to be done to make our harbor better for everyone,” said Christine Metivier, General Manager and Vice President of Entertainment Cruises. “We are proud to sponsor this important event.”

Waterfront Conference Floating Follow-Up Sponsors

Con Edison, Entertainment Cruises/Spirit Cruises, Port Authority of NY & NJ, HDR Engineering, NY Waterway, New York Container Terminal, Metro Energy, MWH Global, New York City Economic Development Corporation, ARCADIS, and McLaren Engineering Group.

About the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance (www.waterfrontalliance.org)

The Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance works to transform the New York and New Jersey harbor and waterways to make them clean and accessible, a vibrant place to play, learn and work, with great parks, great jobs and great transportation for all.

-end-

