

December 5, 2016

John McLaughlin
1011 Maggie Road
Newburgh, NY 12550

Mr. Craig Lapiejko
Waterways Management Branch
Coast Guard First District
408 Atlantic Avenue
Boston, MA 02110

Re: Proposed Rule Making
Anchorage Grounds, Hudson River, Yonkers, NY to Kingston, NY
Docket Number USCG-2016-0132

Dear Mr. Lapiejko:

I am writing this as an active user of the Hudson River as a sailor and kayaker and as a member and Past President of the Beacon Sloop Club, member and officer of the Chelsea Yacht Club, member and water quality coordinator for the Quassaick Creek Watershed Alliance (creek feeds to Hudson at Newburgh), and member of: Sierra Club, Riverkeeper, New York League of Conservation Voters, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Concerned Scientists, Hudson River Yacht Racing Association, Hudson River Boat and Yacht Club Association, New York Public Interest Research Group, and a number of other conservation-related groups directly or peripherally associated with the Hudson River and its drainages and or economy.

I am writing to support the overall tenor of the input you have and will receive from these groups in opposition to the proposed anchorages:

The proposal for anchorages far overstates any contribution they would make to the safety of river traffic. I have transited the river from Newburgh to Port of Albany by power boat on several occasions. I regularly sail the river in my 17-foot Flying Scot sailboat in the waters off the Chelsea Yacht Club, have sailed the river from Kingston up into Long Island Sound on my 30 foot sail boat. I crew the Ferry Sloop Woody Guthrie and sail Newburgh Bay region at least one night (and regularly interact with barges via the colreg lights and voice communication on channel 13) each week throughout most of each summer. I am often the Principle Race Officer at Chelsea or am on one of the racing boats. I skipper and crew racing sailboats at clubs up and down the Hudson. I am quite comfortable in dealing with the barge traffic and certainly expect and hope for the economy that traffic may increase. However, the number of anchorages being sought far exceeds any need and the packing of 3 of them into the proposed areas of the central Hudson suggests they are being sought for far more reason than safety.

Moreover, many supporting the anchorages suggest they will move fossil fuel traffic from the rail lines to river barges, while the agency that proposed them has stated in public meetings that "barge traffic will not increase owing to the installation of these anchorages". Well, I was not born yesterday. Someone is not being fully truthful here. You must reveal the truths and motivations in play during your future hearings.

We in the central Hudson region are accustomed to barges that occasionally must anchor for safety reasons – or regular commercial reasons. They are few and easily accommodated. We welcome the safety provided by our upriver bays for shelter of commercial boats and barges during severe weather emergencies. Past experience has demonstrated how effectively this is accomplished without the installation of the proposed anchorages. Again, the Coast Guard must fully and carefully examine the underlying needs and veracity of such needs in its future hearings.

Sincerely,
John R. McLaughlin, PhD.