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WELLS
10 North Street
Cold Spring, NY 10516

December 5, 2016

L.L. Fagan
US Coast Guard, Commander
First Coast Guard District

RE: Proposed rulemaking: Anchorage Grounds, Hudson River; Yonkers, NY to Kingston, NY

This letter is in response to the proposal by the Coast Guard to establish new anchorage grounds in the Hudson River from Yonkers, NY, to Kingston, NY. One of the anchorage points is at Newburgh, approximately two miles south of the Newburgh-Beacon Bridge. The contemplated Newburgh Anchorage Ground is proposed to cover approximately 445 acres for up to five vessels. It is my understanding from the Coast Guard Notice that this anchorage would cover an area approximately 1,800 feet by 2.0 miles.

I work in Cold Spring, just south of Beacon. My office, in fact, is located on lower Main Street in the first block of buildings up from the River. I am partner in an environmental planning consulting firm, with up to half of my time spent performing visual assessments for my clients as well as community character assessments. My education in the environmental planning and design field included training in the various techniques of visual assessment, and having been a practicing land planner and registered landscape architect for thirty years, I am experienced in evaluating the effects of introduced elements into the viewshed of cultural landmarks (both harmonious and incongruous elements).

Towns in the Hudson River Valley, especially towns along the River, are blessed with the unique scenic beauty of the Valley that includes rolling hills, escarpments, expansive views to the Catskills, and of course, the beautiful River itself.

Tourism is a significant and flourishing mainstay of the Beacon and Cold Spring communities – regularly attracting antiquing enthusiasts, guests at riverside hotels and restaurants, patrons of river cruises that travel this section of the River, as well as recreational bicyclists and hikers. In fact, I see recreational activities at the Cold Spring riverfront nearly every day that I am at work. Both Beacon and Cold Spring have public parks on the riverside that, I know from my own personal experience, are regularly used by the local residents and visiting public.

The Beacon-Cold Spring corridor is also one of the most popular destinations for weekend hikers in the NY Metro region. The majestic hills of Hudson Highlands State Park overlook the River just southeast of the proposed Newburgh anchorage. The following excerpt is taken from page 2 of the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail Master Plan (May 2015):

In recent years, visitation to the area's popular hiking, biking, ski trails and other historic and cultural destinations has increased tremendously, drawing visitors from communities throughout the Hudson Valley, the New York City metropolitan region, and beyond. This has positioned the Hudson Highlands at the forefront of outdoor recreation in the region, so much so that the area has been named by *Newsweek* magazine as among the top ten hiking destinations in the country. The Breakneck Ridge trail recently ranked as the top day hike destination in the country in an online poll conducted by Trails.com. This influx of people, along with positive press coverage, has boosted local economies and contributed to a cultural renaissance of local communities.¹

And here is the view from one of the trail overlooks:



Bannerman Castle on Pollepel Island (center of the image), a popular destination for small boat enthusiasts and tour groups, is located within one-half mile of the proposed Newburgh anchorage.

In my estimation, utilization of a two-mile stretch of river (which is also in the center of the above image) for the stowing of large, industrial-looking vessels for any length of time would certainly have a deleterious effect on tourism and the region's character as a recreational destination.

I see barges traveling up and down the river nearly every day, in addition to the various recreational boats and tourist cruises that frequent the river and the long freight trains traveling along the western shoreline, and I feel the activity of the barges is a sign of healthy commerce. This activity, however, is much different than the effect of stationary barges that would be anchored in clear view from innumerable shoreline vantage points. In my professional opinion, stationary anchorage of these large vessels at Newburgh would create a significant and lasting adverse effect on the cultural environment of the region.

If, however, the Newburgh anchorage site is to be established at all, I recommend that it be strictly regulated as a short term site for use by vessels anchored for no longer than five consecutive days at a time during any single month, for no more than five vessels at a time. Long term anchorage at this location should be prohibited.

¹ http://media.wix.com/ugd/0d79b3_560be9394d1740819545a4e9cb97d5a2.pdf

It is my understanding that members of some river communities have spoken out against the bright lighting and engine noise that certain barges generate around the clock. It is important that any regulations for anchorages include mandatory restrictions on nighttime lighting and noise. Violations of the regulations that are reported to the Coast Guard by an adjacent Town administration should receive preferential and immediate response.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Wells', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Frederick Wells, RLA