



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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SERINO AND BARRETT TAKE AIM AT ANCHORAGE PROPOSAL

SUSAN SERINO March 23, 2017

| ISSUE: HUDSON RIVER ANCHORAGE PROPOSAL, ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION



ALBANY, NY—With the U.S. Coast Guard proposing to establish new anchorage points across over 90 miles of the Hudson River, Senator Sue Serino (R, C, I—Hyde Park), Assemblymember Didi Barrett (D-Columbia, Dutchess) and Scenic Hudson teamed up today to announce legislation aimed at safeguarding the river and local communities against the increased risks associated with the transport of crude oil and other hazardous materials.

“Our communities have worked far too hard for far too long on revitalizing our waterfront to risk compromising the Hudson River,” said Senator Sue Serino, who sponsors the legislation. “As someone

who hails from a town that actually gets their drinking water directly from the Hudson, I cannot overstate the importance of this bill. While I am sensitive to the safety concerns expressed by the Coast Guard, this legislation is about ensuring the environmental safety of the river our communities depend on, the public safety of those in the Hudson Valley, and the economic viability of our waterfront communities.”

*“Any plan to increase oil traffic on the Hudson River with barges carrying volatile Bakken crude must be viewed as an environmental, public health and homeland security concern by New York State. Since the Coast Guard's proposal to fast track new anchorage sites along the Hudson was first put forth, my office has spoken out in opposition, and now we are taking direct action with this new legislation,” **said Assemblymember Didi Barrett, who sponsors the bill in the Assembly.** “The proposed anchorages seriously threaten drinking water, local businesses, historic viewsheds, the Hudson Valley’s vibrant tourist industry and the safety of communities on both sides of the river. New York State must exert its authority in order to protect the health and well-being of the entire Hudson River Valley.”*

In June of last year, the U.S. Coast Guard issued an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking to establish 10 new anchorage grounds along the Hudson River covering a 91-mile stretch between Kingston, Ulster County and Yonkers in Westchester County. The new grounds would allow up to 43 vessels to anchor in the area, 42 of which could anchor for up to 30 days at a time.

Senator Serino and Assemblymember Barrett immediately expressed concern over the proposal and outrage over the lack of public input that was sought before it was issued. In October of last year, Senator Serino joined Senators Terrence Murphy and David Carlucci to hold their own hearing to ensure that the public had a chance to be heard on the important issue. The Coast Guard has not yet held a hearing on the proposal.

For nearly forty years, a federal ban on exporting crude oil limited the amount of oil transported from the Port of Albany to refineries on the eastern seaboard. In December of 2015, Congress voted to lift the ban.

Leading environmental advocacy organization, Scenic Hudson—which played a critical role in drafting the legislation—stated that new anchorage points are not necessary to improve

travel safety along the Hudson as vessels already have permission to anchor when conditions are hazardous for navigation.

Coupled with the lifted ban, the establishment of so many new anchorage points could mean a significant uptick in the transportation of crude oil and an increase in long-term water-borne storage, thereby leaving the area vulnerable to dangerous accidents and spills.

The bill (S. 5197/A. 6825) seeks to safeguard the Hudson River by bolstering the state's ability to exercise its jurisdiction over the river. Specifically, it amends the state's navigation law relating to the establishment of 'tanker-avoidance zones' to consider waterfront communities and significant natural habitats, in addition to navigation safety. The result is that the state will be in a stronger position to prevent anchorages from being sited at points that pose a clear and direct threat to the environment, quality of life and local economic development goals.

*"The US Coast Guard's proposal to permit long-term anchorages for more than 40 industrial-scaled barges carrying highly volatile crude oil and other hazardous materials threatens decades of investments in revitalizing Hudson River waterfronts and the region's natural habitats and scenery – the lifeblood of our \$5 billion tourism annual economy," said **Andy Bicking, Director of Public Policy for the environmental group Scenic Hudson.** "New York State has the opportunity to exert its jurisdiction over the Hudson River and address these risks by updating the state's Navigation Law to consider environmental, public safety, quality of life and regional economic concerns. We're fortunate to have leaders like Assemblymember Didi Barrett and Senator Sue Serino who have taken a keen interest in this issue and are advocating on behalf of the communities they represent by sponsoring this important legislation."*

The bill has been sent to the Environmental Conservation Committee in each house.