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Harbor Scorecard is Launched on First Day of Hurricane Season

How protected are our coastal communities and our infrastructure? Are waterways meeting Clean Water Act standards? Where are opportunities for public access to the water? Turn to the Harbor Scorecard for answers and action, neighborhood by neighborhood

New York, NY—Nearly five years after New York and New Jersey residents woke to the devastating floods of Hurricane Sandy, the Waterfront Alliance released the region's first-ever [Harbor Scorecard](#) on the **steps of City Hall in Lower Manhattan at 11am on Thursday, June 1, 2017**, the first day of a hurricane season forecast to be worse than usual and following the U.S. exit from the Paris climate accords. In this **Rally for Our Waterfronts**, elected officials and Waterfront Alliance partners from all over the region called for better coastal defenses, improved water quality, and more access to the waterways.

Comprehensive and user-friendly, the Scorecard presents extensive research in public access, ecology, and resiliency for a neighborhood-by-neighborhood evaluation of the region's waterfronts.

Some surprising highlights:

- **More than 400,000 New Yorkers (more than the entire population of New Orleans) face a 50 percent risk of a major flood by 2060**
- **Compounding the problem, more than 40 percent of those at risk face substantial social or economic barriers to recovery**
- **Despite being a city of islands, there is only one boating access site for every four miles of New York City waterfront**
- **Nearly one quarter of all water samples failed EPA safe swimming standards in 2015, with more than 17 billion gallons of raw sewage discharged into the waterways (a relatively dry year)**

The [Harbor Scorecard](#) distills complex data into an easy-to-use web tool that creates benchmarks for strong, healthy, and open waterfronts. Using the Scorecard, any stakeholder—from individuals to community groups—will be able to assess their waterfronts in terms of access, water quality, and coastal resiliency. Stuffed with facts and proactive suggestions, the Scorecard will allow users to articulate what they need to improve their waterfronts. [View the Harbor Scorecard](#) and [download the Scorecard overview](#).

Comments from around the region:

"As a coastal city, we must make every effort to ensure we protect our waterfront communities by providing sustainable and resilient measures that are vital to the safety of New Yorkers," said New York City Council member Donovan Richards. "With the opening of hurricane season, it's important to remember that the next 100-year storm

could happen any year, and the more work we do now to mitigate future damage, the stronger our city will be. It is also critical that New Yorkers have easy access to our waterways and that our marine life has a home that allows them to thrive. I'd like to thank the Waterfront Alliance and all of its partners for working to highlight this issue."

"This new scorecard tool distills extensive research and data into accessible, geographically customized information for all New Yorkers," said Council member Debi Rose, chair of the Waterfronts Committee. "The better we understand the accessibility, quality and resiliency of our waterways, the better position we will be in to improve them. I thank the Waterfront Alliance for assembling this important tool, and I look forward to ongoing collaboration to improve our waterways."

Council member Costa Constantinides said, "On the first day of hurricane season, we raise awareness of the importance of our city's resiliency. Waterfront Alliance's new Harbor Scorecard illustrates how protected our infrastructure is, our risk of flooding, the quality of our waterways, and our capacity for recovery. The Scorecard shows that work needs to be done, including in Astoria's waterway health and the quality of our sewage management. As the effects of climate change will only increase risk of flooding and damage from potential hurricanes, we must work continue to implement policies that improve our environment. Thank you to Waterfront Alliance for raising awareness of these important issues with their new Harbor Scorecard."

"As climate change continues to be a reality the threat of another superstorm hitting our city remains," said Council member Ben Kallos. "The Waterfront Alliance Harbor Scorecard will serve as a useful tool for New Yorkers to stay informed of the conditions our coastal communities are in so we are ready when the next Sandy arrives."

"The Waterfront Alliance's Harbor Scorecard is a valuable tool for areas like Red Hook where more than half the residents at risk of flooding also face substantial social or economic barriers to recovery," said Council member Carlos Menchaca. "The Scorecard provides practical information for neighborhoods as they seek better water quality and access. Our City's renewed focus on the harbor requires a better understanding of how maritime industries, recreational uses and resilience efforts interact. I thank the Waterfront Alliance for helping New Yorkers build a better, more sustainable relationship with the harbor."

"From colonial times up until the present day, our waterfront has been our city's premier resource," said Council member Margaret Chin. "After decades of neglect, our coast is reemerging as a center of recreation, residential uses and industry. This scorecard is an invaluable tool that will allow residents, business owners and visitors to be an active partner in our city's waterfront renaissance. I thank the Waterfront Alliance for their work on this important issue."

"The Harbor Scorecard will prove to be an invaluable resource in improving water quality throughout the city," said Council member Paul Vallone. "The data provided by this tool will be critical in identifying which communities are in the greatest need of water quality improvement and also serve as evidence for requesting increased funding and resources to address this issue. Our waterways are an incredible resource and need to be protected and enhanced for the benefit of all New Yorkers."

"Flushing Bay is an active waterway and waterfront, used by hundreds of human-powered boaters, active citizens and fishermen alike," said Akila Simon of the Guardians of Flushing Bay. "The Bay has quickly become home to NYC's largest naturally growing oyster population, despite being constantly polluted by combined sewer overflow. The Waterfront Alliance's Harbor Scorecard will be a great benchmark for us as we continue to build momentum and move forward with strategic efforts to improve the water quality of the Flushing Bay."

"The Waterfront Alliance cannot solve all of New York City's waterfront and sea level rise issues, but its Harbor Scorecard will indicate whether we are moving in the right direction, becoming more resilient while at the same time providing more and better access to the waterfront," said Klaus Jacob of Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory.

"Access to the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary—whether for swimming, boating, fishing, or just enjoying the spectacular views—is an amenity that impacts quality of life and drives spending by residents, visitors, and businesses" said Robert Pirani, program director for the New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program at the Hudson River Foundation. "The Waterfront Alliance's Harbor Scorecard, which utilizes data on parks and public access compiled by the Harbor & Estuary Program, makes it easy to see which of our waterfront communities are able to realize these benefits."

"Right now, New York City is making decisions that will affect clean water investments for the next generation," said Larry Levine, a senior attorney at Natural Resources Defense Council. "Thanks to the Clean Water Act, our harbor is cleaner than it used to be. But far too often the water is still too polluted to touch. Sewage overflows still foul our

waterways after it rains, making them unsafe for eight million New Yorkers to use recreationally. The Harbor Scorecard is a call to action for local, state and federal officials, shining a light on where we need to invest in our infrastructure for a cleaner, healthier future.”

“Are we safe? Can we get on the water? Is the water clean?” asked Roland Lewis, president and CEO of the Waterfront Alliance. “Unfortunately, it’s the same answer for all three questions: not always. And that’s not acceptable. We should be able to get wet when we want to, and stay dry when we need to. But five years after Sandy, hundreds of thousands of people still face substantial risk of a devastating flood. With the United States withdrawing from the Paris climate agreement, the need to protect our coastal city from sea level rise and storm surge is more important than ever. The Harbor Scorecard will help ordinary citizens first assess their waterfronts and then articulate how to improve them, whether better storm surge defenses are required, or water quality needs improvement, or people are clamoring for a public dock. The time is now; the Harbor Scorecard is here.”

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The [Waterfront Alliance](#) works to protect, transform, and revitalize our harbor and waterfront.