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TESTIMONY OF STATE SENATOR BRAD HOYLMAN AND ASSEMBLYMEMBER LINDA B. ROSENTHAL TO THE MARITIME ADMINISTRATION AND U.S. COAST GUARD REGARDING THE PROPOSED PORT AMBROSE LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS PROJECT

JANUARY 7, 2014

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to the Maritime Administration and U.S. Coast Guard regarding the application by Liberty Natural Gas, LLC (Liberty) to build a liquefied natural gas (LNG) deepwater port facility called Port Ambrose, roughly 19 miles from the New York shore. We oppose this unnecessary and environmentally irresponsible project and have serious concerns about the timeline and the public process.

The construction and operation of Port Ambrose would have a negative ecological impact on its surroundings, discharge millions of gallons of chemically treated seawater and require the dredging of miles of sea floor. Port Ambrose would contribute to environmental degradation by increasing New York's reliance on natural gas, a methane emitting fuel, at a time when we instead should be focusing on the development and deployment of clean, safe and renewable energy sources. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the leading international body for the assessment of climate change, methane is a potent greenhouse gas that is 34 times more effective at trapping heat in our atmosphere over a 100-year period than carbon dioxide. This is, of course, in addition to the potential damage to New York's coastline if an extreme weather event, such as another Hurricane Sandy, were to damage a vulnerable offshore facility of this type.

Port Ambrose is an unnecessary project. According to the 2014 Draft New York State Energy Plan, domestic production of natural gas is at its highest level in four decades and the "need for substantial increased volumes of imported LNG has diminished for the near term." The Draft Energy Plan further states that this saturation of supply in natural gas has caused imports to decline every year from 2007 through 2012, a year in which just two of the twelve active LNG import terminals in the country received regular shipments. Adding another unused port to that tally, particularly in light of the myriad potential detrimental environmental impacts, would be both imprudent and wasteful.

Furthermore, the process to consider this project requires more transparency and opportunities for public input. LNG is a major proposal that will affect large numbers of people and municipalities. We appreciate the Maritime Administration's willingness to extend the public comment period from 60 to 90 days, which will allow stakeholders additional time to fully consider the complex and voluminous plans that are laid out in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. However, we also urge you to schedule an additional public hearing in Manhattan that is accessible for our constituents and others in the region. Today's public hearing at the Hilton JFK Airport is currently the only hearing scheduled in New York and is geographically inconvenient. As a result, it is inadequate for robust public engagement. The location is inaccessible to those who rely on public transportation, and requires anyone traveling from Manhattan or any of the other boroughs outside of Queens to take at least one subway, one bus and a shuttle. The ride from the west side of Manhattan, an area we represent, takes nearly one and a half hours. Given the availability of convenient venues in Manhattan, one would not be hard-pressed to identify another, more accessible location.

In 2011 New Jersey Governor Chris Christie vetoed an application for an LNG port by Liberty off the coast of New Jersey, stating that "offshore LNG poses unacceptable risks to the state's residents, natural resources, economy and security." We urge you to oppose this project as a means of defending New York State's precious environmental assets, and also to ensure that the public is fully engaged in the process.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.