



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## COMMUNITY URGES GOVERNOR TO SIGN BILL AIMED AT SAFEGUARDING THE HUDSON

SUSAN SERINO August 7, 2017

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Poughkeepsie, NY—Senator Sue Serino (R, C, I—Hyde Park) and Assemblymember Didi Barrett (D—Hudson) today joined Scenic Hudson in bringing together a group of local leaders, environmental advocates and concerned community members to urge the Governor to sign their legislation that would empower the state to better protect the Hudson River.

While the U.S. Coast Guard has recently announced the suspension of its highly controversial anchorage proposal—thanks to the influx of more than 10,000 comments from concerned members of the local community—without the legislation enacted into law, the area may be left vulnerable should the Coast Guard reconsider its proposal.

*“As the representative of several communities that get their drinking water from the Hudson River, I cannot overstate the importance of this legislation,” said Senator Sue Serino. “The Coast Guard’s previous proposal could have had a negative impact on everything from environmental health, to public safety and economic development. We have an obligation to proactively defend our area’s greatest natural resource so that generations to come can enjoy all that the Hudson has to offer. I urge the Governor to partner with us in these efforts by signing this critical piece of legislation as soon as possible.”*

*“In advance of the anchorages bill being delivered to the Governor, today’s call to action is an opportunity for the sponsors, the advocates and the communities who came together to speak out on the importance of this crucial piece of legislation,” said Assemblymember Didi Barrett. “The guidelines for petroleum vessel traffic that the bill gives the Department of Environmental Conservation will be of critical importance should any future proposals for anchorages be put forth by the federal government. I would like to thank all of our partners who once again came together to protect our historic, iconic and vital Hudson River.”*

The recent proposal would have allowed 10 new anchorage grounds to be established along the Hudson River covering a 91-mile stretch between Kingston, Ulster County and Yonkers in Westchester County. The proposed grounds could have allowed up to 43 vessels to anchor in the area, 42 of which could anchor for up to 30 days at a time.

The establishment of so many new anchorage points could have meant 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.

Specifically, the legislation (S.5197-B/A.6825-A) seeks to prevent this from occurring by bolstering the state’s jurisdiction over the river, putting it 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 bill essentially 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 a sort of 'zoning on the river' system that would put the state in a stronger position to prevent anchorages from being sited at these points should this or other proposals for anchorage points be reintroduced.

**Andy Bicking, Director of Public Policy for Scenic Hudson, said,** *“A majority of Hudson River waterfront communities have spoken loud and clear that they don't want to see the US Coast Guard site new anchorages for vessels carrying crude oil and other hazardous materials in the region. The state legislature – led by Senator Sue Serino and Assemblymember Didi Barrett – has responded proactively with this legislation which asserts the state's jurisdiction over the Hudson. It is urgent that this legislation be signed in to law by Governor Andrew Cuomo. In the absence of a federal rule regarding anchorages, the state can act to protect its residents, however if the federal government moves to site new anchorages first, this opportunity could be lost. New York State has a strong history of conservation and being a leader on the environment. This bill is no exception to that proud legacy, should be signed into law this summer, and implemented by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation to the highest standards for environmental and community protection.”*

**Jeremy Cherson, Campaign Advocacy Coordinator for Riverkeeper, says,** *“Riverkeeper urges Gov. Cuomo to sign this legislation, which would better enable the Department of Environmental Conservation to protect the Hudson River and surrounding communities while maintaining navigational safety. The legislation passed the Assembly and Senate with overwhelming, bipartisan majorities, sending a clear message that New Yorkers want important environmental factors to be considered when determining where vessels can move or anchor on the Hudson River. The public has once again spoken up in a unified call to protect the river, and we hope the Governor will take note of that.”*

With over forty Hudson Valley municipalities passing resolutions or issuing endorsements of the legislation, public support for the initiative is clear and widespread.

At today's press conference held at Quiet Cove in Poughkeepsie, a county-run park along the river, representatives from various communities stood together in support of the initiative.

*Dutchess County Executive Marcus J. Molinaro said, “The Hudson River Valley Region is renowned for its abundant history, tranquil landscapes, unique ecosystems and beautiful waterfronts, all part of what makes us ‘Distinctly Dutchess.’ We stand with Senator Serino, Assemblymember Barrett, and Scenic Hudson in urging of Governor Cuomo to sign this critical piece of legislation to ensure the Hudson River remains protected. We have led this fight for over a year and must remain vigilant about proposals such as the anchorages that can negatively impact this treasured resource.”*

Espousing their various concerns—from public and environmental safety, to economic development issues— attendees included a diverse group of representatives from local municipalities, the County Sheriff’s Department, the Dutchess County Chamber of Commerce and environmental advocates who each made it a point to acknowledge the potential impacts that the Coast Guard’s anchorage proposal could have, not only on the river itself, but on the local communities.

The bill passed both houses of the legislature before the conclusion of this year’s legislative session and now awaits the Governor’s signature before it can become law.