



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 9, 2019

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Waterfront Alliance Honors the 2019 Heroes of the Harbor: Rep. Jerrold Nadler, LANGAN, and Kate Orff

Urgent speeches electrify the crowd

New York, NY—On October 7, at a VIP-studded gala on the Hudson River, the [Waterfront Alliance](#) honored the [2019 Heroes of the Harbor](#): longtime port champion **Congressman Jerrold Nadler**, the engineers and environmental consultants of **LANGAN**, and landscape architect and McArthur Fellow **Kate Orff**. More than 450 waterfront stakeholders from the fields of government, advocacy, design, shipping, construction, media, transportation, science, engineering, and philanthropy gathered to celebrate these exceptional leaders who are helping to advance resilient, revitalized, and accessible coastlines for all communities.

New York's **Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul** welcomed the crowd, and climate activist and comedian **Chuck Nice** served as the evening's emcee. To kick off the evening, the annual Waterfront Alliance Parade of Boats, a charming urban flotilla of two dozen boats, sponsored this year by [Red Hook Terminals](#), sailed past the gala event.

2019 HONOREES

Congressman Jerrold Nadler represents New York's 10th Congressional District, which includes much of Manhattan's West Side and parts of Brooklyn, and chairs the House Judiciary Committee. He began his career in public service in 1976 in the New York State Assembly, and in 1992, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in a special election. Last year, Rep. Nadler was re-elected to his 14th full term. An expert on harbor and maritime issues in the New York–New Jersey region, Rep. Nadler's leadership and advocacy has proven critical to sustaining a vibrant and resilient working waterfront, and supporting the men and women in the maritime sector.

LANGAN has grown to more than 1,100 professionals in 30+ offices around the world. The firm provides an integrated mix of engineering and environmental consulting services in support of land development projects, corporate real estate portfolios, and the energy industry. LANGAN's waterfront and marine services include working with property owners, agencies, and their design teams to assess and rejuvenate waterfront sites. They evaluate shorelines and waterfront structures to determine the best approach for reuse, replacement, or new construction. Their waterfront engineers and marine specialists develop tailored design solutions. And with offices strategically located near major bodies of water—New York, New Jersey, Boston, Philadelphia, Miami, San Francisco and London, to name a few—LANGAN is able to serve clients in coastal regions around the world.

Kate Orff, the founding principal of SCAPE, is the first landscape architect to receive a MacArthur Fellowship. Recognized for her work designing adaptive and resilient urban habitats, Ms. Orff leads collaborative projects that simultaneously address climate change, nurture social interaction, and encourage people to be active stewards of the natural environment. As she works to foster the civic realm at the waterfront, she promotes ecological and social goals with equal emphasis. Influencing regulatory policy about design and landscape architecture, she says, is her most meaningful work.

[View a five-minute highlights video of the honorees.](#)

[View photographs of the evening.](#)

"I am thrilled to be named a Hero of the Harbor, and I accept this hero-ship on behalf of the entire firm. We've been trying to redesign the edge: no more business as usual, no more concrete sea walls, and no more sterile bulkheads. We've pushed for stepped edges and an immersive 3D approach, thickening the edge into spaces that encourage intertidal ecosystem action and social interaction," said **Kate Orff**. "We have to respond not with one singular action, but with a multitude of actions that mirror the complexity of the scene itself. It's not just sea levels are rising; it's that the water is becoming more acidic. Excess nitrogen is creating dead zones across the oceans, plastics choke and snag animals and birds. Glacial melting is creating freshwater stratification, literally suffocating marine life living below. We have to farm differently, build cities differently, ban single use plastics, remove dams, and daylight streams to reverse course. And we have to do it now."

"The port is vital to New York; it is vital to opportunities for working people and it is vital to the economy," said **Congressman Jerrold Nadler**, who then pivoted from saluting the regional working waterfront to the world's environmental emergency. "I have a 13-month-old granddaughter. When I look at her, I have feelings of love and tenderness, and of terror. Terror because I think about how her life could be affected if we don't deal with climate change rapidly. The storms are getting more energetic, the storm surges are higher, the sea levels are rising. The ocean is acidifying. Coral reefs are dying. We have had five mass extinctions in the history of the planet—four of them caused by rising carbon dioxide levels, one caused by a meteor. It is quite possible that if the ocean's acidity level goes up far enough—as it will, if we don't change it—it could destroy the entire food chain that we depend on. We have very few years to deal with this; otherwise, we risk absolute catastrophe. So, I greatly appreciate the work of the Waterfront Alliance in helping to restore our waterfront and helping to make the waterfront accessible for all people, and helping to ensure the waterfront is used for recreation, for industry, for shipping, in helping to people to appreciate it, and helping to build resiliency into it. But we are at a crisis point in human history. And I can only say we have to devote ourselves to averting this threat, to waking people up, to educating them, and doing what we have to do to make sure that humanity thrives, and that our children and grandchildren have a decent world to live in."

"The Waterfront Alliance's Resilience Task Force and Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines are useful tools for us to promote sustainable design. I'd like to say how pleased we are to receive this honor, and to thank all of our clients who embrace waterfront resiliency," said **LANGAN's Greg Biesiadecki**.

"In the face of so many challenges, how can we gather and celebrate? Each study of continuing climate degradation brings the ramifications of sea level rise and climate change before us, every day. We see the challenges in Washington, the demise of political discourse. There is so much to despair of. But we must see these challenges as something that we can address, that we can fight for, as we have done time and time again in this country's great history. Let's acknowledge that we can meet the level of challenge that we face and not allow despair to rule the day," said **Chris Ward, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Waterfront Alliance**.

Heroes of the Harbor 2019 was generously sponsored by:

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The Waterfront Alliance inspires and effects resilient, revitalized, and accessible coastlines for all communities.