

CITY OF KINGSTON
Office of the Mayor
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Steven T. Noble
Mayor



August 22, 2016

U.S. Coast Guard First District
C/O Mr. Craig Lapiejko
Waterways Management Branch

Subject: Proposed Anchorage Grounds, Hudson River; Yonkers, NY to Kingston, NY
Docket Number USCG-2016-0132

Dear Mr. Lapiejko:

As the Mayor of the City of Kingston I am writing to express concerns with the above-referenced proposed rule which would establish 10 new anchorage grounds along the Hudson River between Yonkers, N.Y. and Kingston, N.Y. The City of Kingston has a population of 23,000 and is located 90 miles north of New York City on the west shore of the Hudson River and on the Rondout Creek. The Rondout Creek is the longest tidal tributary on the Hudson and includes the Rondout Harbor Federal Navigation Channel, originally adopted in 1872. The Rondout II Lighthouse is at the north side of the Rondout at the confluence with the Hudson. The City's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program was adopted in 1992.

The City's concerns include the Kingston Hub made up of long term berths at Kingston Flats South (3) and Big Rock Point (4) and one short term berth at Port Ewen. Long and short term do not appear to be defined. Please provide a definition.

In its letter supporting the proposed anchorages, the Maritime Association of the Port of New York/New Jersey Tug and Barge Committee refers to an anticipated increase in oil shipping on the Hudson River. It is assumed, therefore, that most of the barges and ships will be carrying petroleum products.

The City of Kingston is aware of its coastal natural resources and habitats based on the work of the Conservation Advisory Council and other planning documents such as the *Rondout Harbor Management Plan*. A *Habitat Summary* completed in 2014 by staff at NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program maps out and describes the Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat in the vicinity. The proposed anchorage Kingston Flats South, is in the vicinity of the Flats (along the middle of the Hudson and centered under the Kingston Rhinecliff Bridge) and just north of the Kingston-Poughkeepsie Deepwater and the Rondout Creek. In addition just to the west of proposed anchorage Kingston Flats South are large beds of submerged aquatic vegetation off Kingston's Hudson waterfront and the globally rare freshwater tidal wetlands at the mouth of the Rondout (Kingston Point).

According to (Penhollow et al. 2006)¹, “*the open water, tidal wetlands, and tributaries in the upper reach of the Hudson are regionally important fish spawning habitats for anadromous fish, especially American shad, striped bass, Atlantic sturgeon and shortnose sturgeon, and provide habitat for all life stages of resident freshwater species. The numerous creeks and tidal freshwater marshes in this stretch serve as breeding, nursery, and migration corridors supporting waterfowl, shorebirds, herons, raptors, and passerine birds. Regionally and globally rare tidal communities include freshwater tidal swamp, freshwater tidal marsh, freshwater intertidal mudflats, and freshwater intertidal shore.*”

All of these habitats would be threatened by petroleum spills.

The City of Kingston is a Bronze Certified Climate Smart Community and completed a Climate Action Plan in 2012. The City of Kingston recognizes that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from human activity are catalyzing profound changes in climate and weather, the consequences of which pose substantial risks to the future health, well-being, and prosperity of our community. The City has committed to reducing GHG emissions. We do not want to prop up the fossil fuel industry by allowing long-term anchorage of petroleum bearing vessels.

It takes time to transition to the use of carbon-free energy sources. In the meantime petroleum products will be needed. We face a quandary because transportation of commodities by ship and barge is by far the most efficient mode. Rail is the second most efficient. The community is at risk of accidents related to the shipment of oil by water and rail. The railroad passes through the center of our city, and over the Rondout Creek. The additional anchorages are an added risk. We support the transportation of petroleum by vessel, we do not support the long-term berthing of petroleum laden vessels. The Rondout Harbor is a safe haven for maritime and recreational vessels. Temporary berthing for vessels because of equipment outage, fog and storms is acceptable and important for safety of navigation.

Kingston’s Hudson waterfront, including Kingston Point Park and Beach affords views of the Hudson and its eastern shore. These view will be obstructed by vessels anchored at Kingston Flats South. We are also concerned about light pollution from vessel deck lights and noise of generators.

The City of Kingston draws its drinking water from the Catskills, however our neighbors in Rhinecliff and Port Ewen draw their drinking water from the Hudson. Their drinking water will be at increased risk.

Recreational and maritime uses of the Hudson must co-exist. Kingston has one of the only public swimming beaches on the Hudson. Swimmers must leave the water whenever a vessel passes, due to the high wakes. Kayakers, canoeists, paddle boarders, rowers, wind-surfers and sailors use the Hudson. Kingston is a stopover on the Hudson Water Trail. The Rondout Rowing Club and Kingston High School Crew are hosted at the HRMM and have a presence on the Hudson. The Rondout Creek has by far the most marinas for pleasure boats, motor and sail.

The City provides overnight berthing to pleasure boaters traveling inland waterways and canals. Kingston is the home port of The Hudson River Sloop Clearwater.

The long-term parking of barges in the Kingston Hub is an added risk to these recreational usages. The Kingston Sailing Club has submitted their comments separately, and most likely other recreation users groups will also.

¹ Penhollow, M. E., P. G. Jensen, and L.A. Zucker. 2006. Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Framework: An Approach for Conserving Biodiversity in the Hudson River Estuary Corridor. New York Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Cornell University and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Hudson River Estuary Program, Ithaca, NY. 139 pp.

The City has spent decades revitalizing its waterfront. Many organizations have worked to clean up the Hudson, to protect its habitats and make it attractive to recreation and tourism. For safety sake, transient vessel berthing is acceptable. Long-term use is not.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter.

Respectfully,



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