Testimony of the Waterfront Alliance  
City Council Committee on Environmental Protection  
Oversight: Offshore Wind Hearing  
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Waterfront Alliance is a non-profit civic organization and coalition of more than 1,100 alliance partners ranging from environmental advocates to educational institutions to businesses and corporations. Our mission is to inspire and enable resilient, revitalized and accessible coastlines for all communities.

With steady winds off the Atlantic Ocean, New York is one of the windiest states in the nation. This natural resource, paired with New York State’s nation-leading commitment to 9,000 MW of offshore wind power, makes New York Harbor well-positioned to become the supply chain hub for the multi-billion dollar offshore wind industry. For New York to achieve a major share of the jobs and economic benefits generated by serving as an offshore wind hub, New York City and State must commit to the essential role that our ports play to meet the needs of the offshore wind industry.

Despite our region’s extraordinary maritime history and capacity to support major renewable energy goals, the current state of our local ports and industrial waterfront infrastructure is not always well understood. Local maritime infrastructure must be a bigger policy and funding priority for the Council and the Mayor, as well as our future Mayor and Council Members, if offshore wind can truly take off and be an economic engine for the region.

Port and Infrastructure Capital Needs

New York’s more recent offshore wind solicitation seeks up to 2,500 MW of projects, the largest in the nation’s history, in addition to last year’s solicitation which resulted in nearly 1,700 MW awarded. To help meet these ambitious goals, New York City’s offshore wind strategy will need to be multi-faceted and we commend NYSERDA for its multi-port strategy and $400m in public and private investments.

Given the unique technical requirements for offshore wind component staging, handling, assembly and installation, the industry requires port facilities that can handle heavy and large components while also providing unfettered and deep water access for the specialized installation vessels needed to install and maintain them.
Many of the smaller ports in our region were not designed for the heavy lifting and installation that’s required for offshore wind farm construction. Also, many ports across New York have air draft restrictions where turbines might run into bridges restricting passage.

**However, these challenges can be overcome with a commitment to capital investment in infrastructure, retrofits, dredging and other physical site upgrades. We encourage the City to include capital commitments in future budgets. With these upgrades, the 73-acre South Brooklyn Marine Terminal, for example, provides a tremendous opportunity to become an offshore wind hub and a major economic driver for the City.**

Ultimately, the success of offshore wind will require a multi-port strategy across the State. It will take a cooperative approach among owners and operators of various ports and the project developers, along with the partnership of New York City and New York State, to support operations and maintenance; staging areas; various supply chain end uses and to catalyze the manufacturing of offshore wind components in New York.

Importantly, design considerations that promote climate adaptation and resiliency of the Port in responding to such threats as sea level rise and dynamic flooding events will also be critical in these upgrades.

**Workforce Development Opportunities**

Offshore wind has the potential to stimulate the New York State economy for decades to come. 4,500 good-paying short and long-term jobs are anticipated in connection with these first two solicitations.

The City can play an important role in creating pathways of opportunity.

While New York has a highly skilled and well-trained workforce, gaps exist in key skills required for this transition. Offshore wind roles are extremely varied meaning that as the lifecycle of the wind farm progresses from installation to decommissioning.

For example, you could be involved in maintenance, servicing, troubleshooting, inspections, blade repairs and more. Building an offshore wind project is a true team effort, requiring electricians, engineers, pipefitters, vessel operators, wind technicians and dozens of other occupations, not to
mention traditional working waterfront occupations such as captains, crews, stevedores and drydock workers that will be part of the huge effort.

In fact, 74 different professions are needed to build an offshore wind farm, according to the Workforce Development Institute.

Depending on the role, different levels of technical training are required.

We will need undergraduate and graduate programs that equip students with both hands-on experiences, as well as research and development opportunities. The cultivation of these skill sets begins even earlier through middle and high school. We will need programs through the DOE, the CUNY system and the SUNY system to build and train the workforce.

**Siting of Renewable Energy Infrastructure**

Finally, bringing this clean energy to market will require transmission lines, cable landing sites and connections to substations such as Con Edison’s Gowanus substation. The increasingly large footprint of onshore electrical systems needed to bring power to shore warrants community involvement in project planning. Things to consider – even at this early stage – include minimizing the potential impacts on the local community such as reduced waterfront access and disturbances to shorelines.

Further, the City may be required to review applications for cable landfall in zones where public utilities or access to electric lines are not permitted as-of right or require special permits. Clear regulations for land use and zoning can help to alleviate concerns.

Waterfront Alliance looks forward to collaborating with offshore wind developers, port operators, government agencies and elected officials to ensure the growth of the offshore wind sector in our region and to build the 21st century port infrastructure that is core to its success.