TAPPAN ZEE HUDSON RIVER CROSSING STUDY

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT PUBLIC HEARING

Westchester Marriott Hotel
679 White Plains Road
Tarrytown, New York
Thursday, March 1, 2012
5:00 P.M.

MICHAEL P. ANDERSON, P.E.,
Project Director,
New York State Department of Transportation

DAVID CAPOBIANCO,
Director of the Office of Transportation,
Planning, and Environmental Services at
New York State Thruway Authority

RICHARD TOMER,
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

ARNOLD BLOCH, Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates
Session Moderator

Rockland & Orange Reporting
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MR. BLOCH: Good evening to everyone.
Or good afternoon. My name is Arnold Bloch.
I'm a principal of the firm of
Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates. I welcome
you to this public hearing, and I do that on
behalf of Joan McDonald, the New York State
Department of Transportation Commissioner;
Thomas J. Madison, Jr., the Executive
Director of the New York State Thruway
Authority; Jonathan McDade, the
Administrator of the Federal Highway
Administration's New York Region; and on
behalf of Colonel John Boule II, the
District Commander of the United States Army
Corps of Engineers, New York District.

As this is a public meeting, we wanted
to just start off with the Pledge of
Allegiance. So I would like you to stand.
And the flag is over here on the right.

(All stand to recite the Pledge of
Allegiance.)

MR. BLOCH: I am serving as the
moderator and the public hearing officer for
this evening's public hearing. This is the
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second of two formal public hearings for the
Draft Environmental Impact Statement that
has been prepared for the Tappan Zee Hudson
River Crossing Project in Rockland and
Westchester Counties. It fulfills the
requirements of Article 2 of New York State
Eminent Domain Procedure Law for
Right-of-Way Acquisitions required for
construction.

This hearing is also intended to gather
information on an application by the project
for a permit from the United States Army
Corps of Engineers to transport and place
dredge material from construction of the
project at the Historic Area Remediation
Site pursuant to Section 103 of the Marine
Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act, as
well as the hearing is being conducted in
accordance with Title 33 of the Code of
Federal Regulations, Part 327.

These public hearings are sponsored by
three agencies; the two State agencies that
are serving as the project sponsors for the
Environmental Impact Statement, and those
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are the New York State Department of Transportation and the New York State Thruway Authority; as well as by the Federal Highway Administration, which is serving as the lead agency for this Environmental Impact Statement.

The Environmental Impact Statement for the Tappan Zee Hudson River Crossing Project is being prepared in accordance with the following laws and regulations. And I'm going to read these to you quickly.

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended and implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality, regulations 40 CFR, Parts 1500 to 1508;

Also, the Federal Highway Administration's Environmental Impact and Related Procedures, 23 CFR 771;

Also, the requirements of the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act, SEQRA, which is at 6 NYCRR, Part 617.4, in accordance with 6 NYCRR, Part 617.15;

As well as with a number of other federal and state regulations and
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requirements, including the Presidential Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act, and Title 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 325, Appendix B.

In accordance with NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act, and the Army Corps of Engineers permitting regulations, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District is cooperating with the Federal Highway Administration in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement. As a cooperating agency, the New York District is coordinating with Federal Highway so that the resulting Environmental Impact Statement can be adopted by the New York District for purposes of exercising its regulatory authority.

These public hearings are being conducted to provide an opportunity to reach the public and solicit input to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. These
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meetings provide the public one of many opportunities to make formal statements of positions before any project decision-making occurs. Another opportunity for public input is to provide written comments, and I'll talk more a little bit about that later.

Based on the findings of this Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the written and oral comments received during the public comment period, the lead agency will prepare a Final Environmental Impact Statement which contains responses to the comments received during the public comment period, including those received at these public hearings.

To assist interested parties in formulating their comments, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement document is available for public inspection during normal business hours at a number of established repositories throughout the region, including local libraries, town halls, and other locations. And you can get
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a complete list of those repository locations available online at the project website. It's also on one of the display boards in the other room that you were in today, as well as on a sheet of paper that's available at the registration desk.

In addition, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement can be reviewed and downloaded from the project website, which is www.tzbsite, S-I-T-E, dot com. And you'll see that listed on the slide later on.

The proceedings of this meeting are being recorded by a stenographer, up front here, and a verbatim written transcript will be prepared and made available for review on the project website.

So that everyone who desires to speak may be heard and their statements be part of the official record, we will not be responding to questioning from the floor at this meeting room. As you noted when you came in, staff is available in the other room and they will be more than willing to
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listen to your comments and try to answer whatever questions. But those conversations are not part of the formal record. So we won't be responding here.

As I said, I also am going to ask that you confine oral comments that you want to make tonight to two minutes so that everyone will have a chance to speak.

We ask that people sign in at the registration table located in the hallway, I think many of you did, so we can have a record of all those who have attended.

And after we finish our remarks here, we'll be turning to you for your comments. If we have nearly as many speakers as we had on Tuesday night in Rockland County, I'm going to ask you to keep your comments to two minutes so that everyone can be heard.

Now, if you think you're going to need more time than that, you have another option. In the other room where you were, where the meeting began with the boards, there is a court reporter located in there behind a wall and you can give comments...
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privately and as complete and as long as you want to. Comments made either in this venue or in that venue have equal weigh and they will both be addressed by the agencies.

Anyone who wishes to speak either in this room or to the court reporter in the other room needs to fill out one of these cards. And these are available at the registration desk. So if you've just signed in on the form, that doesn't mean I'm going to know you want to speak. You have to go out and fill out one of these.

Now, you may speak or file written statements that can be dropped off here tonight at the registration desk or you may submit those written statements in many other ways. This information is on the comment form which, if you didn't pick one up, you can pick up one of these at the registration desk, and it tells you how you can either drop it off or you can fax it, e-mail it, or mail it. And the various addresses are given on that sheet.

I do want you to know that all written
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Comments must be e-mailed or faxed no later than Thursday, March 15th. Or if you decide to mail them through the Post Office, they must be postmarked no later than Thursday, March 15th.

You don't have to confine your comments to this sheet of paper. You don't even have to use this piece of paper. You can send it in a letter, you can send other information, but you should pick up one of these pieces of paper just to give you the addresses and phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

Written statements will be given the same weight and consideration as oral statements at this meeting. And because of this, if you have a written statement tonight that you were thinking that you would like to read into the record, I really ask that rather than doing that, unless it's very short, that you summarize the comments in it so that it will fit into two minutes, and then you can hand in your written statement to any one of project representatives or to the desk in there. Or
if you really feel you need to speak those entire comments, go see the other court reporter.

So before I call the speakers to the floor, I'd like to introduce the people at this dais. To my right, my immediate right is Michael Anderson from the New York State Department of Transportation. To his right is David Capobianco from the New York State Thruway Authority. And to his right is Richard Tomer from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

So at this time I wanted to call on Dave Capobianco from the New York State Thruway Authority to make a few remarks.

MR. CAPOBIANCO: Thank you, Arnie.

Good evening. My name is David Capobianco and I'm a design engineer with the New York State Thruway Authority and a member of the project team for the Tappan Zee Hudson River Crossing Project.

The purpose of today's meeting is to garner your input on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for this very important
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project. We welcome you and thank you for your attendance.

This project is critical not only to New York State, but is also a vital infrastructure link for the Northeast. The Obama Administration has identified this as a priority project, and Governor Cuomo's office is providing their full support.

Given the scale, complexity, and fast pace of this project, it is being administered in a collaborative manner with the support and participation of numerous agencies and consultants. In particular, the Thruway Authority would like to thank the Federal Highway Administration, the New York State Department of Transportation, and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority for their partnership and collaboration in progressing this project.

In addition, numerous other federal and state agencies are playing an invaluable role in the project. Federal agencies include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who we welcome here tonight. Other agencies
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include the U.S. Coast Guard, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, to name a few. A full list of cooperating agencies is available in the Draft EIS.

While these agencies play a valuable role in the process, no role surpasses you, members of the public, interested parties, and elected officials, which brings me back to why we are here tonight.

On behalf of Thruway Authority and the project team, we thank you again for taking the time for attending tonight to learn about more this project and to provide input to help us ensure a successful project.

Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you, David.

I'd now like to call on Michael Anderson, the Project Director, to give a brief presentation on the status of the project.

MR. ANDERSON: Good evening. Welcome to the public hearing for the Draft
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Environmental Impact Statement for the Tappan Zee Hudson River Crossing Project.

This presentation will give you an overview of the project's goals, a review of what has been done to date, and will inform you of the process moving forward.

Tonight's hearing is intended to provide you information and the opportunity to comment.

It has been determined that the replacement of the bridge is the only reasonable alternative. Focusing on just two components of the bridge, the main span and the approaches, there are significant issues with the foundations in the main span which need to be replaced. There's a significant number of structural members which need to be replaced or upgraded. There's a need to provide redundancy on this bridge, and that is not possible with the existing structure. And due to the nature of the design, even if we were to invest in expensive repairs, significant vulnerabilities will remain for the remainder of the bridge's life.
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With respect to the approaches beyond the main span on either side, extensive work is required in the foundations, the support towers, and the steel framework. The ongoing deck replacement has significantly improved the riding surface quality. However, it has not addressed the significant deterioration which continues to exist in the support structures. The lack of breakdown shoulders constitutes a public health and safety issue and leads to severe congestion even with the most minor incident, such as a flat tire.

A number of significant milestones have been achieved since last fall.

On October 12th, a Notice of Intent was issued by the Federal Highway Administration to rescind the prior Tappan Zee Corridor Project, the 30-mile corridor project.

On that same day, a Notice of Intent was filed to initiate the Tappan Zee Hudson River Crossing Project.

On October 25th and October 27th, the project team held scoping meetings which
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were an opportunity for agencies and the public to comment on the alternatives and the environmental analysis framework. That comment period closed on November 15th of last year.

On January 19th, 2012, the project team issued the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. As an aside, to complete our technical investigation, which will be reflected in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, we've undertaken additional investigation work in the river. And since January 30th, we've been in the river taking additional soil samples. And that work will continue through April. And on February 9th, we accepted bids and will be moving forward with a $17.9 million demonstration project to install and test piles.

This brings us to the 28th and this evening where we are conducting the public hearings for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Given the importance of this crossing
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and the size of the investment currently
under consideration for the crossing, it is
a prudent and practical decision to design
the new bridge to optimize the flexibility
for potential future transportation modes
that are not foreseeable now, but may be
over the lifespan of the crossing. This
project will, therefore, provide the
infrastructure for future transit on the new
highway bridge by providing additional
width, by providing for increased design
loading, by providing certain constant
grades, and by potentially spanning the
space between the bridges at a later date
for infrastructure requirements for future
transit modes.

These actions are consistent with the
project goal to maximize the public
investment in the new crossing. This
hearing is an opportunity for you to learn
more about and comment on the Draft
Environmental Impact Statement.

The DEIS is a comprehensive multivolume
document. It follows a federally mandated
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process that is based upon the project's purpose and need. From the purpose and need flows the identification and analysis of alternatives, and the identification and assessment of potential impacts from the alternatives on the environmental, social, and economic condition.

Project scoping, which occurred in 2011, determined that the study area for this project would include the four-mile extent of the bridge and its landing areas at each shore. The project's limits studied in the DEIS constitute the South Broadway Bridge in South Nyack to the South Broadway bridge or Route 9 in Tarrytown.

In Rockland County, the bridge will tie into the existing Thruway property limits. The extent of the work will require the replacement of the South Broadway Bridge, which in turn will affect several adjacent properties.

In Westchester County, the bridge will also tie into the existing Thruway property limits. The extent of the work will retain
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the Broadway Bridge, the Route 9 bridge, as the new pavement will tie into the existing pavement just short of Interchange 9.

The purpose of this project is to maintain a vital link in the regional and national transportation network by providing an improved Hudson River crossing between Rockland and Westchester Counties. The bridge is an integral element of the New York State Thruway, the interstate highway system, and a critical link in the overall transportation network in the region.

The Tappan Zee Bridge, which opened in 1955, initially accommodated 18,000 vehicles daily. Today, approximately 138,000 vehicles depend upon the bridge every day. The Tappan Zee Bridge is the only limited access truck route cross the Hudson between New York City and Interstate 84 in Newburgh, 45 miles to the north. It also serves commercial traffic between New England and points south and west, and accommodates motorists and truckers wishing to avoid New York City congestion.
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The ever increasing traffic volume, especially of commercial vehicles, continues to slow traffic and contributes to the structure's deterioration. Inspections and analyzes have revealed other numerous significant vulnerabilities.

Since 2001, over a half billion dollars have been spent on bridge repairs, and it has been estimated that it would take approximately $1.3 billion in the next decade to maintain the bridge's viability.

As I said previously, it has been determined that rehabilitation cannot remedy the existing bridge's vulnerabilities. Replacement is the only existing solution. This action satisfies the project's need, which is to address the bridge's structural, operational, safety, security, and mobility deficiencies.

We've also identified three important goals that guide the project: Ensure the long-term viability of this Hudson River crossing; improve transportation operations and safety on the crossing; and maximize the
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public investment in a new Hudson River crossing.

There are two alternatives in the DEIS: A No-Build alternative and a Replacement Bridge alternative.

The No-Build alternative or the No-Action alternative is a forecast of future conditions which includes all known and programmed transportation improvements and all known major development projects. The No-Build alternative serves as the basis of comparison for the assessment of other project alternatives.

The Replacement alternative is a dual-span structure which allows for flexibility in the design of the main span and the approaches. While the specific design for the preferred alternative will be left to the designer and builder of the bridge, there are specific features that must be included. These are: Four lanes in each direction; emergency access lanes and shoulders in each direction; shared use bike and pedestrian path on one of the spans; and
the final design for the replacement bridge shall maximize the public's investment by allowing for the consideration, design, and construction of transit modes in the future.

These two bridge options have been evaluated in the DEIS. The final configurations, as I've just mentioned, will vary based upon the winning proposal. We've evaluated these two alternatives, these two options in the DEIS because they represent a reasonable range.

We've looked at the long span and so-called short span options. The long span option proximately spans 430 feet between supports. That works out to 32 piers per structure, or a total of 64 new foundations in the river. The short span, approximately 230 feet long between supports, requires 58 per structure, or a total of 116 new foundations in the river.

There are other significant differences between the long and short spans which are identified and analyzed in the DEIS.

It's important to understand that the
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final design must meet the environmental constraints which have been identified and analyzed and will be clarified in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

In terms of the main span, it will maintain the existing 1200-foot span length over the channel. And we're especially interested to hear your opinion about what that main span should look like. The character, look, and esthetic of the replacement bridge must be an appropriate gateway for the Hudson River Valley. We ask that you visit the display area where we present the two general bridge solutions evaluated in the DEIS. One of those is known as cable-stayed, which appears similar to a suspension bridge but performs very differently. It is an efficient and widely used design which can be adapted in an appropriate esthetic for this setting.

And the arch design. It is interesting to note that the original design for the Tappan Zee Bridge called for an arch. However, that design was abandoned and
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changed to the current double cantilever design when there were no bidders for the arch design in 1952. Arch construction has since evolved and is now a feasible solution.

Tonight and during the comment period, we hope that you will make your preferences known regarding these or other styles of main span which should be taken into consideration in the final design.

A little bit more detail with the esthetic and the design of the bridge has to do with the profile. The existing bridge has a long, flat grade followed by a steep incline of approximately three percent. This abrupt change in the grade and the distance that that grade extends causes trucks and large vehicles to lose speed, resulting in traffic congestion and contributing to a high accident rate.

From 2001 to 2009, approximately 2700 accidents occurred on the bridge, and that rate is more than twice the current statewide average.
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The replacement bridge proposes a more constant and manageable grade than does the existing bridge. This constant grade will improve traffic flow and consequently, reduce accidents.

Impacts. A wide range of criteria were analyzed in the 23 chapters of the DEIS document to determine the project impacts to the physical and social environment. Most areas of study revealed no adverse impacts, but there were some areas where it was determined that there will indeed be impacts, particularly during the construction process. These are identified, described in the DEIS.

Among other impacts, we have evaluated the visual impacts to the existing communities and considered the overall esthetic of the replacement design. The DEIS evaluates the impacts to historic and cultural resources, including two historic homes directly affected, as well as the bridge itself, which is eligible for listing on the National Historic Register.
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Noise impacts associated with the project have been modeled and assessed. An extensive analysis of the impacts to the overall ecology and the ecology of the river ecosystem has also been done. We have evaluated all aspects of the interface, including effects on wetlands, fish, fauna, mammals, birds, et cetera.

Most impacts that we have identified will occur during construction, and in order to minimize community impacts from construction activities, the selected designer will develop and adhere to a construction impact mitigation plan known as the Environmental Performance Commitments or EPCs. To date, over 50 specific EPCs have been identified. These EPCs have been developed in detail, and we have the opportunity tonight and for the rest of the comment period to improve and expand upon them with your input. Input is sought and valued in order to ensure that all appropriate measures will be included in the final construction mitigation plans.
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Other areas considered in the EPC include transportation concerns, and in that regard, the contractor will be required to minimize detours through residential areas. There will be advanced notification of road closures and detours through a variety of means, most importantly, the contractor must coordinate on a daily basis with local agencies.

In terms of community character, the contractor must maintain a clean and orderly work site and provisions for enforcement and penalties for noncompliance will be included in the contract.

With respect to historic and cultural resources, a protection plan is required to avoid damage to architectural resources and submerged archeological resources will be protected during construction.

With respect to land acquisition and displacements, any easements that are necessary will be removed and returned to the owner without delay as soon as the work is completed.
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Demolition and modification to affected properties are to be carried out quickly with minimal impacts, and the sites returned to a condition consistent with the adjacent communities.

Noise is an unfortunate consequence of construction. Noise generated during construction will be mitigated in numerous ways. Some of the precautions will include the use of shrouds or attenuation curtains for pile driving and other compressors and generator machines. Electric powered instead of diesel equipment should be utilized when possible. Impact devices such as jackhammers, pavement breakers, pneumatic tools must be shrouded. Construction staging areas must have appropriate noise attenuation materials installed. And contractors and subcontractors are required to properly maintain equipment.

With respect to air quality, among the EPCs is included that contractors must use clean fuels and best available technologies; all equipment must meet United States
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Environmental Protection Administration

Tier 3 Emission Standards or better;
prohibition on idling trucks for more than
five minutes, and all reasonable efforts
must be made to reduce all diesel engine
idling. And this pertains to the machines
that are not on the road but within the work
site.

In terms of energy and climate change,
the use of recycled material,
locally-sourced material, and renewable
fuels must be used to the maximum extent
practicable.

In terms of soils and topography, an
erosion and sediment control plan must be
developed and followed at all work and
staging locations.

With respect to water quality and
ecology, the DEIS has evaluated the
potential impacts to endangered species, the
Shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon, as well as
the larger community of fish which are
present in the river. Extensive measures
will be taken to minimize river impacts
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during dredging and foundation construction.

The project limits have been examined and tested for the presence of hazardous materials without any significant discoveries. However, during the advancement of the work, additional sampling and testing will occur, and if and when hazardous materials are encountered, they will be handled appropriately.

Early on in my talk I mentioned that we are moving forward with a pile demonstration project. That project was let on February 9th, and we are very close to making that award. The installation of piles is a critical part of this project.

There are different types of poor soils in the materials that must support the new bridge. Currently, a soil boring sampling and testing program is under way to better define conditions deep in the soil beneath the river.

The pile installation demonstration project, the PIDP, will collect additional information about the installation of
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different sized piles at different
locations. The environmental effects of the
pile installation will also be monitored,
and that will educate us and inform us about
additional precautions to be taken during
the production/construction period. This
information will be provided to the
contractors as they develop their designs
and their bids. And most importantly, they
will use this information to help mitigate
the environmental effects of the pile
installation during construction.

The PID project is expected to start
within the next two weeks and will be
completed by July.

Section 4(f) is the applicable federal
regulation regarding the evaluation of
publicly owned parks, recreational areas,
wildlife refuge areas, or public and private
historic sites of national significance.
The requisite 4(f) analysis has been
completed and is included in the DEIS.

We look forward to receiving your
comments tonight and over the next two
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weeks. As a reminder, the DEIS can be found on our website or at several locations in the area.

Based on the comments received and subsequent findings of the DEIS, a Final Environmental Impact Statement will be issued in July. We expect a Record of Decision, which will confer final approval and list project requirements and mitigation measures, from the FHWA later this summer.

On behalf of all of the agencies, once again, I'd like to thank you for your interest and participation in this very important project. The staff will remain available through the evening in the adjoining room, and I believe we'll repeat this short presentation later this evening.

Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you, Mike. We just have one more brief speaker here. I want to call on Richard Tomer from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

MR. TOMER: Good evening. And I do promise to be brief because I know you're
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all ready to get up here and get those
comments to us.

I am Richard Tomer, I'm Chief of the
Regulatory Branch of the New York District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. I will be the
presiding officer on behalf of the Army
Corps of Engineers at today's public
hearing.

The Army Corps of Engineers is here
today to obtain information and evidence and
ensure coverage of Army Corps of Engineers'
concerns to assist in the regulatory review
of a permit application submitted by the New
York State Thruway Authority for the
transportation of approximately
1.5 million cubic yards of dredge material
associated with the construction of the
replacement of the existing Tappan Zee
Bridge for the purpose of placement of this
dredge material at the Historic Area
Remediation Site in the Atlantic Ocean for
the purpose of remediation.

Activities related to the construction
of the replacement bridge itself are
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regulated by the United States Coast Guard.

The Army Corps of Engineers is neither a proponent for nor an opponent of the proposed work. Our role is to determine whether the proposed activity is in the overall public interest. This hearing will play an important part in that determination.

The New York District will issue another Public Notice upon receipt of the required dredge material test results and analysis. That future Public Notice will include test data and a determination as to whether the dredge material is suitable for placement as remediation material at the Historic Area Remediation Site. That future Public Notice will be posted on the New York District website. The website address is www.nan.usace.army.mil. We will send out an e-mail announcement when that Public Notice is available for review on our website.

If you're not currently on our public notice e-mail distribution list and would like to receive that e-mail announcement for
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that Public Notice, you can provide your e-mail address to one of the staff members at the registration table today. Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. So we're now ready to hear your comments. We do have a microphone in the middle of this aisle here, and we'll be asking you to come to that point.

If you want to speak tonight, you will have had to fill out one of these cards at the registration desk. So if you haven't done that and do want to speak, please go back and do that at any point before we adjourn.

In accordance with our policy, elected and appointed officials will be given the first opportunity to speak. Others will then be called to make their statements in the order in which they've registered.

As I mentioned, and I may need to mention this again, in order to allow as many people to speak as possible and in order to be able to do our -- as Mike mentioned, we advertised we were going to do
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another presentation at 7:00, we would like to get as many comments in as possible, we will not be responding to comments at this table. And I would very much ask you to confine your comments to two minutes. And there are other options if you need to speak longer: The other court reporter, as well as written comments can be added.

If your comments are in writing, they can be simply handed to anybody at the desk, at the registration desk, or anyone else wearing any of these badges.

If you've already submitted comments in response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, there's no need for you to do that again. Those have already been recorded and they will be part of the record and will be responded to. Again I just want to remind you, written comments are due by Thursday, March 15th.

So as I call people, I'm going to call the first two people so the first person will come up and the second person knows that he or she will be the next person to be
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speaking.

So let's get started. I would like to ask the County Executive of Westchester County, Robert Astorino, to come up to the mike there. And he will be followed by Joe O'Brien from Congressman Engel's office.

MR. ASTORINO: Thank you very much. First of all, thank you to the State DOT and Thruway Authority for arranging this. I know there's a lot of people that would like to speak tonight.

I would like to say up front what I've been saying all along, and that is, the new bridge needs to be built. It needs to be built as soon as possible. We all want to get people back to work. And so I applaud Governor Cuomo for initiating this project.

But we need to do it right. And attempting to build a bridge that does not address the needs of the region will be a prescription for cost overruns and delays.

We're not just building a roadway over a body of water. We're building a lifeline to the economic future of our county, our
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region, our state, and nation. So with our future at stake, the design of the new bridge in 2012 can't be stuck in the 1950s.

Now, that does not mean we need to have a Jetsons' bridge. We don't need bells and whistles all over it. That's not what we're asking here. But we do need some sort of mass transit component. Otherwise, we may not be building a bridge, we may be building a scenic parking lot over the Hudson River.

Bus rapid transit provides, I think, the best answer because it provides immediate and future value. Now, what we're talking about is running buses over the bridge and between Westchester and Rockland on a special high occupancy or HOV lane. And this can be done at a modest cost and make an important stride forward on the problem of traffic congestion.

And BRT must be part of the original plan, otherwise it will never get done. The lower level of the George Washington Bridge, as you know, was designed for mass transit, and we know how that worked out.
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So let me make this very clear, though. Equipping the bridge for BRT does not have to nor should it slow down construction of the bridge. We should get construction under way as soon as possible. Any studies that are necessary can begin immediately with the goal that BRT will be ready when the bridge construction is complete. It's sort of like watching a television show live and on DVR. You can catch up and eventually you'll be live again. And I think that's really what we need to do, a dual-track.

If people are going to pay $12 or more to get over the bridge, and we still haven't seen any financing plans, we need to give them an upgrade from the status quo. If we plan the bridge the right way from the start, we can then honestly assure the public that the completion date will be as soon as possible, and the price tag will be the cheapest possible.

And we also have to make sure that the concerns of those who live and work near the bridge will be met. Measure twice, cut
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once, as the old saying goes. Delays and cost overruns are caused when not enough thought and care go into the initial design of a project. The object isn't simply to start the bridge quickly. It is to finish it quickly.

So both myself and our administration, including the planning and transportation commissioners, are paying very close attention to this project and will continue to listen to the public's concerns. And I encourage everybody, whether in this room or outside in Westchester and Rockland, of course, to let your comments and questioning be heard through this process. We have one chance to get it right and it will take the force of the public to influence how the bridge is ultimately built --

So I wanted to thank you again for coming here today. We look forward to the continuation of this, but we ask that it is done right so a generation from now they don't say, what did they do? We can actually say, they actually got this one
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right. Thank you very much.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Our next speaker is Joe O'Brien from Congressman Engel's office, to be followed by Assemblyman Tom Abinanti.

MR. O'BRIEN: Thank you very much. The Congressman wanted to be here himself tonight, but Congress is in session so you'll have to make do with me.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Draft Environmental Review for replacing the Tappan Zee Bridge.

Safety must be our number one priority and, therefore, the rehabilitation of the existing bridge is not a realistic option, and we must proceed with its replacement.

As you know, the Tappan Zee Bridge is the only heavy traffic bridge between George Washington and the Newburgh-Beacon bridge, a distance of 60 miles. The Tappan Zee Bridge is more than that. It is a vital link between the upstate, downstate, and New England economies.

So while I agree that a replacement
bridge is necessary, the concerns of the local communities who will be impacted by this huge construction project must be taken into account. The DEIS does a thorough job of looking into these concerns and into many of the mitigation techniques. However, the fact is that this construction will be a burden on the local communities. The noise from the construction, the taking of some local property, and the traffic reroutes will impact the local communities on both sides of the Hudson. They will be bearing the burdens for a project which has huge regional and national implications. We must do all we can to make sure that those burdens are as minimal as possible.

That being said, this project moving forward is necessary for our region and for our country. The new bridge will be a boon to the local, state, and regional economies. The project is expected to produce 2800 direct construction jobs, and 2150 induced jobs in the region, with a combined economic impact of almost $400 million.
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I was also pleased to learn the plans will include a biking and pedestrian path, a great benefit to the area.

A mass transit component of this bridge must be closely examined. This is an opportunity to remake our region's transportation system, and we must look at every possible element. In doing so, we must strive to keep costs and the build time as low as possible. Mass transit would be a great benefit to Rockland County and the region as a whole.

As the project moves forward, I look forward myself to more of these public events so we can all understand the impact the new Tappan Zee Bridge project will have on the region.

I will continue to work with all involved to make sure the bridge is built efficiently with as minimal impact on its neighbors as possible.

As the Congressman who represents both sides of the bridge, I want to hear from the people who will be directly impacted by this
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project. They deserve to have their voices heard as the bridge replacement goes forward. Thank you very much.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Our next speaker, Assemblyman Tom Abinanti to be followed -- excuse me.

The Assemblyman will actually be speaking at the later session. So I'll take him off now. And please stick around, you can hear him speak later.

I would like to call on Amy Paulin, who is representing Assemblymember Nancy Fisher, to be followed by Mary Jane Shimsky, Westchester County Legislator.

MS. FISHER: I'm sorry. Actually, it's the opposite way around. It's Nancy Fisher speaking for Assemblywoman Amy Paulin.

MR. BLOCH: I really apologize for that. I'm very sorry.

MS. FISHER: Thank you for all of the work that you've put into this so far and the opportunity to speak on behalf of her constituents and my constituents on her behalf.

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I speak on behalf of my constituents to ask that the new Tappan Zee Bridge design include a mass transit option, specifically bus rapid transit, at this time, and that this component be available from the day the new bridge opens.

If we neglect to include a transit component, we are ignoring all of the studies, research, and data we have collected over the past decades showing that increased traffic congestion is a major pollutant of our air, water, and soil. We have raised a generation of students to believe that we always do our part to save our earth. How can the State of New York ignore the very lessons that we have been teaching? We can't.

The State has estimated that 50,000 people per day would use a bus transit option. Without mass transit, you have possibly added 50,000 cars per day crossing this bridge.

We have made it a policy to use mass transit to reduce our carbon imprint. We
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must now show by example that we are planning for the future and we must begin now. To not make mass transit available makes no sense and, quite frankly, leaves us open to ridicule.

Secondly, the no mass transit plan is penny wise and pound foolish. We have never, ever saved money by putting off an essential expense, ever.

There are many people who count on mass transit to contain costs. Including a bus rapid transit option can save a family from needing an extra car or even owning a car at all, especially senior citizens who will almost always choose mass transit over driving.

I would also like to state my support for turning the old Tappan Zee Bridge into a park and a crossing for pedestrians and cyclists. The deconstruction of the bridge is costly and adds to industrial waste. The Hudson River is one of New York's most beautiful views, and it will make it available to people of all ages for leisure.
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and recreation.

I think this is where our public private partnership may really work. The Highline has proven to be a huge success, providing recreation and boosting the economy.

Constructing the new Tappan Zee Bridge with a transit component and reinventing the old bridge as a park is a real opportunity for the State of New York to learn from our successes rather than from our mistakes.

Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. We have Miss Shimsky to be followed by Alfreda Williams, whose representing Westchester County Legislature.

MS. SHIMSKY: Thank you to the panel for coming to listen to our input today.

My name is Mary Jane Shimsky. I am a Westchester County Legislator who represents the villages of Hastings, Dobbs Ferry, Irvington, and Ardsley, as well as parts of unincorporated Greenburgh.

We obviously need a new bridge. This
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bridge was not engineered to last and it needs to be designed more safely. This is also the time to do it. The gentlemen behind me and their coworkers need the jobs. This is also the time when the money we need to build the bridge will be cheapest while interest rates are at historic lows.

That being said, we need to focus on mass transit. We need to begin to plan it at the soonest possible moment to make the construction process between the bridge and moving on to mass transit a seamless one.

Also, I'd like to comment on the effect that this construction will have on the local communities. Every community between the Bear Mountain Bridge and the George Washington Bridge is going to be effected with additional traffic on its local roads and on its highways as a result of various dislocations as a result of bridge construction. The local governments are going to need assistance to handle the traffic and to fund whatever additional planning and resources are going to be
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needed. And that planning should begin now, should be done in detail, with the local villages, towns, and cities, and the Borough of the Bronx and Manhattan involved right now.

Thank you very much for coming to listen to us, and we look forward to a new bridge and all the benefits it will bring. And we ask for the relief we need to help make everything go as smoothly as possible for the people we represent. Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. After our current speaker, the next speaker will be Paul Summerfield, to be speaking for Mayor Spano from the City of Yonkers.

MS. WILLIAMS: Good evening. I want to thank you for providing this opportunity to hear from those of us that live in the region about our feelings about the new bridge.

Obviously, we need a new bridge. I don't think there's anyone in this room who would disagree with the fact that the current bridge is unsafe in many areas and
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we need a replacement. We need the jobs
that it will provide because the
construction industry needs them and we know
that going forward, this bridge will provide
not only jobs during the construction
period, but will make it convenient for
residents in Rockland County and Westchester
so that there will be greater employment
opportunities available.

My concern is with the lack of rapid
transit. It is deplorable to think that in
this day and time that we would not include
the rapid transit component with the
building of this bridge so that they can
both be completed simultaneously.

There is no doubt that the air
pollution and the soil pollution and all of
the noise pollution that goes on with the
construction of a new bridge would only be
continued two or three years down the road
if your current plan is put into operation.
It is highly doubtful whether rapid transit
would ever be included later on, but if it
is, this means that it would only provide
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another two or three or five years of discomfort and evacuation and deplorable living conditions for these people that live in the area.

I represent the Village of Tarrytown, part of the Village of Sleepy Hollow, the Village of Elmsford, part of Northern Greenburgh. These areas are going to be directly affected by the construction involved in building a new bridge. And obviously we need it, as I said earlier, but what we need is a bridge, a smart bridge, and a smart bridge means bus rapid transit.

Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. I apologize for misstating your name.

Our next speaker is Paul Summerfield, and to be followed by Paul Feiner, Town of Greenburgh; Supervisor, Town of Greenburgh.

MR. LESNICK: Yonkers speaks with one voice. I'm here with Paul Summerfield. I'm Chuck Lesnick, the Yonkers City Council President.

We unanimously passed a resolution
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supporting what Mayor Spano is about to say.

In the interest of brevity, I'm going to
hand it in and not speak.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you.

MR. SUMMERFIELD: Good evening. Thank
you. I'm Paul Summerfield. I'm the City
Engineer for the City of Yonkers. I'm here
to represent Mayor Mike Spano, who
apologizes for not being able to make it
here.

Just briefly, Mayor Spano's
administration fully supports the Governor's
Tappan Zee Bridge replacement project,
including future train and bus
accessibility.

The replacement of the Tappan Zee
Bridge has for too long been just a topic of
conversation. We can no longer afford to
postpone this vital project, especially
considering the jobs that will be created
which we need now more than ever, and
considering the importance that this bridge
has on the economic well-being of the
region.
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The Mayor also supports the plan to reuse the existing Tappan Zee Bridge as a recreational facility.

Thanks to Governor Cuomo's leadership, the Mayor is hopeful that the replacement of the Tappan Zee Bridge will finally become a reality.

The Mayor looks forward to continued working with the Governor, state, and local leaders to help move the project forward.

Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Our next speaker is Paul Feiner, Supervisor Town of Greenburgh, to be followed by Mayor Drew Fixell from the Village of Tarrytown.

MR. FEINER: I'd like to thank Governor Cuomo, the New York Times, Newsday, the Journal News for supporting the proposal to study the possibility of preserving the old Tappan Zee Bridge and turning it into a park. I believe that we can make the Tappan Zee Bridge a world-class destination point, and also believe that we should explore some public/private opportunities that can
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generate revenue for the state.

New York is known for its greatness. We're a state that should not settle for mediocrity. We have to do things right and we have to do it the best. Our projects should be the models for the rest of the nation. The Tappan Bridge Park initiative is one model that will encourage tourism, help our hotels, our local businesses, our property values.

But we also need mass transit. The Greenburgh Town Board, at our February 28th Town Board meeting, unanimously approved a resolution urging the State to restore dedicated public transportation infrastructures on any and all plans for the replacement of the Tappan Zee Bridge.

Finally, I'd like to suggest that the State create an advisory committee made up of local officials and residents who live closest to the path of the bridge. The State is focusing its attention on the impacts the bridge will have on the larger community, but we also have to think about
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the people who live right near the bridge. I believe that that community deserves attention.

When construction starts, there's going to be a lot of quality of life issues impacting residents; noise, there's going to be construction-related problems, inconveniences, evening work. These are issues that need to be addressed. Creating a committee consisting of residents who live near the bridge and local officials and the State could be very useful and help mitigate some of the disruptions caused by the construction.

Finally, government construction projects have a habit of going over budget. It's my recommendation that the State commit to a project that will not go over budget. Contracts, architects, everyone involved in the project should know that if they bid low, that's the bid. That's what they're going to be paid, nothing more. And there should be a cap on all bidding. And we have to show the rest of the State that when...
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there's a low bidding process, we expect them to do what they say they're going to do.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you very much.

Our next speaker is Mayor Fixell from the Village of Tarrytown, to be followed by Michael Mills, Village Administrator for the Village of Elmsford.

MR. FIXELL: Thank you. First, I would like to say that I'm appreciative of the Governor's and the President's efforts to move this project forward.

Ultimately, however, I come to this hearing with a profound sense of disappointment. As so many other officials and citizens have testified before and will no doubt do so after me, that disappointment stems from the absence in this project of a meaningful commitment to mass transit, specifically bus rapid transit.

Though all of us acknowledge that making and delivering on that commitment would be neither easy nor inexpensive, failing to do so is, at bottom, a choice.
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And if you make that choice now, everything we know from the history of public finance, mass transportation, and government policy tells us that the opportunity is not likely to come again for many years, if ever. And if it does take somewhat more time to put that plan together, that's a small price to pay for a project that truly delivers the long-term economic and environmental benefits that have always been promised and are much needed and deserved by our residents.

While delay and paralysis serves no positive purpose, there similarly is neither a need nor an apparent justification for rushing forward, like was done in 1952, with a project whose impacts we will live with for the next 100 years or more.

Now, I truly wish that my only misgivings concern mass transit, but unfortunately, I do have several additional issues that need to be raised.

First, the 40-day review period for the DEIS is unacceptably short, particularly for
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a project of this unprecedented size, scope, and complexity. If a private developer came to any community or to the state, for that matter, with a project a fraction of this size, there's simply no way the review would be limited to only a month and a half. Aside from being unreasonable, this sets a terrible precedent, and an extension of 60 to 90 days needs to be considered.

Second, the absence in the DEIS of a financial plan and an analysis of the impact on both our local economy and our residents, especially middle and lower income commuters, of what will almost certainly be significantly higher tolls, undermines the review process.

Moreover, as the project does not include mass transit, which could provide some relief from the negative impacts of the higher tolls, it is even more critical that the financial plan and measures to mitigate negative economic impacts be part of the review from the start.

Third, we believe it is imperative that
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serious consideration be given to real
mitigation measures to offset the negative
environmental impacts on neighboring
properties, in particular, the Quay
condominiums. Such mitigation ought to
include some means to counter the
substantial loss of property values that
will inevitably result from such a massive
project being placed on the edge of this
property.

These impacts are real and the DEIS
does not adequately address them. Moreover,
if the response to this issue is that the
state law has no provisions for compensating
neighboring property owners for the
extraordinary negative impacts of major
projects, then perhaps consideration should
be given to modifying the law as was done
with the design-build legislation.

MR. BLOCH: Can I ask you to wrap up
shortly?

MR. FIXELL: Sure. Finally, as we have
pointed out many times before, the DEIS
ought to give a hard look at an alternative
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configuration that would allow for the
creation of a new TZB/Metro-North transfer
station built as part of the toll plaza that
would allow bus passengers and nearby
residents to quickly and easily access the
Hudson Line trains without clogging our
roads. If such a facility is not considered
within the planning process and the capacity
for such a facility is not provided for in
the actual plans, it will likely be
impossible to add it at a later date.

Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. I would like to
call the next speaker, Michael Mills,
Village Administrator from the village of
Elmsford, to be followed by Chuck Lesnick,
President of the City of Yonkers City
Council.

MR. MILLS: Thank you for this
opportunity to deliver this message.

A little over eight years ago, a
handful of consultants converged on my
office at the Village of Elmsford to begin
the review of potential mass transit options
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transversing through the borders of the Village as part of the Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Corridor Project. The options at that time varied from rail to bus rapid transit with the potential of stations within the borders of the Village of Elmsford.

Over the course of the next seven years, the Village staff, the Village Board of Trustees, Mayor Williams, and I worked cooperatively with the consultants towards determining the best options for mass transit, for a mass transit system to serve the region and the Village.

This work included maintaining active participation in the project SAWG as well as the Village undertaking significant planning activities and initiatives to potentially transform one or two areas of the Village into new transportation centers, with the inclusion of transportation-oriented development, TOD, along this mass transit system.

With the subsequent shelving of the
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Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Corridor Project in favor of the new Tappan Zee Hudson River Crossing Project and the apparent scrapping of mass transit over the bridge and through the corridors, it goes without saying that the Village was a bit confused and disappointed after all the time and energy it had invested towards the incorporation of mass transit and TOD in the Village.

As such, at first, and evidenced by previous written comments submitted on the new project, the Village took a stance in opposition to the new project without mass transit.

However, over the course of the past few months, as we continued to do our due diligence on the new project, we have gained a greater appreciation for the plan currently before us today. And I am pleased to state that we support the expedited process to build a new bridge as currently proposed.

I join Mayor Williams in commending the cooperative effort of Governor Cuomo, the
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New York State Department of Transportation, the New York State Thruway Authority, and the Federal Highway Administration as they work together to expedite the rebuilding of one of the region's most important infrastructures, the Tappan Zee Bridge.

We believe it is important to understand the current project plan speeds up the construction of the new bridge, but does not slow down the future incorporation of mass transit on the bridge and along the connected highway corridors east and west of the river.

The new project plan clearly does not preclude mass transit onto the new bridge in the future. The state and federal commitment to expedite construction of a new Tappan Zee Bridge at this time is fiscally prudent, will create much needed local and regional jobs, and preserve options for inclusion of mass transit in the near future.

It is clear from our perspective that to remove, but not to preclude, the complete
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buildout of a mass transit program in the Tappan Zee Hudson River Crossing Project is a decision in the overall best interest of public safety and economic stability.

Today, without the inclusion of mass transit, a program requiring additional study of modes, land needs, design, operational decisions, and cost implications, the Tappan Zee Hudson River Crossing Project is a new bridge which is now in the forefront instead of the horizon.

We stand confident that all environmental concerns identified will be satisfactorily mitigated and, as such, fully support the Tappan Zee Hudson River Crossing Project moving forward as proposed.

And if I would indulge you just one more minute, I want to break the rules for a second because I noticed here in the crowd two young people who won’t have an opportunity to be made part of the record, but I would ask them, would you stand up and show us your signs?

That's who we're building this new
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bridge for.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you very much. Our next speaker is Chuck Lesnick, President of Yonkers City Council.

A VOICE: He already spoke.

MR. BLOCH: Okay. I apologize.

Councilwoman Milagros Lecuona, again I apologize if I mispronounce your name, from the City of White Plains, to be followed by Richard Anderson from the New York Building Congress.

MS. LECUONA: You pronounced my name almost 100 percent right, Milagros Lecuona.

A few months ago I attended the first public hearing on scoping and as the co-chair of the Tappan Bridge Park Alliance, I spoke in support of the conversion of the existing Tappan Zee Bridge into a park.

I'm thrilled to see that Governor Cuomo realizes the potential of this option, and I applaud the Governor's leadership on his comments from a last week in support of the Tappan Zee Bridge preservation and for being receptive to innovative alternatives when
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presented to him.

For those of you not familiar with the Tappan Bridge Park Alliance proposal, the reasons behind our mission are many. I'm going to only mention a couple.

Environmentally speaking, the conversion will create 33 acres of parkland instead of generating tons of debris if the bridge is demolished.

It will facilitate a much needed pedestrian/biking trail linkage from east to west throughout the Hudson Valley, instead of ignoring unique opportunities for important trail linkages in the region.

Economically speaking, the conversion will add permanent jobs and economic development to the region instead of throwing away 150 million in demolition and, what was said tonight, 1.3 billion in maintenance only in the next decade.

Historic preservation: The conversion will preserve a magnificent structure instead of demolishing an engineering artwork; and, very important, preserve an
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historic structure of important value for the region instead of destroying New Yorkers' historic patrimony.

Community development: The conversion is a great project that unites communities from Westchester County and Rockland County instead of a demolished bridge that brings no value for our communities.

Of course, there are challenges. And the two that seem to concern most people are the fact that the new and the existing bridge are sharing the same footprint at their landings. But keep in mind that those two bridges are going to be a different height. And it appears that the bridges are not monolithic structures. They have piers and enough space for adding connecting ramps.

The other challenge is fundings for maintenance. I already just mentioned that 150 million for demolition would be saved and the $1.5 billion dedicated to the maintenance should be spent keeping in mind preservation and not demolition. And that's
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a very important point.

I also applaud Governor Cuomo for expediting the construction of the new bridge. However, as I mentioned at the scoping public hearing, I am disappointed that mass public transportation is not part of this first phase.

As a trained architect and an urban planner, I have to say that not including modal transit from day one is not going to solve the increasing problem of traffic congestion, and is not the right way of addressing the present or future environmental issues in this region.

By bringing public transportation at this first phase, you will save money on soft costs, you save money on mobilization that only will occur once instead of twice, and, most of all, you will be disturbing the Nyack and the Tarrytown neighborhoods only once instead of twice, which is really asking too much to those residents.

MR. BLOCH: Can I ask you to wrap up shortly?
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MS. LECUONA: Excuse me. But I spent a lot of time working on this and I am --

MR. BLOCH: I understand, but we have 40 other speakers after you.

MS. LECUONA: I understand.

For centuries, human society has been directly influencing the state of our natural elements cycle, and despite the rapid population growth, especially during the last few decades, the subject has received not much attention.

Last century, we became environmentally conscious and we started addressing the damage we humans do to our land, water, and air.

This century, we need to focus on developing innovations that help us reduce the impact of our daily lives on the environment. In other words, we know better now.

I understand that the budget is the budget, but not bringing public transportation into the project at its opening in 2017 is not a responsible
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alternative.

However, if we keep thinking out of the box, there is also a great opportunity here for the transit mode if the Tappan Zee Bridge has access to bikers and pedestrians through the new park. The DEIS proposal for the new bridge is showing an 18-feet lane for pedestrians, bikers, and the required buffer between them and the incoming traffic. That lane will not be necessary. Use that 18-feet lane for a tram or a bus, allowing for public transportation from day one on the new crossing.

And allow me to give a couple of recommendations, and then I will be done.

The design of the new bridge have to keep in mind the preservation of the bridge. So those images that you are showing are really a little bit of misleading if we are keeping the bridge, the Tappan Zee Bridge up. So the designers should keep in mind that in front of that bridge there is going to be the existing Tappan Zee Bridge.

I recommend the creation of an office
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dedicated to address people's concerns or problems at all time. This office will be taking care of daily issues related to quality of life such as noise, et cetera, especially for the neighboring affected communities.

I believe the design/build construction contract is the way to go, but we need to have the quality controls in place all the time.

And I strongly ask you for an inclusive process of the conversion of the Tappan Zee Bridge into a park. It is important to keep the community, the hundreds, if not thousands, of residents that have received this idea with open arms from day one participating in this project.

MR. BLOCH: I need you to --

MS. LECUONA: And my last one. And my last one --

MR. BLOCH: It's five minutes. I really need you to finish.

MS. LECUONA: -- is to present this project to the Obama Administration as a
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model for hundreds of bridges all over the country in similar situation. We preserve the bridge, but with bring mass transit to the new bridge. Thank you very much.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you.

I'm going to remind people, I do have 40 other speakers. By and large, we have people staying very close to two minutes.

I also want to remind people in the audience, it does not help to show emotion. I know there's a great deal of emotion, but please hold back on any displays.

So I'd like to call Richard Anderson from the New York Building Congress, to be followed by Ross Pepe from the Construction Industry Council.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you. The New York Building Congress is pleased to join so many others here this evening to support the findings of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a new Tappan Zee Bridge. We believe the DEIS effectively summarizes the critical condition of the existing span and presents a recommended alternative that will
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improve travel conditions and provide
opportunities for adding mass transit when
funding becomes available.

The Building Congress is a membership
organization and we incorporate in our
membership the designers, the contractors,
the working men and women who will build
this bridge. One of our core objectives is
to encourage infrastructure investment and
economic development.

The most important conclusion of the
DEIS is the determination of need for a new
bridge. Traffic flows coming from counties
west of the Hudson River have increased many
fold since the original bridge opened in the 1950s. We heard that this evening. Traffic
volume far exceeds capacity, and traffic
jams are a daily occurrence. The resulting
delays have a significant impact on our
economy.

While funding for the project is not
fully secured, the State is rising to the
challenge of assembling financing, including
seeking support from the innovative federal
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TIFIA loan program, and negotiating with pension funds.

The Building Congress urges the State to move quickly to begin construction. New York has studied options for replacing the Tappan Zee Bridge for over a decade. We must take action now before a crisis occurs.

Engineering a major transportation facility for future additional capacity is not unprecedented. When the George Washington Bridge was opened to the public, there was a single deck. Fortunately, the Port Authority planned for the future growth, and as capacity grew, a second level was constructed 30 years after the bridge was first opened, increasing capacity by some 75 percent. The State can take the same prudent approach with a new Tappan Zee Bridge.

So in including, we believe the DEIS provides a firm foundation for the State to complete design and begin construction for a new bridge as soon as possible.

We applaud the Governor and his staff
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for their efforts to strengthen our infrastructure and our economy. New York must not miss this historic opportunity.

Thank you very much.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Ross Pepe, to be followed by Bill Mooney from the Westchester County Association.

MR. PEPE: Thank you and good evening.

First, I'm here tonight to speak on behalf of ReplaceTheTZBridge.org. It's an organization and coalition of many businesses here locally, statewide, and nationally that are concerned with this Tappan Zee Bridge being replaced and the new bridge being put in service as quickly as possible.

We want to congratulate the agencies that have been involved in designing and studying this bridge over the past years and who have worked expeditiously to move the process forward for replacing the Tappan Zee Bridge.

I think, too, we need to look at and
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focus on the mass transit discussion that's taken place and identify and know that the first step towards a final mass transit solution will be the construction of the replacement bridge.

Once this bridge is complete, mass transit systems, when they are designed and developed on the land sides, can be attached to the bridge quickly, and we'll have a region-wide mass transportation system under way immediately.

The window of opportunity for this all to take place has finally arrived and we need to act on it quickly. We cannot allow it to escape us. It may never come around again.

When you look at the two structures, the existing structure and that which is being proposed, the existing bridge is old and beyond its life cycle. It has narrow lanes that do not meet federal interstate standards. It has the highest rate of accidents by as much as 100 percent more than any other section of the Thruway.
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system. It has no redundancy to withstand an earthquake or other natural disaster, and it will cost one and-a-half billion dollars over the next 10 years just to maintain it in some operational condition. It offers no room for the expansion of the deck, nor does it offer any opportunity for mass transit.

The new replacement spans are everything the Tappan Zee Bridge is not.

Tens of thousands of new jobs will come to the region with a new replacement bridge, jobs in design, construction, material production and delivery, housing, hotels, food services, transportation services, insurance, banking, and on and on during the construction of a $5 billion project.

Following the new bridge opening, the economy of the immediate and regional areas will expand with new businesses bringing thousands of permanent jobs to all areas of the economy.

The recently issued DEIS said there are no significant long-term impacts for the surrounding communities, nor the Hudson
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River.

The new replacement bridge is affordable and comes at a time when New Yorkers need two important things; jobs and a revitalized transportation system that serves local, regional, and global transportation needs.

We urge you to build the new bridge now. Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Our next speaker is Bill Mooney, to be followed by Michelle Simard.

MR. MOONEY: I'm Bill Mooney from the Westchester County Association.

We need a new bridge and we need it now, clearly.

And we support vigorously Ross Pepe in his efforts to get the new bridge, I might add.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak here this afternoon and would like to take a few minutes to focus on three key issues relative to the rebuilding of the Tappan Zee Bridge.
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Number one, the economic realities, the esthetic appeal, and privatization options.

The economic realities are such that we may have to sacrifice the perfect to avoid the disastrous. The requirement to have mass transit in place on the bridge from the first day of its operation will only serve to delay the environmental review process and, therefore, the bridge construction for many years. This puts the safety of those 150,000 plus daily commuters who depend on the bridge to work and live in jeopardy.

In addition to the safety issue, we cannot lose sight of the economic developments, the benefits that will accrue. Not only will we see the creation of thousands of jobs for the local construction industry which has been suffering from 20 percent unemployment, and we've got to get those guys back to work, no question about that, but the boon to local vendors, service providers, et cetera, will be enormous. And the opportunities lost which we will face every day from the business
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that may decide not to relocate or expand in our region because of the outdated infrastructure cannot be overlooked.

The esthetic appeal, just briefly, and my statement will detail that as I hand it in --

MR. BLOCH: Thank you.

MR. MOONEY: We're aware of the costs of the safer replacement bridge, but we'd like to see something that can serve as an icon for our region. And, once again, I'll detail that.

Privatization, we believe there are many private equity partners here and abroad with plenty of liquidity and we think the time is right to foster a partnership with them and others, such as public-sector pension funds, to create a long-term solution for the Tappan Zee Bridge.

Thank you for having me.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you very much.

Our next speaker is Michelle Simard, to be followed by John Corvett.

MS. SIMARD: Hi. Good evening. My
name is Michelle Simard and I'm here on behalf of the Pace Environmental Litigation Clinic. In the few moments that I have, I'd like to address our most significant concerns regarding the bridge and the DEIS.

First, the amount of time that the public has been given to review and comment on the DEIS is wholly insufficient. We have been given the minimum number of days as required by law to comment and read this DEIS that is very long and addresses a multitude of complex issues.

Furthermore, we have filed many FOIL requests with a number of agencies that are critical to our ability to properly comment on the DEIS and have been told that these documents will not be available for at least four weeks, which will be after the comment period is over. Therefore, we have filed a request with the DOT to ask for a 60 day extension, and we hope that they honor this request in order to better facilitate the public participation in this process.

Another concern is that the DEIS fails
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to properly assess the impacts of
constructing a new bridge and demolishing an
old one on the Hudson River ecosystem. This
problem will cause the Shortnose sturgeon
and the recently listed Atlantic sturgeon to
be taken in much larger numbers than the
DEIS suggests.

Furthermore, we are still waiting for
Noah to designate the critical habitat for
the Shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon which
may have an impact on the extent and
activity that may occur on the Hudson River.

The DEIS also falsely claims that the
replacement alternative will not generate
additional volume or capacity on the bridge.
There is no basis for this assumption in the
DEIS. The lead agencies use this assumption
to justify their decision to short circuit
and avoid studying the environmental impacts
to critical areas like transportation, air
quality, energy, and climate change.

The fact of the matter is, they will be
adding capacity to the bridge because they
are adding an additional lane in the other
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direction every single day that the bridge is open.

Finally, the DEIS fails to adequately describe all of the alternatives considered and provide sufficient justification for eliminating options such as the tunnel, single structure, and the rehabilitation and expansion of the current bridge.

Additionally, the cost estimates for the alternatives mentioned in the DEIS have no accompanying cost studies to show how these figures were calculated.

Thank you for listening.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Our next speaker is John Corvett, to be followed by Veronica Vanterpool.

John Corvett? No.

Okay, our next speaker is Veronica Vanterpool, to be followed by Steven Faust.

MS. VANTERPOOL: Good evening. I'm with Tri-State Transportation Campaign. I'm the Associate Director there.

Tri-State Transportation Campaign supports the replacement of the Tappan Zee
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Bridge project, but the current plan without transit is shortchanging Westchester, Rockland, and New York.

Without transit on the Tappan Zee, our region gets more of the same, another costly transportation project that encourages our dependence on oil, invites traffic congestion, contributes to air and water pollution, encourages sprawl, and isolates communities.

The irony of this situation is that New York State Department of Transportation felt the same before October 2011 when Governor Cuomo reversed course and decided to build a bridge not to preclude transit instead of building a bridge that includes transit.

Yesterday, the New York State Thruway Authority issued a MYTH verse FACT press release. Tri-State wishes to address these and other myths.

There are no plans at this time to build transit as part of this project, although the State says in yesterday's
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release that the new bridge will have immediate dedicated express bus service. Why isn't this explicitly stated and explained in the DEIS?

Yesterday, the State indicated that Westchester and Rockland Counties would be solely responsible for implementing transit, when for 10 years the State was involved. No big transportation project in our region gets done without State support.

Bus rapid transit systems are generally cheaper than rail systems despite what the State says. It has grossly inflated the cost of transit, pricing a new bus system at $5.3 billion. That ends up being $166 million per mile, 12 times the industry standard of $13.5 million a mile. At $5.3 billion, the State must be planning to use platinum to build a BRT system reaching Westchester's Platinum Mile.

The State suggests the Counties will have to resort to tax increases and toll hikes to pay for a bus system. But the State doesn't have any money for the bridge
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and will likely have to resort to tolls that could be as high as $30 per vehicle to finance the loans on the bridge. Just today, Deputy Commissioner for Transportation Karen Rae said tolls on the bridge would be consistent with other Hudson Valley crossings. Today, cars pay $12 to cross the George Washington Bridge.

Like the construction trades, we want and support construction jobs. We also want and support transit manufacturing and operation jobs, which are permanent and go beyond construction. Bridges with transit create more jobs and provide access to more jobs than is currently planned in this proposal.

In closing, there is tremendous support for transit on the bridge. Towns in the Tappan Zee footprint are passing resolutions in support of transit and sending these resolutions to state and federal officials. Hastings-on-Hudson was the first to start this effort. Croton-on-Hudson followed, then Dobbs Ferry, Greenburgh,
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Yonkers, the Northern Westchester
Environmental Action Consortium representing
Bedford, Cortlandt, Lewisboro, New Castle,
North Castle, North Salem, Ossining, Pound
Ridge, Somers, Yorktown, City of Peekskill,
Croton-on-Hudson, and Village of Mt. Kisco.

MR. BLOCH: Could you wrap up?

MS. VANTERPOOL: I am, yes. Thank you.

Rockland County towns are passing resolutions, also.

Building a bridge without any mass transit ignores these voices, it ignores public comments, facts and findings from a 10-year planning process, and contradicts the State's own data, and does not plan for the future.

Let's replace the bridge, but let's do it right. Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you.

MS. VANTERPOOL: I'm also submitting a separate comment. I signed in on behalf of Scenic Hudson.

MR. BLOCH: Okay. I'm going to call on you later for that. I can't do two in a row...
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right now.

MS. VANTERPOOL:  No.  They registered me as such.

MR. BLOCH:  I know.  They made a mistake.  I have to go to the next speaker. We have 40 speakers.  You can certainly go to the other court reporter or you can hand in those comments.

MS. VANTERPOOL:  I'm speaking for a totally exclusive organization, Scenic Hudson.

MR. BLOCH:  I understand.  You can come back and do --

MS. VANTERPOOL:  And in this 30 seconds, I could have already been well into this other short --

MR. BLOCH:  I'm sorry.  You can't right now.  I apologize for that.

Steven Faust, to be followed by Nat Parish.

MR. FAUST:  Thank you.  I'm a professional transportation planner.  I've actually worked for Federal Transit Administration.  I'm retired from that.
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I very much support transit on the bridge, but I think other speakers have been addressing that quite well.

I'm going to take on a different element, which is, I'd like to thank the Thruway and DOT for including a non motorized bicycle and pedestrian path on the bridge. This fills a 60 year gap across the Hudson.

This opportunity for cyclists and pedestrians and walkers and runners does bring with it a few problems; particularly, making local street access on both sides of the bridge safe for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The new path will induce a significant increase in both walking and bicycle traffic on both sides of the bridge. The DEIS does not discuss the traffic safety issues of connecting the path, the bridge path to the regional non motorized trails and on-road bike routes. For example, a key omission in the DEIS, the Putnam Rail Trail was left out. This is a 55-mile bicycle and walking...
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parkway that runs from Brewster to the Bronx. The closest connection on the Putnam Rail Trail is in Elmsford, just half a mile from here. It's up Route 119 from Route 9, and it's only two and-a-half miles, which puts it well within a very short riding distance and even a relatively short walking distance from the bridge head.

However, Route 119 is not a bicycle safe roadway. A few years back, the State and County probably together improved the road. They put up a very nice landscaped central median buffer and narrowed the side lanes so that there's no space for cyclists -- for motorists to overtake safely, to overtake bicycles. The lanes are too narrow.

This is a life safety issue that exists on several of the other roads and paths connecting the bridge. These need improvements such as route signs, crosswalks, traffic signals, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes. Most of this can be done at very low cost, but it's a critical element
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that has to go along with the bridge
project. And it can be ready when the
bridge opens.

There just will be -- I represent the
Five Borough Bicycle Club. We run things
like the Five Borough Bike Tour with 32,000
riders. I've got 60 years of riding
experience, 40 years of leading riders
around and --

MR. BLOCH: Can you wrap up, Steve?

MR. FAUST: Yeah. We bring people up
and down the Hudson on both sides all
yearlong. This crossing is going to be
heavily used. Please make it safe and
convenient for everybody and we'll all have
a good time.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Our next
speaker is Nat Parish, to be followed by
Marsha Gordon.

MR. PARISH: Thank you. My name is Nat
Parish. I'm a professional engineer and a
full member American -- full member Society
Planner.

I'm here today representing, as a
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consultant to the Quay condominium. Some People call it the Quay condominium. You can take it both ways. And thankfully Supervisor Feiner and the Mayor of Tarrytown both discussed the need to consider the impacts on the Quay which have not been adequately considered in the current DEIS.

Specifically, the proposal requires the acquisition of a small slice of the Quay for easement because the bridge comes that close to the condominium complex. As a result, there are all kinds of impacts, both permanent impacts and construction impacts, particularly construction impacts, which have not been adequately examined in this DEIS and should, at a minimum, be examined in the FEIS. Those include noise, vibration, light, air quality, and diminution of property value impacts. All of those are not at all considered.

There's one other factor here which I think needs to be examined is the fact that one of the -- some of the important impacts of pile driving. And you're going to have a
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pile demonstration study now, as was earlier described. That's going to happen later. Actually, that should have happened before the DEIS was prepared and the results of that shown in the DEIS. I believe this is part of a segmented review.

Secondly, your illustrations outside explain that the design-build construct team that's going to be selected will be doing and proposing environmental mitigation. I think that's the problem that we have here that that should be in this DEIS, not later when that team is proposed.

Now specifically, while I'm going to discuss in a detailed statement what's needed, some of the impacts that need to be mitigated --

MR. BLOCH: If you could just do a few so we could wrap up.

MR. PARISH: Yeah. Very specifically, there are noise barriers, swimming pool bubble installation, replacement to tree damage, rodent control, curtailment of nighttime activity, lighting mitigation.
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All of those need to be considered and haven't been, as well as the whole issue of diminution of values, and also the installation procedures for the effective mobility to reduce noise impacts.

Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you very much. The next speaker is Marsha Gordon, to be followed by Edmund Walsh.

MS. GORDON: Thank you. I'm Marsha Gordon. I'm the president and Chief Executive Officer of The Business Council of Westchester. We represent more than 1,000 employers in the region.

The title of my statement Replacing the Tappan Zee Bridge Now is Critical.

I want to thank you for the opportunity. The Business Council has long been on record in support of the replacement bridge currently being considered. As we all know, the current bridge was originally designed to handle much less traffic than now it is being asked to serve. There are many reasons to build a new crossing. Let
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me just list a few.

The current bridge doesn't conform to current interstate standards. There are conditions that contribute to traffic accidents and tie-ups that's really not good for commerce, it's not good for business.

In addition to many of these issues that will be corrected by a new bridge, the bridge project will bring major economic activity to our region, including the creation of more than 10,000 construction jobs, as well as all of the other work needed in connection to the project.

We applaud the leadership of Governor Cuomo and his staff while the agencies and departments for the fiscal pragmatism to start to build the new bridge now, while keeping open the mass transit option for the future.

We recognize the importance of planning for mass transit, particularly east-west connecting bus rapid transit. Building the bridge is clearly the first step to achieve this option.
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The Business Council of Westchester looks forward to continuing our efforts in this area. However, insisting that mass transit be part of the new bridge on the first day the bridge opens will delay the project by five years. Please don't let this occur.

Given the political gridlock in Washington as evidenced most recently late last week when the leadership of the House scuttled a multiyear federal transportation bill in favor of a shorter bill with less funding for infrastructure renewal, the fact that the White House has listed a new Tappan Zee Hudson River crossing as one of only a handful of priority infrastructure projects translates into an unprecedented opportunity for us.

We are truly at a point of mission critical. Let's replace the Tappan Zee Bridge now. Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Our next speaker is Edmund Walsh, to be followed by Dom Scaffeddi. Mr. Walsh?
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MR. KOPE: Hello, sir. My name is John Kope. You called out a few speakers ago the name John Corvett. I just want to be sure that you weren't mispronouncing my name.

I've been sitting here for quite a while.

MR. BLOCH: Are you from AAA?

MR. KOPE: No.

MR. BLOCH: No, I did not call your name yet.

Edmund Walsh? No.

Dom Scaffeddi?

Are you Mr. Scaffeddi or Mr. Walsh?

MR. SCAFFEDDI: Scaffeddi. Good evening. My name is Dominic Scaffeddi. I'm a representative with the Northeast Council of Carpenters. I'm here tonight in support of the bridge project.

I want to talk about safety real quick. When you look at the bridge and the amount of travel that it takes on a daily basis, in the event of a catastrophic event, the impact on both sides of the river would be great. That's something that we could not tolerate in these economic times.
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Unemployment. When you look at TV and you see a nine percent unemployment rate, that's not a true barometer of the construction industry. We're currently at anywhere between a 25 and a 30 percent unemployment rate. That's unacceptable.

We support the design-build process.

We feel that the mass transit should be a part. It's a cost effective way of doing business and will bring the project in on time and under budget. The cost of the construction materials are going up yearly. So by the delay of this project, the costs of doing this would be a significant increase to the cost of this bridge in itself.

We want to see this bridge built, built on time, under budget, and as soon as possible to put our brothers to work.

Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. The next speaker is Adrienne Donato. No.

I'm going to take this moment, we are about halfway through, to save the fingers
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of our court reporter, I just want to take a
30 second break so she can just stretch her
fingers. You can stand up if you like.
Don't leave because we're going to get back
in 30 seconds.

(Pause.)

MR. BLOCH: We're going to start again
and I'm going to ask Victoria Weisel to be
followed by John Lipscomb. So Miss Weisel,
will you come up? Everybody please give her
the respect that she needs. And if you want
to talk, please leave, but everybody else
please sit down.

MS. WEISEL: Victoria Weisel of the
Irving Neighborhood Preservation
Association. We're sort of a microcosm.
We're one of the neighbors that's right next
to the tollbooth of the bridge on the south
side. And of course we're concerned about
noise, dust, air quality pollution, bright
lights, and any sort of mitigation and
preplanning in terms of taking a look at our
houses before construction starts because if
damage occurs, we'd like to be compensated
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and helped out with that.

What I truly want to speak about is traffic mitigation and also, not only our smaller neighborhood, but what happens to the village as well.

In terms of traffic mitigation, this is very specific to our neighborhood, we are hoping that -- our neighborhood you turn-off of Broadway onto Van Wart and Paulding Avenues. We're hoping that the construction vehicles will not use that as an entrance and an exit. The entrance to the tollbooth parking lot is off of Van Wart and there is also a maintenance road that travels underneath the bridge. However, we have over 30 children in the neighborhood and we have just scads of school buses coming and going via that place, as well as the Jewish Community Center which has its school bus dropoff in the afternoons.

We lived through the construction of the Route 9 bridge over 287 and we were cut off from the village entirely. We couldn't make left turns.
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If construction vehicles are constantly turning in and out of there, we're going to be cut off again and it's also going to be a dangerous situation.

In addition to that, we are hoping that we can get some sound barriers put up because at Washington Place, perpendicular to Van Wart, right where the tollbooth parking lot is, there is what we call the shower curtain, which is merely a net rather than a sound barrier or a wall.

In addition to that, I wanted to mention that we have Riverwalk at the end of our road, which is on Van Wart Avenue. We are hoping that that might be connected under the bridge over some point because that would add connection to the village, and we're cut off right now from that.

In addition, I know this is a little bit just beyond the scope of this project, but the Aqueduct Trail is also cut off by 287 and there is no connection there.

So more construction happening with construction sites around the south end of
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Tarrytown is cutting us off from the village completely. It's also creating a complete boondoggle of traffic going into Tarrytown and into Irvington. And we're hoping people will look at that.

I did also want to mention something that Mr. Parish had said in regard to the Quay. With the widening of 287 and the blasting, we had an influx of rats and groundhogs, and I'm hoping there will be pest remediation because we actually had lots of property damage and problems throughout the neighborhood because of that.

So we're a microcosm. We're hoping you'll take these things into consideration.

The sound barriers also are an issue, not only along Van Wart, but along the area of the maintenance road.

We're hoping that you will prevent the maintenance road from being a frequently traveled site for construction vehicles.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. I wanted to remind people, just one second before our next speaker, we have almost 30 more
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speakers. So if you feel that you can't wait, I'm not going to make you wait. We do have another court reporter in the main area. She would be very happy to take your comments. And you don't have to rush through your comments with her. There's nobody sitting there saying two minutes. So please feel free to do that.

And if you have written comments that you want to submit, please, I would very much ask you to try to just summarize those, give us the written comments, and they will be addressed. So thank you.

Mr. Lipscomb to be followed by Jeffrey Miller.

MR. LIPSCOMB: My name is John Lipscomb. I have lived in the Hudson Valley, Tarrytown, Irvington, Rockland County my whole life.

I work for Riverkeeper, I operate our patrol boat. I'm here representing Riverkeeper.

This DEIS fails because it pretends that the bridge replacement is no longer
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part of the corridor master plan which we
discussed for over a decade to increase the
capacity of the 30-mile corridor.

The lead agencies are now segmenting
the 30-mile project, which is unethical and
illegal because it deprives us, the public,
our legal right to fully assess the total
environmental impacts of the project.

This DEIS is premature because a final
crossing design has not been presented to
the public for our review. A comprehensive,
meaningful review by the public is required
by law. You ask us to review the DEIS, but
you do not give us a design. What
for-profit business could get away with that
in New York State?

In addition, the DEIS is premature and
incomplete because you have not secured
funding. How can we judge which is the best
alternative if we don't know where the money
will come from? It's essential for us to
know whether there will be federal grants or
whether our taxes and our tolls will go up
to pay for it.
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The Governor a few days ago stated that it will probably be paid for by tolls. That is not fair to those of us who live here. The cost of an interstate artery such as this should be spread out regionally, nationally, in fact, not fall on those who happen to live nearby.

This DEIS fails to take the, quote, unquote, hard look required by law at all legitimate alternatives, like a comprehensive complete rehab of the existing bridge or a tunnel or a single new span. The lead agency is required by law, and these laws are in place to protect the public from political and governmental abuse, you are required by law to do so and the government is required by law to share with the public the available alternatives and their relative impacts in the DEIS.

It's not sufficient to say the rehab of the bridge is not okay, you don't like it. That's not sufficient. It must be in the DEIS.

MR. BLOCH: Could I ask you to wrap up
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your comments, please?

MR. LIPSCOMB: Yes, I will.

Note, for the working men here, all of these alternatives, all will create many jobs. No one is advocating for the no-build alternative. We all understand it's required.

Very important, no one here has discussed the impacts on the Hudson River yet tonight. This DEIS should be rejected because it recommends the one alternative which is most likely to do the most harm to the Hudson River.

The Hudson has never before been subjected to an assault equaling the proposed extensive cross channel dredging lasting more than five years, the extensive disruption and re-suspension of bottom sediment, some contaminated, the extensive pile driving of such violence that it's predicted that it will cause fish kills.

The Hudson River, and in particular the areas around the Tappan Zee, are critical to migratory fish and wildlife, critical as a
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nursery for spawning fish, critical to fish that populate the entire Western North Atlantic.

MR. BLOCH: Please finish up right now, okay?

MR. LIPSCOMB: I will, I will. Many Hudson River fish populations are in decline. Some are listed as endangered. You must find a way to solve our transportation problems without sacrificing the river. Those days are gone.

One more sentence. This DEIS is fatally flawed because the technique used to do fish population studies was inadequate, especially in regard to endangered Shortnose sturgeon and recently listed Atlantic Sturgeon. It's a matter of public record that the methodology used was, quote, inadequate, end quote. So it's no surprise then that you determined that there would be minimal harm to these species.

This also means that the information you've provided to permitting agencies was incorrect and permits granted will not be
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based on actual conditions in the river.

Do not fast track us. Give us a good plan that we can live with for the next 150 years.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Our next speaker is Jeffrey Miller, to be followed by Karl Smarsch. Mr. Miller?

MR. MILLER: Good evening. I'm Jeffrey Miller. I work for Local 137 Operating Engineers. We work out of Westchester County, Putnam. I also live around here, been around here a long time.

Really quick. I won't take too much time. I was going across the Tappan Zee Bridge not long ago with a friend of mine. And there was three of us in the truck and I kind of turned to him and almost at the same, we looked up and said, please, five more minutes. Get me across this bridge.

This bridge is falling apart as we know it and Band-Aids is what they're trying to do temporarily to patch it. It's not an answer.

We need a new bridge and we need it now
before something real bad happens and we won't have it and we won't have this crossing going over. So we need to get it done, move it along so our kids can also use it. It will be designed properly so it will last longer than the one now.

I look around. I see a lot of people here, young families with kids, younger kids, and they're the ones that we have to think about with this, not only just us, who are going to be going to work on this. And all the towns around that are going to be affected by this also with their increased monies coming in with the delis and businesses and trucking and car sales, it's going to increase a lot. You increase that bridge, make it nice coming across, it's going to increase everybody around us.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Our next speaker, Paul Smarsch. Mr. Smarsch?

Okay. Our next speaker would be Joe DeVoe, to be followed by Alexander Saunders.

MR. DeVOE: I brought a small picture with me. I'm Joe DeVoe. I'm one of the
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directors of River Rowing Association. We row out of Nyack, New York. We are a non-profit organization.

This project seriously impacts our home on the Hudson River between Nyack and Piermont. Together with the Piermont Rowing Club, we ply these waters every day from May through November. We know for example, it's 60 strokes from Grandview Village Hall to the Tappan Zee Bridge, and 200 strokes from the bridge to Nyack.

We understand the need for a new bridge, as you can see from this picture. Thankfully, the bridge looks a lot better now than it did in 2006.

The New York State DOT has ignored our letter submitted on November 9th 2011 with a petition showing the support of over 150 people citing safety concerns for our rowers and your work crews during the construction period.

No mention of our rowers' use of the river is noted in the DEIS. The only reference I could find is related to the
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Hudson River Greenway and, quote, it mentions, a temporary disruption of small watercraft navigation beneath the bridge during construction period can be expected.

Construction will last four to five years. It may be temporary in DOT parlance; however, it represents the time it takes to mold a gangly eighth grader into a New York State rowing champion. Many of our youth row in college and receive scholarships to do so. Over the past three years, river rowing graduates have rowed for Colgate, Marist, New York Maritime Academy, Syracuse, UC San Diego, Kenyon, and Harvard, among other schools.

This project seriously jeopardizes our ability to safely use these waters and thus our ability to survive as an organization. We estimate that from May through November we have over 10,000 man days of use on the impacted section of the Hudson River.

This project will include a multislip dock stretching into the river for over a third of a mile. The dredging, tug, barge,
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Crane, construction crew traffic on the river will materially interfere with our ability to use these waters safely as we have for years.

To be dismissed by the DOT is insulting and it raises the questions, what other concerns are being ignored or withheld from the public? The safety of our rowers and the safety of your work crews is important to us and it should be to you in this process. Please incorporate our concerns into your review. Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you very much. Our next speaker is Alexander Saunders, to be followed by Linda Viertel.

MR. SAUNDERS: There are so many familiar faces here. Over 12 years, I've come to meet a great many of you. And I appreciate your patience. It's unbelievable.

In '03, I went to the world's greatest tunnel engineer, who is currently doing 40 subways in China alone, just completed Alps Transit high speed trains straight and level
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from Germany to Italy, and a multitude of other projects.

Dr. Haronek (ph.) drew for us at no charge, and I brought to our DOT at no charge, full engineering drawings, no mystery, no test pilings, no nothing, just full engineering drawings for the Tappan tunnel, which lent itself for extension to Long Island, thereby solving the problem of environmental justice of the 2000 people who are dying every year along 495 and 95 due to diesel air pollution. Sad to say, that is the truth.

In the 10 years that we have been goofing around with this, 20,000 people have died of asthma, cancer, and cardiac problems due to diesel air pollution. And we have done nothing to create a full fledged tunnel all the away from Mahwah to Syosset.

Finally, cost. A billion dollars, if you pay it off, costs you between 20 and $25 a ride across the bridge. So $5 billion costs over $100 a ride every year, all the time, forever. We don't have that kind of
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money.

And we ought to be studying what's going on around the world that -- in Shanghai -- the Hudson River drawing that we got in '03 was taken to Shanghai in '05, completed in '08 in 22 months of building time for a cost of $800 million with German machinery, German engineers, 10,000 miles from home. That is an affordable price. It came in at $800 million.

That is typical of tunnel work everywhere in the world at this point except in Manhattan where it costs $4 billion to go one mile with the number 7 train extension.

We live in some kind of a time warp in the United States. We used to be a leader. We're not a leader any more. Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you, sir. Linda Viertel, to be followed by John Kope.

MS. VIERTEL: Yes. I'm a Tarrytown resident, but I'm here on behalf of the New York League of Conservation Voters, the Westchester chapter. But I am also a Tarrytown resident.
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You will not be surprised to hear that the Westchester Chapter of the League of Conservation Voters strongly supports the inclusion of public transit in the Tappan Zee Bridge replacement project.

Rebuilding the Tappan Zee Bridge without public transit would be missed opportunity carrying with it significant negative environmental and economic repercussions for decades to come.

While the Westchester Chapter recognizes the need to develop a sound replacement for the bridge as opposed to indefinitely continuing ad hoc repairs, we believe that excluding a transit option in the new proposal is shortsighted. Doing so would lock local communities into reliance on this automobile-only infrastructure for the foreseeable future, and would fail to achieve important quality-of-life goals, including relieving congestion and improving air quality in the communities surrounding the bridge.

Proposals for the TZB replacement that
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include public transit will achieve these goals, yet the DEIS as released by the New York State Department of Transportation fails to consider any options for the bridge that include public transit.

To focus on just one shortcoming, while the proposed project as represented as not precluding transit in the future, in fact, the new plans for the replacement fail to consider the need to align the bridge landings with a feasible transit corridor as previously identified in years of study.

The State's current proposal disregards the transit consensus and the painstakingly developed technical details that emerged from over ten years of prior public process and 280 public meetings.

Much has been made of the additional cost to build a bridge that will accommodate transit. However, the public, as we have heard before tonight, can have little confidence in cost estimates used to dismiss transit when the underlying data on which such estimates rely have not been released.
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to the public.

In any event, according to a recent news report in the Wall Street Journal, the state is planning to seek a loan and loan guarantees under the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act to cover 3 billion in cost.

Under this program, based on U.S. Department of Transportation criteria, projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, encourage the use of alternative transportation, reduce reliance on foreign oil, and promote livability, are more likely to receive federal loans. If the TZB replacement were to include mass transit, the State would have a stronger application.

It is difficult to see how the State can conclude that it has identified the best option when it has excluded one of the key goals of regional transportation planning from its proposals.

For these reasons, the New York League of Conservation Voters Westchester Chapter strongly urges Governor Cuomo to ensure that
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the TZ Bridge replacement be fully consistent with the important concerns and objectives outlined by the citizenry over the years of the replacement planning process. Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Our next speaker is John Kope, to be followed by Joyce Lennert.

MR. KOPE: Good evening. My name is John Kope. I'm a realtor and I'm Co-Chairman of the Legislative Council for the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors. I am here representing this realtor association. We have handed in a written statement in support of building a new bridge, so I will make my remarks brief.

It is quite understandable if many of you do not recognize the name Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors. We are a brand new association formed just this year in January 2012. We were formed by the merger of, on this side of the bridge, Westchester and Putnam County Associations of Realtors, and on the other side of the bridge, by the
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Rockland & Orange County Association of Realtors.

The fact that we now have all, that is 9300 members, that we are all part of a regional organization whose territory crosses the Hudson River speaks to the ongoing regionalization of the real estate industry in this area. The industry is simply following the movement of populations and the strengthening cross Hudson links in commerce and industry, education, and other key components of urban fabric.

At the center of the region, almost literally, is the Tappan Zee Bridge. It knits the region together. Without it, the region would cease to function, causing enormous harm to our economy and quality of life.

The present bridge is now old, some 10 years beyond its 50 year life span. It's in disrepair and many consider it to be unsafe. If a new bridge was started today, we are told it will take approximately five or six years to complete. That would put the
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present bridge some 15 to 16 years beyond its life span.

The urgency is now. The urgency is especially now considering that building a new bridge is now among the highest infrastructure priorities at both the federal and New York State levels, that we have the commitments of the Obama and Cuomo Administrations to commence the project, and that there is serious consideration of fund raising options by those parties. It does not make sense to risk all of that by tacking on an unknown number of years to plan and review the transit options.

MR. BLOCH: Can I ask you to wrap up?

MR. KOPE: I will. Our preference as an organization is that the project stay on its current fast track, which also includes mass transit capable mode. Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you very much. The next speaker, Joyce Lennert, to be followed by Joan Traber. Is Joyce here? No?

Okay. Joan Traber?

MS. TRABER: I'm going to pass.
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MR. BLOCH: You're going to pass, okay.

MS. VANTERPOOL: If you're going to pass --

MS. TRABER: Yeah, I give it to Hudson --

MR. BLOCH: No, I'm sorry, it doesn't work that way.

Carolyn Cunningham is our next speaker, to be followed by Gary Prophet.

MS. CUNNINGHAM: I am speaking for Federated Conservationists of Westchester County, which is an environmental group that's been around since the 1960s. We have been involved, over the last 10 years, in the Tappan Zee and the I-287 Corridor Project so that we are terribly disappointed that this particular situation has come to be that we are now planning a bridge without the mass transit facet that we think should be on the bridge and which most people who have spoken to date from all the municipalities would agree.

We are extremely disappointed that this is no real plan, but we feel that the mass
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transit is still critical to reduce the
traffic congestion and the air pollution
that we have in our region.

We are happy that the DEIS, of course,
said that the proposed bridge would not
preclude mass transit; however, we have no
timeline presented and we know what has
happened in the past on this.

We are being told now that the grading
and design features will not inhibit or
preclude bus rapid transit or hopefully
light commuter rail, which is what we still
feel is the best long-term solution for the
county and for the whole region. We hope
that this will be made clear that this mass
transit will be added to the design, and if
it continues to go on this way without
further actual immediate planning, that if
we could well ensure that the new Tappan Zee
Bridge will add this capacity for mass
transit, and that it's not just assured but
is facilitated.

We need to implement the capacity for
multimodal solutions right now and not just
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as a possible way-down-the-road future expansion. Work must be done to make this like a stage one because we've got to take real proactive measures to reimagine the future of transportation for the region in terms of real mass transit and not just put in a temporary solution that will not only be inadequate but obsolete almost when it opens.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our views.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Our next speaker is Gary Prophet, to be followed by David McKay Wilson.

MR. PROPHET: Good evening. I'm Gary Prophet, the Vice President of the Empire State Passengers Association. We're an association that works across the entire State to improve transit and connections to transit from local bus service on Genesee street in Buffalo to encouraging taxicabs to meet the Long Island railroad in Montauk Station.

We have been involved in this process
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since the very first meeting. As a matter of fact, we were kind of amazed at the huge transit component that was initially desired in this meeting and the huge cost of that component.

Unfortunately, that seems to have been one of the downfalls of this, was having heavy commuter rail being proposed across the bridge and down the Hudson River Valley on the Hudson Line. That is not really needed because, as many of you already know, going across the Tappan Zee Bridge, 70 percent of the traffic continues east toward White Plains. Only 30 percent of the traffic goes south toward New York City.

What we need and what we must have on day one is some type of mass transit, bus rapid transit across the corridor.

That doesn't mean that it has to be a $5 billion project in its own right-of-way. It just means it has to be across the bridge and then do its best to get across the corridor.

I could change that with making a few
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lines on some of those maps in the next room. There is no reason why it needs to take several years of delay. It can be done at the same exact time that the bridge is constructed to make sure that the right-of-way and the pathway to extend it on both sides is there in the near future.

If nothing is done on day one, it will not be added, just as what happened to the George Washington Bridge which still does not have mass transit on it.

Another option that could be looked at, which somebody else had suggested, was having a bus go across the bridge and then having some type of way for people to get down to the track level to board at the Tarrytown Station. That could be anywhere from an elevator to a moving walkway to items such as that that would also greatly improve transit and greatly allow people to get across the bridge without adding traffic.

As far as the DEIS goes, I found it amazing that one of the comments in that
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document said that it would reduce pollution by allowing traffic to go quicker across the bridge. I don't know who wrote that in the document, but many people got a laugh out of that. And I suggest you eliminate that because building a new, bigger bridge is not going to reduce pollution. It's going to add pollution in Rockland County, it's going to add pollution in Westchester County.

We need some type of transit on day one to provide alternatives to people to get east-west across the corridor north of New York City. Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you.

Before Mr. Wilson, I just wanted to remind you, we have about 10 more speakers listed. Some of you have come maybe for the 7:00 presentation that's being delayed because we have so many speakers. Of those who are signed up right now, if you would like, if you don't want to stick around, you can go to the court reporter in the ballroom. She will take your comments. You don't have to talk quickly there. Or you...
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can hand in your written comments. So I just wanted to remind you of that.

Mr. Wilson, to be followed by Sherwood Chorost.

MR. WILSON: Thank you. My name is David McKay Wilson. I'm the Executive Director of the Bike Walk Alliance of Westchester and Putnam. I'm here tonight to speak on behalf of the cyclists and pedestrians in the lower Hudson Valley.

First, we're heartened by the State's inclusion of a pathway across the Hudson on one of the new spans. I look forward to the State safely connecting this pathway to the north-south routes, the Old Croton Aqueduct Trail about a mile from the bridge, and the North and South County Trailways which are about three miles east.

We believe the project can do more to improve the environment in our area. And the way that can be done is to rethink the plan to demolish the old bridge. Deemed eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, this bridge is an
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historical treasure in our region. It's been deemed worthy for preservation, and I say let's preserve it, let's make it a preserve.

I'd like to thank Governor Cuomo and Thruway Authority Executive Director Tom Madison for hearing our calls at the October Scoping Session when we called for a feasibility study of preserving the bridge. Both are now on record saying that they want to pursue a study of preserving the bridge. We think it's a good thing for the region.

We also believe that the Final Environmental Impact Statement should look more thoroughly at the environmental impact of demolishing the bridge, carting away 33 acres of pavement, and ripping the pilings from the riverbed.

We know that cost is a serious issue for the bridge. We believe that preserving the bridge is a way to save money. Demolition will cost at least $150 million and that will be spending $150 million to dismantle a bridge that's just seen a half
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billion dollars in repairs over the past 10 years, with another 1.3 billion planned by the time the last car goes over it.

Transforming the bridge into a recreational destination will ignite a boom in healthy living and spark economic development on both sides of the river.

We have reason to believe that the Tappan Zee Bridge will have plenty of life left in it when its days are done carrying cars and trucks. Here's an opportunity for New York to think big and imagine a sustainable future. Transforming the Tappan Zee Bridge into Tappan Bridge Park can help lead the way. Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Our next speaker is Sherwood Chorost. Not here.
Our next speaker is Deborah Ramsey. Is she here? No.
Our next speaker is Peter Sprink. No.
Next speaker is Tracy Brown to be followed by Robert Friedman.

MS. BROWN: I'm here. I am here representing local residents. I live in
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Sleepy Hollow. And I have a lot of concerns about what we're talking about for the bridge, many of which have been addressed by other people tonight, so I'm just going to focus my comments on the process.

I understand that this process has been going on for 12 years, and yet somehow we've gotten to a point where it's rush, rush, Draft Environmental Impact Statement, 45 days for the public to respond to it.

There are clearly many, many questions and issues that have not been addressed. I wrote a list of some that I'm aware of, but I won't bother going into it.

It's so incredibly obvious when you listen to everyone's comments today that this is being railroaded through this community. The process has been segmented the way it's being presented to us. And you said in your presentation earlier that you want input from the public, but how can we really give meaningful input when we don't really know what you're building, what its going to cost, how it will be financed, how
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long it's really going to take, how it's
going to impact our community.

MR. BLOCH: Could you hold your
applause so we could get through the
comments? Thank you.

MS. BROWN: Segmentation of a project
like this is unethical and it's not legal
either.

And for the government to take our tax
dollars and take 12 years to research all
these options and all these alternatives and
all these impacts and to not document them
in this Draft EIS Statement and give us 45
days to imagine and figure out what isn't in
there and give you meaningful comments, it's
a joke. I'm sorry. It's ridiculous.

So I would implore you to extend the
comment period. You've given us a really
difficult task of reviewing what's in there
and figuring out what isn't in there.

You know, you want something to happen
quickly. I think this type of process only
serves to slow it down. You know, give us a
real full meaningful picture. What are the
alternatives? What are the costs? What is the plan? And then we can really respond instead of a, you know, kind of treasure hunt of what's here and what's not here and trying to imagine the possible scenarios.

So give us two more weeks. What is two weeks after 12 years? And we'll try and make sense of what you've presented to us. And I think if you can come back with something that's more thorough and responds to the comments that you hear today and over these many sessions, and I've been to a few now, then we can have a real conversation, decide on what's going to work for everybody's interest, and get going.

But in a process like this, it's only going to slow you down in the long run. So that's all I have to say.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Our next speaker is Robert Friedman, to be followed by Richard Gualtieri.

MR. FRIEDMAN: Good evening. I think it's evening now. My name is Rob Friedman. I'm a resident of Hastings. I have several
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comments to share with you today, as both a lifelong resident of this area and as an employee of Riverkeeper, regarding this DEIS which I consider to be an utter disgrace for more reasons than I have time for right now. But I'll give you some highlights for your enjoyment.

The DEIS for this project is a failure because it assumes that a bigger bridge with breakdown lanes will not create additional traffic volumes in the villages that feed the bridge.

Mr. Anderson, members of this panel, have you ever spent time on Route 9 in Tarrytown or Sleepy Hollow? It's a joke. Traffic is miserable. And I deal with it daily on my commute.

Building a bigger, wider Tappan Zee will cause more congestion on either side of the bridge, more idling, polluting vehicles in our communities which will cause both Westchester and Rockland Counties to suffer. This DEIS must address regional traffic concerns. It does not at this time.
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With regard to mass transit, if this bridge plan is built or if this bridge is built without mass transit to begin with, it will be obsolete from precisely the time that construction begins. Let's get smart here.

And, honestly, what exactly are we talking about tonight? How can you present a DEIS to us when you haven't even given us a final design for the bridge? I saw two options in that slide show. We're not even sure that those will be the final options.

You have requested that the public provide input and to review this massive DEIS, 1,000 pages. You gave us only 45 days to comment on it. We're not even sure what the final bridge design is going to be. That's preposterous.

Why can't we have an additional 60 days, 90 days to comment? That's not going to kill this project. No one actually believes that that would kill the project. Give us some more time to comment on that.

And don't even get me started on the
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funding for this project. It's clear that
no one has any idea of where that's going to
come from. And, you know, the papers over
the last few days, and Governor Cuomo
included, has said that, you know, maybe the
bridge will be paid for by raising tolls 15,
$20. Give me a break. That's ridiculous.

I feel that you're up here saying that
this project is ready to go from that
presentation that you gave us. But it's
obviously to me and many people in this room
that there are some serious questions that
still need to be answered before a shovel
enters the ground. Thank you very much.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Our next
speaker is Richard Gualtieri, followed by
Harold Shames.

MR. GAULTIERI: If you read the holy
scriptures, there's a place where it says,
eyes have they, but they see not. Ears have
they, but they hear not. Sometimes I think
that the writer must have been thinking of
Andrew Cuomo.

We've heard the Westchester County
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Executive and the Rockland County Executive and countless elected officials and ordinary citizens saying that we should have transit on this bridge, and the Governor seems to say no. Doesn't care what the people of this Valley say or the elected officials thereof. He's determined what he's going to do, and the heck with everybody else.

The other thing I wanted to say is, we've heard talk about tolls being used to pay for this replacement bridge, and we've heard speculation about a $15 toll, $20 toll, sometimes numbers higher than that. It would seem as though any kind of a substantial increase in the toll is likely to have an impact on traffic, not only across the bridge, but all the other arterials that feed into the bridge. Traffic in certain corridors could be increased while traffic in other roads decrease, and yet there's no consideration of the air quality and other community impacts that this could have.

The other thing is that a chain is only
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as strong as its weakest link. In this instance, we know that from Nyack to the Palisades Parkway is heavily constrained, and that's not proposed to be improved in any way by this project. So while it's great to have a really great bridge, if the people of this community are still going to be tied up in the same traffic, particularly in Rockland, then the operational situation will not be good.

MR. BLOCH: Richard, could you wrap up?

MR. GUALTIERI: Yeah, yeah. So I think that this EIS is not complete if it does not take the funding into consideration, which was promised in October when this thing was rescoped.

One other thing real quick is that I don't think that transit or what have you needs to be part of day one, but it would have independent utility and it could be processed on parallel track.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Mr. Shames, Harold Shames? No.

Gus Montero, to be followed by Bill
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Huston.

MR. MONTERO: My name is Gus Montero. I'm a local resident. I really didn't prepare, but I just want to say that rehabilitation of the current bridge is the most affordable option with the least adverse environmental impact, and I think it should be given strong consideration.

Demographic studies have shown that the population is actually decreasing. That's why we lost a Congressional seat. That's why Social Security is threatened. So we don't really need a bigger bridge for more traffic because traffic will be diminishing.

So, in conclusion, I'm saying let's rehabilitate the current bridge and save some bucks.

Governor Christie had it right when he said to Schumer and everybody else when they wanted that project, we can't afford it.

Thank you.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. Bill Huston?

Kenneth Vogel?

MR. VOGEL: I thought I'd be speaking
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at 7:00, but okay.

MR. BLOCH: You can wait. I can
certainly call you later, if you'd like.

MR. VOGEL: No, no.

MR. BLOCH: To be followed by Cheryl
Pine.

MR. VOGEL: Hi. Ken Vogel from the
Hudson Valley by Ulster County.

My comments are based on what I also
heard before. I heard somebody saying that
the tolls would be going up. Being that I'm
from north, I didn't know that the George
Washington Bridge was $12 for one car.

Bridges up by me raised by 50 percent,
by the way, if you guys didn't know. It
went from $1 to $1.50. And that's what I
crossed, the Bear Mountain, to get here, by
the way.

The reason I bring that up, by the way,
is what toll could it be based on, that
disparity between the George Washington and
the bridge to the north of the Tappan Zee.

The other reason I ask that is that
because the new bridge is not leaving the
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footprint of the old bridge, just in case,
God forbid, some sort of calamity, if, for
every, the bridge closed, what is your,
like, backup idea if that would happen, by
the way? Do you happen to have had any
thought, by the way? I just want to make
sure you've got that covered.

Also, over the 12 years now that we've
been talking about this, one of the things
about tolls that I heard, and because I grew
up in New Jersey, by the way, is that I-95
between 287 and 195 in Ewing, New Jersey
never got built because the Turnpike would
lose all the toll for the free interstate
going through.

And one of the things I learned here at
the Tappan Zee meeting in 2000 was, I asked
the Thruway Authority because, I mean, they
happened to be here at the meeting, and you
still are so I just want you to verify this,
I said, how is it that the Thruway Authority
is for I-86, which is, by the way, getting
built right now, and, therefore, you would
have truck traffic deviating from the
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Thruway in Harriman and avoiding all the tolls, being that tolls were brought up.

This is kind of relevant because I was also told back then that all the highways would have E-ZPass on it, which obviously isn't true now that Barack Obama has stopped Pennsylvania from tolling I-80. And also the Connecticut DOT was planning on tolling I-84, if you haven't heard, with the congestion pricing. So all these things ought to be thought into it.

The next thing I want to bring up, which the last person kind of brought up, is have a look at the history of the Nicholson viaduct and have that in context of the new Tappan Zee Bridge. And if you don't know what I mean, come see me afterwards. I don't want to take up more time.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you, Ken.

Cheryl Pine?

Matt Brennan? Okay. Matt is our last speaker of this session. Not of the evening, but of this session.

MR. BRENNAN: Thank you. And I give
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you a lot of credit for being able to sit through all of us today.

I must say, it was refreshing to see Governor Cuomo endorse a scaled-down version of the Tappan Zee Bridge, considering the last decade has been dominated by an unrealistic obsession to build a $16 billion mega bridge with an emphasis on accommodating mass transportation. None of it's supporters seem to realize the massive amounts of road reconstruction and property condemnation which will occur along with the fact that numerous connecting bus lines must be designed, built, equipped, and staffed, creating more unnecessary expense for local government.

Simply put, local bus service in suburbia is a gigantic waste of taxpayer money. Most people own cars, and subsidizing taxi rides would be a lot cheaper.

The mega bridge project only makes sense if the ultimate goal is to change Rockland County bedroom communities that
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surround the New York State Thruway into a
giant industrial park requiring massive
numbers of employees reminiscent of the 1923
movie Metropolis.

Hidden agenda question marks got larger
last summer when New York State Thruway
Exit 14 was the location of an exploratory
drilling two miles deep into the Newark
Basin aquifer in order to ascertain its use
for possible carbon sequestering.

The mega bridge plan also calls for a
14,000-foot train tunnel to begin at the
Palisades Mall and exit upon the shores of
Grandview. Inaccessible to Nyack residents,
this also defies logic. A large mega bridge
cannot be built because there is no bedrock
support until reaching the current main
structure at the ship channel, because after
drilling 1,000 feet, as deep as Hook
Mountain is tall, no bedrock is yet to be
discovered.

The current bridge, which has a
two-mile causeway supported by piles driven
into a riverbed consisting of peat, clay,
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and glacial till, is probably what will have
to be done for the current bridge. And
that's all the weight that can be supported.

MR. BLOCH: Can I ask you to wrap up in
a moment?

MR. BRENNAN: Oh, I already had two
minutes?

MR. BLOCH: Yes. Actually, a little
bit more.

MR. BRENNAN: Okay. The 70,000
commuter increase spoken of by the mega
bridge proponents is unrealistic unless
Rockland is going to gain 50,000 households.
In fact, most of Rockland rail commuters
into Manhattan already commute on the
Suffern or Nanuet lines and have no reason
to travel across the Tappan Zee Bridge, and
neither do the Manhattan commuters from
Orange County. Westchester commuters are
already well served by trains into Grand
Central station.

The mega bridge project would cost at
least 20 billion after the last bit of
debris is once again left abandoned upon the
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Nyack shores. With no government money available, private money won't touch it. Anyone doing the math will realize that if the bankrupt New York State Thruway Authority were to issue tax free 30-year bonds, $20 billion of New York State Thruway Authority tax free 30-year bonds per annum would bring the total cost at over $50 billion. The bridge project will cost $2 billion a year for 30 years. At $5 per vehicle, it will take a physically impossible 400 million annual trips to break even. Last year the bridge had 25 million passengers --

MR. BLOCH: I'm going to have to ask you to --

MR. BRENNAN: Okay. Unlike the other speakers ahead of me that I had to sit through, I'll respect your wishes.

MR. BLOCH: Thank you. I appreciate that.

So that is it for our speakers at this point. Thank you.

oOo
THE FOREGOING IS CERTIFIED to be a true
and correct transcription of the original
stenographic notes to the best of my ability.

____________________________
Kathleen Stala

Kathleen Stala