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May 7, 2019: Waterfront Conference

RISING SEAS, RISING RISKS: Adapting Our Region

*Leaders from the Civic, Business, Government, Academic, and Media Worlds
Explore the Latest in Resilience and Adaptation, and Plan for Action*

New York, NY—How can our region prepare for climate change? How do we ensure coastal resiliency is part of the national conversation about climate change? How can we pay for all that needs to be done, and how do we communicate the urgency of the situation? This year's Waterfront Conference, [Rising Seas, Risks: Adapting Our Region](#), will explore these pressing questions when more than 500 civic and business leaders; engineers, planners, and architects; academics; community activists; and media professionals come together to plan for action.

The Waterfront Alliance's annual Waterfront Conference, this year on **Tuesday, May 7**, is the region's premier forum focused on the challenges of and solutions to climate adaptation, sustaining a strong maritime industry, and equitable access at our shared waterways. The day-long series of panels and presentations takes place aboard the Hornblower *Infinity*, dockside at Hudson River Park, Pier 40, in the morning, and cruising New York Harbor throughout the afternoon.

On May 7, after a welcome from Waterfront Alliance president and CEO **Roland Lewis** and Hornblower Cruises & Events CEO **Terry MacRae**, a series of experts will present short keynotes. New York City Comptroller **Scott M. Stringer** will discuss the economics of sustainability and resilience with Marketplace reporter **Janet Babin**. Comedian **Chuck Nice** will present "Climate Truthoganda" and New York City Council Member and chair of the Council's Environmental Protection Committee **Costa Constantinides** will give remarks. Attendees will also hear a timely report from the New York City Panel on Climate Change.

High-level panels in the morning will include civic and private sector leaders from across the country—including Miami, Norfolk, and New Orleans—examining how to prepare for big floods, plus a discussion among local municipal leaders from New York City and Jersey City on resilience strategies at the neighborhood level, as well as a talk on financing resiliency investments with leaders from the financial industry. Key speakers include New York City Park & Recreation commissioner **Mitchell J. Silver**; New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection commissioner **Catherine McCabe**; visionary architect **Susannah Drake** of DLANDstudio; **Peter Kasabach**, executive director of New Jersey Future; **Matthew Kwatinetz**, executive vice president, asset management, New York City Economic Development Corporation; **Peggy Shepard**, executive director, WE ACT for Environmental Justice; **Alan Rubin**, principal, Blank Rome Government Relations; Jersey City's Director of Housing, Economic Development and

Commerce **Annisia Cialone**; **Michael Samuelian**, president of The Trust for Governors Island; and founder of *Untapped Cities* **Michelle Young**.

The event will continue with these sessions and panels, some concurrent:

- New York City Comprehensive Waterfront Plan: The Next Ten Years
- Innovators Present: from the fields of artificial intelligence, autonomous ships, and resiliency infrastructure
- Get Back: Is Managed Retreat Going Mainstream?
- A Picture is Worth One Thousand Words: Breaking Through With Climate Art
- The Future of Governors Island and Connecting to the Waterfront
- Watershed Planning and Ecological Restoration in Our Region
- The Answers (and Questions) are Blowing in the Wind: Opportunities and Challenges for Offshore Wind in the Region
- Shape Your Waterfront: WEDG as a Toolkit for Civic Engagement

The day will begin with the Port Authority Waterfront Scholars Welcome Breakfast, and will conclude with the Norwegian Consulate General and Equinor Wind US Networking Reception. For the fourth year, the [Waterfront Scholars](#) program, this year sponsored by The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, invited college and graduate students to attend the conference and contribute their perspectives on climate change and resiliency.

View the [Waterfront Conference program](#).

"How we ensure the safety of millions of lives and how we communicate the urgency of resilience in the face of climate change are the crucial questions of our time," said **Peter Madonia**, Waterfront Alliance trustee and former chief operating officer of The Rockefeller Foundation. "The Waterfront Conference is the place to start figuring out the answers."

"With several hundred thousand homes and businesses in the floodplain, the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) is working to update zoning to allow owners to build more resiliently or retrofit to better withstand future storms and tidal surges. I look forward to discussing the range of measures that my colleagues are advancing to ensure our city can enjoy the benefits of its waterfront location and manage the risks," said **Anita Laremont**, DCP executive director.

"What should the next ten years of the New York City Comprehensive Waterfront Plan look like?" said **Michael Marrella**, DCP director of waterfront and open space planning. "At the Waterfront Conference, my team and I expect to explore the most innovative ideas about coastal resiliency with the brightest people in the business, and incorporate these strategies into the next Comprehensive Waterfront Plan."

"When looking at the towering glass and steel skyscrapers of Manhattan, it's easy to forget that we are surrounded by rivers, streams, a tidally influenced estuary, and the Atlantic Ocean. In the words of our President '...surrounded by water, big water, ocean water,'" said comedian **Chuck Nice**. "Human-caused climate chaos is the single most critical issue posing potential threats to the lives, livelihoods, and lifestyles of our citizens and it's crucial that we get them to buy into the efforts to secure resiliency. In addition to planning how we manage the many challenges presented by climate, we must also outline how we will communicate the issue to optimize public support of the comprehensive strategies needed to answer this challenge."

"Climate change is already impacting the health of the New York–New Jersey Harbor Estuary," noted **Isabelle Stinnette**, restoration manager at the New York–New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program. "Sustaining critical wetlands and the services they provide requires new conversations about how we manage our shared waters and coastal lands."

"By integrating environmentally sensitive technologies into the planning, design, and construction of urban, coastal, and marine infrastructure, we are able to harness natural processes both for ecological enhancement and improved structural performance, thus bridging development and sustainability. Apart from the highly valuable ecological and structural advantages, these methods also provide economic advantages associated with increased stability, longevity, as well as a reduction in maintenance costs," said **Andrew Rella**, global director of engineering at EConcrete.

"The [2019 report from the New York City Panel on Climate Change](#) and the [2018 report from the International Panel on Climate Change](#) both could not be more clear. The seas are rising inexorably, climate change is here to stay, and hundreds of thousands of people in the region are vulnerable," said Waterfront Alliance president and CEO **Roland Lewis**. "As we consider bold steps forward, we must be informed by science, and organize robust and real public discussion, like we have at the Waterfront Conference, to address the urgency."

[Learn more about the Waterfront Conference and purchase tickets](#) (\$150 regular ticket; \$75 government agencies and nonprofits; \$50 students). Registration and breakfast is 8am to 8:40am; the boat is dockside at Pier 40, Hudson River Park until 1pm; the afternoon harbor cruise returns at 5pm.

The Waterfront Conference is generously sponsored by:

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