



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## NOT SO FAST: NEW YORK STATE SENATORS CALL FOR EXTENSION OF COMMENT PERIOD FOR NYC STORM BARRIERS

SUSAN SERINO July 31, 2018

| ISSUE: **PROTECTING THE HUDSON RIVER, STORM RECOVERY**



Albany, NY - In early July, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) held a series of meetings to explore the impact of offshore barriers, land-based floodwalls and the potential of a levee system to protect the metropolitan region. There were no meetings in the Lower Hudson Valley, despite the fact it has the largest population outside of New York City and is home to the heart of the Hudson River Estuary. Today, Senators Terrence Murphy,

Sue Serino and Elaine Phillips called for an extension of the review period to give residents in the Hudson Valley and Long Island the opportunity to voice their concerns.

In a letter addressed to Lieutenant General Todd Semonite of the USACE and Commissioner Basil Seggos of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Senators Murphy, Serino and Phillips urged both agencies to extend the comment period for the proposal from the current 40-day period to at least 90 days.

"This extension would allow for additional public meetings to be scheduled in the Hudson Valley and other areas of the state, and will give more New Yorkers the opportunity to join the conversation," said Senator Murphy. "In addition to extending the comment period, I also request that more information be shared with the public, including the studies that the United States Army Corps of Engineers is using to evaluate alternatives. A longer comment period and the availability of more information will create a more transparent and productive dialog between New Yorkers who will be affected by this proposal and the federal government."

Senator Sue Serino said, "The Hudson River is the lifeblood for so many of our local communities and protecting and preserving it needs to always be one of our highest priorities. While we understand the critical importance of properly preparing our area for extreme weather, in doing so, we need to hear directly from the communities that would be impacted. I join today with Senator Murphy and Senator Phillips in calling on the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and the DEC to extend the public comment period for these proposals so that our communities have the chance to be heard."

Senator Elaine Phillips added, "With communities still recovering from the devastation of Superstorm Sandy, it is paramount to include the insights and concerns of our residents. If another storm hits our region, Long Island will undoubtedly face the brunt of the disaster

given our proximity to water. I call on the Army Corps of Engineers and the State DEC to make sure that Long Islanders have the opportunity to be heard and have our needs addressed."

One plan under consideration calls for a surge barrier at the mouth of the harbor from Sandy Hook, New Jersey to Breezy Point in Queens. Alternative plans include multiple shorter barriers from Staten Island to Brooklyn and at various other locations blocking tributaries. The cost for the project has been estimated at \$25 billion and could take decades to complete. Concerns have been raised that it could cause worse flooding in certain areas and harm nearby beaches. Environmentalists have raised concerns for many species that call the Atlantic Ocean home, including some that are on the endangered list.

In comparison, the United States Coast Guard gather comments and feedback for six months pertaining to their proposal to establish 10 new long-term anchorage sites for oil barges along the Hudson River. In large part due to the advocacy of Senators Murphy and Serino that proposal was ultimately tabled.