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## COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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March 29, 2013

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
NWWashington, DC 20500

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

The Honorable Chris Christie  
Governor of New Jersey  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Honorable Jerrold Nadler, Congressman  
201 Varick Street, Suite 669  
New York, NY 10014

Dear President Obama, Governor Cuomo, Governor Christie, Mayor Bloomberg and  
Congressman Nadler:

At its Full Board meeting March 21, 2013, Community Board #2, adopted the following  
resolution:

**Whereas** Hurricane Sandy made landfall on October 29, 2012 resulting in 43 deaths in New  
York City and causing massive flooding and infrastructure destruction to Metro New York, as  
well as the New Jersey Cities of Hoboken and Jersey City;

**Whereas** at the peak of the storm, National Weather Service data collection buoys located near  
the entrance to New York Harbor recorded record wave heights of 32.5 feet causing the National  
Weather Service to infer from the data the wave heights were the largest since record keeping  
began in this portion of the Western Atlantic in 1975;

**Whereas** Hurricane Sandy generated tropical cyclone strength winds resulting in coastal  
flooding with waters rising to 13.88 feet above the average low tide level including a record  
setting surge component of 9.23 feet in and around lower Manhattan;

**Whereas** the Queens-Midtown and Brooklyn Battery tunnels and the New York City subways and PATH trains below 34<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan were closed due to flooding causing residents of lower Manhattan to seek alternative transportation through their darkened neighborhoods for the duration of the power blackout;

**Whereas** the newly renovated South Ferry Station, built with \$545 million in post 9/11 recovery funds but never designed to prevent flooding, was completely ruined having been submerged in sea water and faces years of rebuilding;

**Whereas** Hurricane Sandy struck just after much of the Northeast coast line had finished cleaning up from Tropical Storm Irene, making it two once-in-a-hundred year storms to affect New York Harbor in less than one fourteen (14) month span of time;

**Whereas** a Consolidated Edison spokesman reported to the Manhattan Community Board 2 Environment, Public Safety and Public Health committee that Hurricane Sandy resulted in the worst ever flooding of its equipment, specifically citing the East 13<sup>th</sup> Street East River Complex Generating plant which experienced failure as evidenced by a temporary arc at 8:12pm on October 29, 2012 caused by a 14 foot storm surge that overcame its 11 foot barrier protectors;

**Whereas** Consolidated Edison reported the loss of electrical power to more than 1.1 million of its customers and 1/3 of their steam customer base for more than one week;

**Whereas** requests for federal aid by New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo included \$33 billion dollars to repair housing and infrastructure and \$9 billion to fortify transit and power systems damaged or destroyed by the storm;

**Whereas** the United States Environmental Protection Agency has calculated that sea levels have risen between eight (8) to ten (10) inches and the average temperature of Earth has risen 1.4 degrees over the last one-hundred years;

**Whereas** everyone knows or should know that global warming, the melting ice cap and climate change will continue to cause sea levels to rise in the future;

**Whereas** researchers at NASA and Columbia University expect the likelihood for storms of Sandy's magnitude to increase in frequency as a result of climate change;

**Whereas** New York Harbor encompasses a system of waterways in an estuary of 650 miles of coastline in the vicinity of New York City and northeastern New Jersey, as well as three international airports (LaGuardia, Newark & JFK), supporting rail and roadway distribution networks;

**Whereas** a significant portion of the lower west side of Manhattan, including portions of Chelsea, Tribeca and the West Village have residential building stock which have been built on flood plains underlying water lots and therefore are prone to inundation;

**Whereas** more people are migrating to live in lower Manhattan and to the coastal areas of New York Harbor, where an additional one million people are expected within our lifetime;

**Whereas** Professor of Physical Oceanography and Distinguished Service Professor at the Marine Sciences Research Center at the State University of New York at Stony Brook New York Malcolm Bowman reported to the Manhattan Community Board 2 Environment, Public Safety and Public Health committee it was no longer a question of if New York City would be flooded but when;

**Whereas** Professor Bowman pointed out that in light of climate change, when trying to secure regional protection for our area, future designs would need to be modified and go well beyond our current 100-year benchmarks and look ahead into our City's future for the next 300 to 1000 years and beyond;

**Whereas** Professor Bowman spoke of and presented a detailed slideshow of storm surge protection systems currently being used in Providence, Rhode Island, Stamford, Connecticut, London, England, St. Petersburg, Russia, the new levee system that protects New Orleans, Louisiana post Katrina and the a vast network of levees, sea gates and sand dunes in the Netherlands that followed devastating flooding of that Country in 1953 resulting in 1836 deaths;

**Whereas** the flooding of the Netherlands in 1953 exposed the fallacy that its levees were sufficiently strong enough to protect its lowlands from any storm;

**Whereas** the flooding of New Orleans exposed the fallacy that its levees were sufficiently strong enough to protects its City from any storm;

**Whereas** Professor Bowman recommended the St. Petersburg style system for New York City, consisting of an outer gateway system with enhanced extension dunes, storm surge harbor barriers, sluice gates and shipping gates that would connect Breezy Point (Far Rockaway) to Sandy Hook with a second barrier on the Upper East River to block surges from penetrating from western Long Island Sound (see Fig.1);

**Whereas** Professor Bowman's recommendation for New York City would protect Manhattan, JFK Airport, the outer boroughs for Staten Island, Brooklyn, Queens, Hoboken, Jersey City, Port Elizabeth Newark and La Guardia Airports from further storm damage for the next five hundred years;

**Whereas** the costs of building a storm surge system of barriers, gates and enhanced extension dunes have been estimated between \$20 and \$24 Billion dollars;

**Whereas** in the wake of its devastation, Hurricane Sandy leaves New York and Northern New Jersey with difficult questions about how to prevent similar destruction and death from future storms;

**Whereas** Metro New York is at serious risk from extreme weather events and it will only get worse in the decades ahead;

**Whereas** eventually rising sea levels will submerge portions of Metro New York as we know it;

**Whereas** no measures have been taken to protect the coastline from catastrophic storms;

**Whereas** it would be irresponsible to insist that the risk of similar future storms is so remote that it does not justify the time and cost of building an effective surge control barrier for the ports of New York and New Jersey;

**Whereas** the costs of rebuilding after Super Storm Sandy greatly exceeds the future estimated costs of building a storm surge system of barriers outlined by Professor Bowman;

**Whereas** future rebuilding costs and future loss of life from future storms and higher sea levels to New York and New Jersey will be devastating to this region;

**Whereas** the storm surge system recommended by Professor Bowman will protect the entire 650 mile coastline that makes up New York Harbor for hundreds of years into the future;

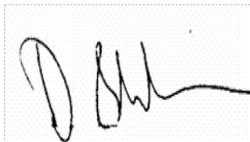
**Therefore, let it be resolved that** Community Board 2 calls upon the Mayor of New York, the Governors of New York and New Jersey, the Congress of the United States and President Obama, to direct the United States Army Corps of Engineers to evaluate the oceanographic, meteorological, geological and engineering aspects of a surge barrier system in the ports of New York and New Jersey, to identify suitable locations for such a system and to investigate the effects of ocean circulation and flushing ecology, fisheries, transportation, issues of social justice

and economics, as well as to project the future cost of reoccurring devastation to Metro New York and its urban population.

Vote: Unanimous, with 37 Board members in favor.

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to this resolution.

Sincerely,



David Gruber, Chair  
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Robert Ely, Chair  
Environment, Public Safety & Health  
Community Board #2, Manhattan

DG/gh

- c: Hon. Jerrold L. Nadler, Congressman
- Hon. Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator
- Hon. Daniel L. Squadron, NY State Senator
- Hon. Sheldon Silver, Assembly Speaker
- Hon. Deborah J. Glick, Assembly Member
- Hon. Christine C. Quinn, Council Speaker
- Hon. Rosie Mendez, Council Member
- Hannah Friedman, Community Liaison, Man. Boro. Pres. Office

Attachment:

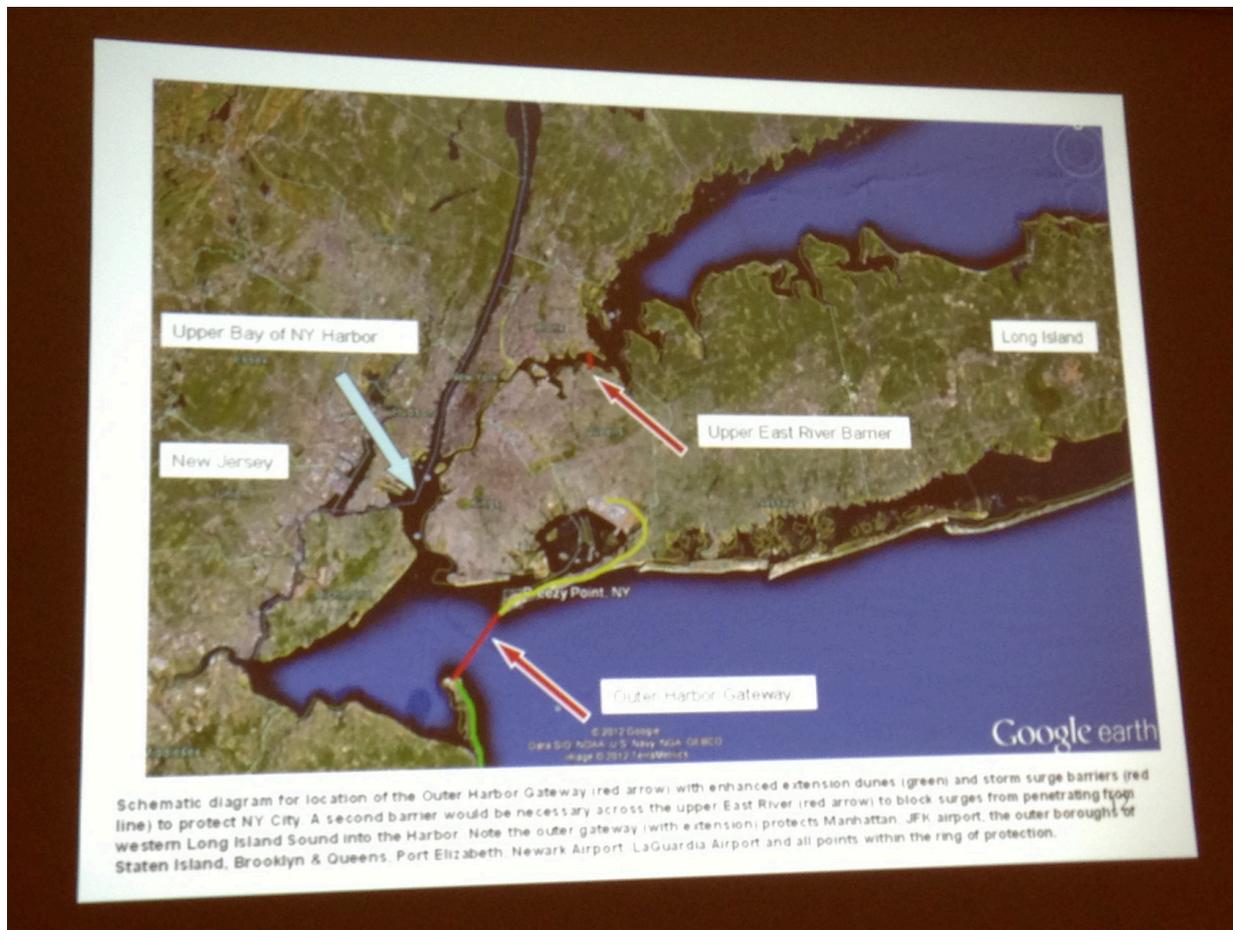


Figure 1: Schematic Diagram Outer Harbor Gateway  
Professor Malcolm Bowman