



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **“RISING SEAS, RISING RISKS: Adapting Our Region” Waterfront Conference to Take Place on May 7, 2019**

Science, arts, technology, and engineering come together at region’s premier waterfront forum

***Waterfront Alliance announces that 26 Community Boards across the five boroughs have taken the WEDG Pledge to strengthen waterfront resilience and design. Conference panelists will discuss a citywide campaign to promote use of the Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines***

New York, NY—On May 7, 2019, more than 500 civic and business leaders; engineers, planners, and architects; academics; community activists; students; and media professionals will meet for the annual [Waterfront Conference](#). The theme of this year’s conference is “Rising Seas, Rising Risks: Adapting Our Region,” with the day-long agenda to explore pressing resilience and waterfront matters in a series of panels, workshops, and networking opportunities.

The [Waterfront Alliance](#)’s annual Waterfront Conference—a conference on a boat—is the region’s premier forum focused on the challenges of climate adaptation at the waterfront, a strong maritime industry, and equitable access at our shared waterways. The event takes place aboard the Hornblower *Infinity*, dockside at Hudson River Park, Pier 40, in the morning, and cruising New York Harbor throughout the afternoon. The day will begin at 8am with the Port Authority Waterfront Scholars breakfast and conclude at 5:30pm with the Norwegian Consulate General and Equinor Wind US networking reception. This year, 98 college and graduate students were invited to attend the conference and contribute their perspectives on climate change as Waterfront Scholars, a program sponsored by The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey.

After a welcome at 8:45am from Waterfront Alliance president and CEO **Roland Lewis** and Hornblower Cruises & Events CEO **Terry MacRae**, keynotes will be given by New York City Comptroller **Scott M. Stringer** (discussing the economics of sustainability and resilience with *Marketplace* reporter **Janet Babin**), comedian **Chuck Nice**, New York City Council Environmental Protection Committee chair **Costa Constantinides**, and New York City Panel on Climate Change co-chair **Bill Solecki**.

High-level panels in the morning will include civic and private sector leaders from across the country 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 NYC Parks commissioner **Mitchell J. Silver**; New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection commissioner **Catherine R. McCabe**; visionary architect **Susannah Drake** of DLANDstudio; **Peter Kasabach**, executive director of New Jersey Future; **Matthew Kwatinetz**, executive vice

president, asset management, PortNYC managed by the New York City Economic Development Corporation; **Peggy Shepard**, co-founder and executive director, WE ACT for Environmental Justice; **Alan Rubin**, principal, Blank Rome Government Relations LLC; Jersey City's Director of Housing, Economic Development and Commerce **Annisia Cialone**; and **Michael Samuelian**, president of The Trust for Governors Island.

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

- Who Stays Dry? The Risk is High and the Water's Getting Higher
- We're Under This Together: Planning for Big Floods Across the Country
- Climate Resilient Solutions for our Neighborhoods and Open Spaces
- Scaling the Next Generation of Innovative Green Finance Solutions
- New York City Comprehensive Waterfront Plan: The Next Ten Years
- Innovators Present: brief reports on 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
- Opportunities and Challenges for Offshore Wind in the Region

A special afternoon panel on [Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines](#) (WEDG) will celebrate the success of the **Waterfront Alliance WEDG Neighborhoods** campaign. Twenty-six Community Boards in all five boroughs have committed to using WEDG to shape better waterfronts by adopting resolutions and taking the WEDG Pledge. At the "Shape Your Waterfront: WEDG As a Toolkit for Civic Engagement" panel, learn how communities are leading the movement to demand more resilient, accessible, equitable, and sustainable waterfront development from the ground up.

View the [Waterfront Conference program](#).

"Renewable energy is a keystone of resilience work, and Norway has accomplished much in this regard," said **Consul General Harriet E. Berg** of the Royal Norwegian Consulate General. "I'm looking forward to the Waterfront Conference on May 7, to learn about innovative waterfront development and technology in the United States, to share Norway's best practices, and to delve into sustainable solutions that will help both countries and our global neighbors adapt to the rising seas."

"New York City's 520 miles of waterfront define our city," said **New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer**. "From working toward our goal of divesting from fossil fuels to promoting green investment in our communities, our City must continue to be a global leader in the fight against climate change. I look forward to discussing my work on resiliency and sustainability at the Waterfront Conference."

"New York City faces a one-foot sea level rise within the next 30 years because of climate change, which is why we must adapt to new realities," said **Council Member Costa Constantinides**, chair of the Committee on Environmental Protection. "We are at a pivotal make-or-break moment in which our decisions now will impact countless generations to come. I look forward to discussing new ideas and means for us to make a brighter, greener, safer city at this year's Waterfront Conference. Thanks to the Waterfront Alliance for being such a great leader in the quest to protect our coasts in a meaningful, long-term way."

"How can we speed vital efforts to combat climate change while reinforcing New York Harbor as a working waterfront, home to a large and flourishing workforce?" asked **Julia Bovey**, director of external affairs at Equinor Wind US. "By embracing rapid and responsible development of offshore wind off our coasts, built in our ports, feeding renewable energy to our homes and business, and showing the world that the low-carbon future is here right now, as long as we roll up our sleeves together and get to work."

"Designing for a resilient waterfront in the face of climate change may be the most critical issue in urban development for our time, and for future centuries," said **Michelle Young**, founder of Untapped Cities. "The survival of cities relies on a sensitive, comprehensive understanding of the contradictory demands of waterfront development and how to communicate such insights effectively to the public. The Waterfront Alliance's annual conference has become the gathering place for not only experts in waterfront development, but also for urban dwellers looking to engage more deeply with the city's future."

"I'm expecting invaluable discussion and insight about resilience at this year's Waterfront Conference. As climate change advances, coastal cities around the world have to prepare and adapt," said **Chris Ward**, chair of the board of

trustees of the Waterfront Alliance. “On May 7, I’ll be listening, learning, and connecting with many other waterfront stakeholders—and then, with my esteemed colleagues, ready to take action.”

[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 8:45am; the boat is dockside at Pier 40, Hudson River Park until 1pm; the afternoon harbor cruise returns at 4:30pm. Continuing education credits will be offered (AIA CES; APA AICP CM; and GBCI CMP).

Reporters and editors are welcome to attend the Waterfront Conference. Please [RSVP](#) to Alison Simko.

**The Waterfront Conference is generously sponsored by:**

**Venue Sponsor:** [Hornblower Cruises & Events](#)

**Waterfront Scholars:** [The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey](#)

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The [Waterfront Alliance](#) inspires and effects resilient, revitalized, and accessible coastlines for all communities.