



The City of New York

Manhattan Community Board 1

Catherine McVay Hughes CHAIRPERSON | **Noah Pfefferblit** DISTRICT MANAGER

**Public Comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for
Citywide Ferry Service (CEQR No. 15DME009Y)
Diana Switaj, Director of Planning and Land Use
110 William Street, New York, NY
Thursday, May 19 at 6:00PM**

Good evening. My name is Diana Switaj and I am Director of Planning and Land Use at Manhattan Community Board 1 (CB1). Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Citywide Ferry Service (CFS). Community District 1 (CD1) includes three significant islands: Governor's Island, Statue of Liberty Island and Ellis Island. It is bounded by the East River and the Hudson River. We have almost 70,000 residents, 310,000 workers and are visited annually by almost 13 million tourists. Ferries are the only way to get to these iconic historic places and parks, and a primary means for others to commute to and from New Jersey and elsewhere to Lower Manhattan.

Ferries are a significant part of Lower Manhattan's transportation system. They are a valued community amenity and provide commuters with an alternative to more environmentally taxing forms of transportation such as buses and personal automobiles. In addition, ferry service was crucial during the evacuations that took place as a result of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 and the 1993 WTC bomb attacks, and was one of the first modes of transportation back on-line after Superstorm Sandy struck New York City. Ferries are also a beloved tourist attraction, create jobs, and provide opportunities for Lower Manhattan residents to easily travel to Red Hook for grocery shopping and other services.

The Pier 11/Wall Street terminal is anticipated to be the primary terminal of the expanded CFS, receiving vessels from all five of the proposed new ferry routes. The New York Harbor is one of the busiest waterways in the Western Hemisphere. Residents of our District have suffered some negative impacts from existing ferry service in Lower Manhattan. Older ferry models are loud and have heavy emissions, creating noise and environmental pollution. Periods of heavy ferry usage have caused subsequent pedestrian and vehicular congestion in areas of Lower Manhattan designated for ferry queuing. Existing ferry service already creates significant wake impact, including damage to vessels, piers, historic ships and waterfront infrastructure, and occasionally including threat to life and safety for waterfront personnel and those operating human-powered craft. Increased ferry routes and trips will further exacerbate this problem. These wakes also create wear-and-tear on the delicate water's edge.

In September 2015, CB1 adopted a resolution supporting CFS (attached) with several conditions and concerns ranging from environmental, wake, pedestrian/vehicular congestion and safety. At this time, CB1 is particularly concerned about the following:

- 1) Mitigation for the effect of increased ferry traffic on air quality must be implemented as soon as possible. The DEIS notes that at Pier 11/Wall Street, nitrogen dioxide levels would reach almost six times the national standard in open spaces and 1 ½ times the national standard in residential areas, with pollutants spreading further inland. The report also states that full mitigation of adverse air quality impacts is not possible by the 2017 project launch, that unmitigated potential significant

adverse air quality impacts cannot be avoided, and that the City would continue to pursue emission reductions in the short and long term, if found reasonable and practicable. Ferries should be retrofitted using the best available technology and industry standards and use ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel, and mitigation must begin as soon as possible to reduce the anticipated significant adverse effects on air quality.

- 2) New York Water Taxi issued a memo to its employees stating that they would be forced to shut down their operation on the grounds that they would be unable to compete with the subsidized fare of CFS. A letter from the office of Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer to EDC in March 2016 (attached) regarding CFS reveals that the South Street Seaport Museum currently generates close to \$600,000 annually in revenue from the lease that New York Water Taxi has on Pier 16, and that they were in the process of finalizing a new lease that would generate \$1 million annually. This is an unacceptable loss of revenue to the Museum, which is still recovering from Superstorm Sandy. If New York Water Taxi shuts down operations at Pier 16, we urge that the City create a plan for the Museum to recoup, dollar-for-dollar, the lost revenue.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Citywide Ferry Service.