



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel L. Squadron

## Testimony of State Senator Daniel Squadron Regarding the U.s. Department of Housing and Urban Development Action Plan Amendment and Rebuild by Design

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Below and attached is Senator Squadron's testimony regarding the HUD action plan amendment and Rebuild by Design.

My name is Daniel Squadron and I represent the 26th District in the New York State Senate. My district includes the Manhattan neighborhoods of TriBeCa, Battery Park City, the Lower East Side, Chinatown, the Financial District, Greenwich Village, Little Italy, SoHo and the East Village and the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Greenpoint, Williamsburg, Vinegar Hill, DUMBO, Fulton Ferry, Brooklyn Heights, Cobble Hill, and Carroll Gardens.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the HUD Action Plan amendment.

Like other parts of the city, my Senate district was severely impacted by Hurricane Sandy in the fall of 2012. Thousands of my constituents lost essential services like heat, water, and electricity, and other basic services like transportation and telecommunication. My office, like other elected offices and neighborhood organizations around the city, engaged in a variety of outreach efforts to help residents and businesses both prepare for the storm and

then to recover from the damage and disruption it caused. From this experience, it was evident that better long-term planning was needed to mitigate the impacts of future disasters.

On the Lower East Side, in particular, the disruption of services impacted residents living in subsidized and public housing, many of whom are non-English speakers or seniors.

The East Side Coastal Resiliency proposal in the Action Plan amendment embodies the types of steps that should be taken to improve disaster preparedness and neighborhood resiliency, and I am proud to have supported the project, along with my elected colleagues and various community organizations. East Side Coastal Resiliency provides the opportunity to not only bolster the Lower East Side's resiliency against future storms, but also increase the neighborhood's access to green space by coordinating efforts with the redevelopment of Pier 42, located on the East River just east of Montgomery Street, into a world-class park.

After listening to the community's needs, U.S. Senator Charles Schumer and I secured \$16 million for the redevelopment of Pier 42 into a park from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation. Additionally, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer has allocated \$250,000 for the construction of a park at Pier 42. The Lower East Side community has long advocated for the redevelopment of Pier 42 into a park, and Community Board 3 has listed the redevelopment of the pier into a park as the district's number one capital priority for many years, including in the upcoming fiscal year.

A section of Pier 42 is now open for interim use, after community groups and I advocated for this opportunity. Several community organizations now conduct summer programming on the pier. This has galvanized even further community support for Pier 42 – evident in the thousands of visitors coming to the pier with their families since its opening two summers ago. We are thankful for the support from the New York City Department of Parks and

Recreation on these efforts.

Now, due to great community advocacy, and support from Senator Schumer, and my other elected colleagues, the east side waterfront has received \$335 million for the development of the East Side Coastal Resiliency project – a project aiming to protect the Lower East Side from storms, while connecting the community to recreational spaces.

Coordination of these two projects is an opportunity to make the Lower East Side simultaneously more resilient, while advancing the world-class waterfront park at Pier 42 that Lower East Side residents and Community Board 3 have long advocated. The plans for Pier 42 propose several topographic elevations and other measures linked to the resiliency vision put forth by the East Side Coastal Resiliency project. I encourage the City to work with residents, stakeholders, and Community Boards 3 and 6 to find ways to further synchronize these two projects so as to maximize resources and impact.

Without proper coordination, funding for the East Side Coastal Resiliency project may be a missed opportunity for Pier 42 and the Lower East Side. I look forward to working with the Administration, the Parks Department, the community, Community Boards 3 and 6, and my colleagues in government in order to achieve a more resilient Lower East Side while advancing the momentum towards a sustainable and world class green space at Pier 42.

Additionally, I remain committed to working with the community, my colleagues, and the Administration towards securing further resiliency funding for the rest of Lower Manhattan, south of Montgomery Street.

The Administration also recently announced an end to the Game Changers program and Business Resiliency Investment Program, reallocating millions of dollars that had been targeted to Lower Manhattan.

Community Board 1 faced disastrous flooding which led to two fatalities among other severe consequences, as well as significant long-term impacts, particularly at the South Street Seaport. Our small businesses are still vulnerable and still need the assistance these important programs could have provided. I am concerned about the loss of these two programs and the consequences that Lower Manhattan may face as a result. I remain committed to working with our community boards, Downtown Alliance, my local colleagues, and the Administration to restore what Lower Manhattan had been counting on.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments.