



MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT *Legislation to Safeguard the Hudson River and Surrounding Communities* A.6825 (Barrett); S.5197 (Serino)

AN ACT to amend the Environmental Conservation Law and the Navigation Law, in relation to consideration of environmental conditions when permitting petroleum-bearing vessels to enter navigable waters; and repealing section seventy-one of the navigation law relating to the petroleum-bearing vessel advisory commission

SUMMARY: The proposed legislation would, among other things, give the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), in consultation with the United States Coast Guard, the Board of Commissioners of Pilots, the Department of State, the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and local elected officials, the power to establish “Tanker Avoidance Zones” near sensitive aquatic habitats, waterfront communities and other factors critical to the safety and security of the Hudson River.

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT:

In June of last year, the United States Coast Guard issued an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking to establish 10 new anchorage grounds on the Hudson River, spanning a 91-mile section between Ulster and Westchester Counties. The new grounds would allow up to 43 barges to park in the area, the majority of which could anchor for up to 30 days at a time.

We are opposed to these proposed anchorages for the following three reasons:

- Anchorages could dramatically increase oil storage and transport on the Hudson River, turning it into an oil barge parking lot. As recently as April of this year, a barge transporting gasoline ran aground in the Hudson River. While there was no spill, accidents are inevitable;
- Anchorages could tarnish the viewshed, drinking water and character of riverfront communities; and,
- The anchorages are proposed for areas previously not navigated by large vessels, exposing aquatic ecosystems to harm, including critical spawning habitat for the endangered shortnose and Atlantic Sturgeon.

We cannot afford to expose the Hudson River and our communities to this risky proposal. As the environmental regulator for the state, we believe that DEC, in consultation with the aforementioned parties, must have the ability to protect New Yorkers and the Hudson River from further industrialization. This important legislation would allow the DEC to proactively decide where it does not want new anchorages to be established.

NRDC supports this legislation to give the DEC the authority to establish “tanker avoidance zones” to protect the Hudson River and surrounding communities.