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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

Eliot L. Engel

16th District, New York

August 12, 2016

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

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

Dear Mr. Lapiejko:

I am writing in response to the United States Coast Guard's above-referenced Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) which seeks to establish new anchorage grounds for commercial vessels and their attending tug, tow, or pushboats at 10 sites along the Hudson River from Yonkers, NY, to Kingston, NY. Though I recognize that the ANPR is merely an information-gathering step at the very early stages of the regulatory action, this initial proposal raises serious unanswered questions that could have wide-ranging impacts on virtually every aspect of life along the Hudson – ranging from economic development, to environmental protection, to the safety and security of residents throughout the region.

This plan could imperil the great strides that our local communities have been making to revitalize their waterfronts. New York's fourth largest City, Yonkers is in the midst of revitalizing its Hudson River waterfront with a mix of residential, commercial, and recreational development that would strengthen its downtown and provide its residents with unparalleled access to the natural beauty of the Hudson. Yet the ANPR proposes a Yonkers Extension Anchorage Ground for up to 16 barges that would cover approximately 715 acres, fundamentally altering the landscape and jeopardizing the vast amounts of time and money invested in an around the Yonkers waterfront.

The environmental impacts of this proposal could be devastating. Native fish, wildlife, and their habitat could be drastically affected, including and especially the endangered shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon. The National Marine Fisheries Service is currently undergoing a rulemaking, NOAA-NMFS-2015-0107, to designate critical habitat in the Hudson for the New York Bight Distinct Population Segments of Atlantic sturgeon. Our vibrant commercial, recreational, and traditional fishing activities could also be negatively impacted.

Finally, anchoring barges potentially carrying hazardous substances near the nation's largest and most densely populated metropolitan area raises serious concerns about the safety and security of the people in the region. From a minor fuel spill to a major explosion, the Coast Guard must do all it can to protect people in the local communities along the river from anything that might go wrong.

Thank you for your attention and I look forward to your careful and thoughtful consideration of any changes to current regulations.

Sincerely,



Eliot L. Engel  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS