

Dear U.S. Coast Guard:

Thank you for accepting public comments regarding the proposed anchorage sites along the Hudson River. For several reasons the Beacon Sloop Club is opposed to these anchorages and joins with the many public officials and advocacy organizations in asking for public meetings to be held about the proposal.

For nearly 50 years the Beacon Sloop Club has played a local role in advocating for a cleaner, safer environment, with particular focus on the Hudson River. Our organization's mission is to promote and encourage interest in sound ecological practices affecting the Hudson River and its environs, to organize and arrange recreational activities such as picnics, festivals, and other community gatherings on the waterfront of Beacon, New York, and to promote interest in sailing and foster good fellowship and safety in boating. With respect to this mission we are opposed to the expanded anchorage grounds for several reasons.

- The existing anchorage area at Hyde Park is rarely if ever used to its capacity of 3 vessels. Consequently there is little reason for expanding anchorages while existing ones are left vacant.
- These anchorages may facilitate expanded traffic of dangerous Bakken crude oil along the Hudson River. An accident involving this oil could prove disastrous to the ecosystem of the river, progress in cleaning it up, and the safety of riverfront communities. Past barge accidents resulted in hundreds of thousands of gallons of oil spilling into the river, and designated anchorages would allow the captains and crew to leave their vessels, which further increases the risk of accident.
- Either the anchored vessels will be lit at night and would be a source of light pollution that injures scenic views, or they would be left dark and would be dangerous for night time boat activity. In either case the net effect on the area where the anchorages are installed is negative.
- In the event of an emergency it is not clear that local emergency personnel are prepared to handle an accident effectively. Until they are, this proposal would put local residents at increased danger.
- The Hudson River has particular scenic and historic significance to the people of the region. This significance has been recognized in important American environmental law and the Hudson Valley has been designated as a National Heritage Area. These expanded anchorages could diminish its scenic beauty by effectively turning the Hudson into a parking lot for barges and tankers.
- The anchorages could cut off a large section of Newburgh Bay from recreational boating as well as our organization's free educational public sails. The area proposed as an anchorage is what we describe as a "safe zone" where we can operate outside of the commercial channel. While touting increased vessel safety for the commercial operators on the river, the proposed 445 acre anchorage area and the other proposed anchorage zones will undoubtedly compromise and come at the expense of the safety of the recreational boating public.
- There are areas along the river where tankers, barges, and tugs already anchor outside of the commercial channel and not in declared special anchorages. We see no evidence of the need to create such declared zones and, considering both commercial and recreational vessels, do not think they will have a positive effect on the overall traffic safety on the River.

In a greater context the proposed anchorages are a threat to the enormous progress that the Hudson River has seen in recent decades. Public parks and recreational boating are a reflection of the success of the now fifty-year-long effort to make the Hudson River cleaner and to encourage the public to re-embrace the river as the region's greatest natural resource. To see Newburgh Bay filled with sailboats, fishing boats, jet skis, tourist vessels, and other pleasure craft reaffirms that it is everyone's river and not just the industrial waterway that it was once considered to be. In that not-too-distant past, people and politicians alike turned a blind eye as millions of gallons of raw sewage flowed into the river daily, the fish (including the now-endangered Atlantic Sturgeon and the heavily depleted American Shad) washed up dead on its banks, and the sediments, water, and shorelines were poisoned by some of the most toxic chemicals on the planet. This anchorage proposal, offered under the guise of increased safety, is a vestige of the destructive and selfish mindset that poisoned the river by prioritizing industrial convenience over the health and well-being of the river and the people along its shores, and it would endanger the special bond that has been carefully tended between the residents of the Hudson Valley and waterway that connects its communities.

For these reasons the Beacon Sloop Club is opposed to increased anchorages along the Hudson River and the Newburgh Bay proposal in particular and asks for hearings to be held for all involved parties to express their concerns in person.