



Testimony of Roland Lewis, President and CEO

On the Waterfront Management Advisory Board

THE METROPOLITAN WATERFRONT ALLIANCE

Before the New York City Council Waterfront Committee

Tuesday, November 25, 2008

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony. I am Roland Lewis, president of the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance, a coalition of over 350 organizations working together to transform the New York Harbor and its waterways into a world class resource for work, play, transit and education.

On behalf of my organization and our partners in hundreds of waterfront related community organizations, businesses and recreational groups, I would like to express my support for the passing of Council Member Nelson's amendment to the city charter. With the passing of Intro no. 809 a few weeks ago, it is clear that the city is ready to take a fresh look at its waterfront. The passing of Council Member Nelson's amendment would signal that the city is prepared to not just talk about positive change for our waterfronts, but act as well. It is essential to have a strong community voice in the comprehensive

waterfront plans the city is now mandated to create. The creation of this advisory board is an opportunity for just that.

At one time the waterfront of our city was managed by the Department of Ports and Terminals. With the loss of much of the shipping industry to New Jersey, jurisdiction over the waterfront was splintered into a number of city agencies, including the Economic Development Corporation, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of Transportation, and City Planning, among many others. The Comprehensive Waterfront Plan and the reinstatement of the Waterfront Advisory Board as proposed under the amendment under question would do much to bring intelligent and balanced planning for our waterfront, including planning that can create jobs, improve the environment and provide access and recreation for all New Yorkers.

Our organization was founded to help bring together all the voices of those involved with and concerned about this city's waterfront. This advisory board, we hope, will be the place where these voices can finally be heard. We believe that New York has the potential to create a working, clean, and accessible waterfront that rivals any other in the world. The creation of this advisory board is a huge step towards realizing this potential.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.