

Comment to the United States Coast Guard Opposing the Proposed Hudson River Anchorages  
From Mid-Hudson Valley Municipal Leaders and Environmental Organizations

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The iconic Hudson River is vitally important to the Hudson Valley and all of New York, because of its unique ecosystem, its notable history and its scenic beauty that brings in thousands of tourists, who recreate and shop at local businesses, farms, and wineries. The River holds the unique distinction of being one of the few American Heritage Rivers established by Congress in 1996.

In June 2016, the U.S. Coast Guard announced that it was soliciting comments and concerns from the public in an Advanced Notice of Public Rulemaking (ANPRM), Docket #USCG-2016-0132, on a proposal to establish a large number of anchorage grounds for commercial vessels in the Hudson River – 43 berths in 10 locations from Yonkers to Kingston – at the request of shipping industry. There are currently just two official anchorage grounds, at Yonkers and Hyde Park. The additional anchorages are proposed for Kingston Flats South, Port Ewen, Big Rock Point, Milton, Roseton, Marlboro, Newburgh, Tompkins Cove, Montrose Point, and Yonkers.

This proposal poses many risks to the ecology of the river as well as detrimental impacts on the surrounding communities and inconsistent with the vision our communities share for the future of the Hudson River. Research shows that the habitats of some fish have been affected by previous anchorage sites. Vessels containing volatile crude oil and petroleum products pose a serious risk to a river, which it has taken more than 40 years to clean up. An anchored boat containing these hazardous materials could catch fire or spill toxic fuel in the river. The water supplies of communities that use the Hudson River for drinking water, including the City of Poughkeepsie and the Towns of Lloyd and Esopus, will be threatened. The anchorage sites would also take a toll on the scenic beauty of our region. Many of the proposed anchorage locations would block the view from riverfront restaurants and other businesses that support tourism, which is so important to the region's economy. Moreover, many of the proposed sites are located near homes and businesses who are concerned about the impact of constant noise, light and smoke from anchored boats. We strongly support both recreational and commercial uses of the river; however our communities have invested too much in the revitalization of the river to allow all that progress to be undone. Having unmanned, unlit barges parked on the river creates the potential for navigational, environmental and homeland security hazards that will be detrimental to the ecological health of the river and wildlife and the economic health of our tourism and fishing industries.

As an elected official in one of the communities along the Hudson River that highly value the aesthetic beauty and commercial importance of the Hudson River, I request that the United States Coast Guard reconsider the Proposed Rule to establish anchorages between Yonkers and Kingston.

Respectfully submitted,

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Town of Yorktown