Public Testimony
New York City Council, Committee on Environmental Protection
Re: Oversight - Facilitating the Use of Wind Power in New York City

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Waterfront Alliance

The Waterfront Alliance is a non-profit civic organization and coalition of more than 1,000 community and recreational groups, educational institutions, businesses, and other stakeholders committed to restoring and revitalizing New York Harbor and the surrounding waterways. Our waters have been revitalized with education, recreation, and transportation, and the harbor has long been a vital conduit for commerce.

Waterfront Alliance strongly supports Resolution 0176-2018 in support of the State of New York’s “commitment to and facilitation of the development of large-scale offshore wind projects by 2030,” which is sponsored by Council Members Donovan Richards and Helen Rosenthal. In March 2017, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management entered into a lease for nearly 80,000 acres approximately 30 miles off the coast of New York for exploration of offshore wind development. Although power generation is not expected to begin until approximately 2027, New York City must take this once-in-a-generation opportunity—to provide renewable energy to New York City and simultaneously create new, good-paying jobs in the maritime sector—as the kind of bold action we need to combat the threat of climate change-related storms and sea level rise. As other states along the Atlantic coast have taken the initiative to prepare ports and staging areas for this emerging industry, New York risks losing out on capturing the enormous economic potential of offshore wind.

Offshore wind power generation presents opportunities for simultaneous economic and environmental benefits for New York City and its residents. Its growth would contribute toward the goals of the Clean Energy Standard, which requires 50 percent of New York State’s electricity to come from renewable energy by 2030. This would continue to reduce our dependence on greenhouse gas-emitting fossil fuels and reduce our region’s impact to global climate change. It would also position New York City as the hub for thousands of new jobs and maritime support services this growth industry will require. Our waterfront has the capability to support new, high-wage industrial and logistics jobs that can create new career pathways in clean energy for New Yorkers living with the risks posed by climate change.

We must preserve and build upon the expertise we have right here in New York’s maritime sector to fully capture the benefits of offshore wind power generation. While the port industry has expanded over the past generation to bring much of the region’s container and terminal operations to New Jersey, many of the maritime support services, including tugs, barges, and ship repair services, which make our ports run smoothly, are located in New York City. In particular, we can utilize the industrial maritime infrastructure along the Brooklyn waterfront as the nexus for a vital new industry with vast regional and global potential. One such example is the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal (SBMT), where the City has invested more than $100 million in infrastructure improvements to reactivate the facility with maritime-dependent uses.

New York’s proximity to proposed offshore wind development sites along the East Coast positions us as a good candidate for a centralized port for the industry. To become a first mover, and catalyze investment that could serve additional
markets beyond New York, we must commit to fully utilizing our port infrastructure and invest in workforce development, skills training, and job placement. Building the training facilities, developing a skilled workforce, and utilizing our working waterfront will embed labor and supply chains within our region, and new attract manufacturers and logistics companies to serve the offshore wind sector.

**New York City must be a world leader as we rise to meet the challenges we face together.** We must once again look to the water's edge to meet new challenges—the port that helped New York grow into a global capital for commerce and culture must be called into service to help protect our planet and preserve our livelihood. We urge the New York City Council to take the steps necessary to support the development of offshore wind energy in New York, to support new job growth and combat the threats posed by global climate change. We thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony, and welcome any questions you may have.