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2 THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

3 -----x

4 Public Meeting:

5 Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement

6 For the Proposed Goethals Bridge Replacement

7 -----x

8 The Staten Island

9 Hotel

10 1415 Richmond Avenue

11 Staten Island, New York

12 July 9, 2009

13 4:30 p.m.

14

15 B e f o r e:

16

17 GARY KASSOF
18 Bridge Program Manager
19 The United States Coast Guard

19 MAURA FITZPATRICK
20 Moderator
21 Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates

21 KEN HESS

22 Project Manager
Louis Berger Group

23

24

25

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2 A P P E A R A N C E S:

3 For The United States Coast Guard:

4 Gary Kassof

5 Chris Bisignano

6 Zack Strauss

7 For Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates:

8 Maura Fitzpatrick

9 Christie A. Marcella

10 Ryan Walsh

11 For Louis Berger Group, Inc.:

12 Ken Hess

13 Jean Philippe Magron

14 Craig Hanlon

15 For Parsons Brinckerhoff:

16 Judy Versenyi

17 Peter Sucher

18 For URS:

19 Stefan Armington

20 ALSO PRESENT:

21 The Public

22 The Press

23 The Media

24 Marc Russo,

25 Reporter

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PROCEEDINGS

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THE MODERATOR: So good afternoon,

5

everyone.

6

My name is Maura Fitzpatrick and I

7

will be facilitating this afternoon's hearing.

8

I am here behalf of the United

9

States Coast Guard and welcome you all here.

10

And we're working to make this

11

louder? Does that work? Is that better?

12

(Adjusting microphone.)

13

THE MODERATOR: We will try that

14

again. I will just project, how's that? Okay.

15

We're going to begin this

16

afternoon with a very short presentation and mostly

17

the reason why we're here this afternoon is to hear

18

from you. So we're keeping our presentation brief.

19

We're going to be repeating this

20

presentation also at 6:30 and we expect to have a

21

new batch of people then.

22 But mostly I want to stand here
23 and remind you that if you are interested in making
24 oral comments this afternoon, you need to fill out
25 a speaker request form in the back of the room.

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2 And you need to do that with Christie in back.

3 And without further adieu, I'm

4 going to introduce Gary Kassof from the U.S. Coast

5 Guard. He's the Bridge Program Manager of the

6 First Coast Guard District.

7 MR. GARY KASSOF: Thank you,

8 Maura.

9 I'll try to do this without a

10 mike. If I'm not projecting, let me know.

11 And before we begin, I would like

12 to recognize some elected officials and

13 representatives of elected officials:

14 Mr. Tom Aiello of Governor

15 Paterson's Office, welcome;

16 Jack Vokral of Staten Island

17 Community Board # 2;

18 Patrick Hyland from Congressman

19 McMahan's office; and

20 Jeanette Beck of New York City

21 Councilman James Oddo's office. So welcome all and

22 welcome to you all for participating in this

23 process.

24 We are here to listen to your

25 comments regarding the Draft Environmental Impact

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2 Statement for the proposed Goethals Bridge Project.

3 As Maura mentioned, I am Gary

4 Kassof, the Bridge Program Manager for the First

5 Coast Guard District.

6 The U.S. Coast Guard, an agency

7 within the Department of Homeland Security, by

8 virtue of its authority to consider the issuance of

9 a bridge permit for the proposed action, is the

10 lead federal agency in accordance with the National

11 Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and its enabling

12 regulations which are found at Title 40 Code of

13 Federal Regulations part 1500.

14 Therefore, the Coast Guard is

15 responsible for ensuring that the Federal

16 environmental process is properly conducted.

17 In addition, this process is being

18 conducted in compliance with Section 106 of the

19 National Environmental Policy Act -- I'm sorry. Of

20 the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

21 With me this evening, this

22 afternoon and evening are members of my staff as
23 well as members of the joint venture consultant
24 team of The Louis Berger Group, and PB World who
25 assisted the Coast Guard in preparing the Draft EIS

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2 about which we're going to hear comments from you.

3 This meeting therefore, is very --

4 is a very critical part of this environmental

5 process.

6 There are numerous federal, state

7 and local agencies with expertise or jurisdiction

8 in the environmental review process that have

9 provided consultation to the Coast Guard through

10 the Technical Advisory Committee and Environmental

11 Task Force in order to ensure conformance with

12 existing laws and regulations.

13 Further, public input has been a

14 key component of the process to date via the EIS

15 scoping meeting held in October of 2004, two rounds

16 of public open houses at key junctures in the

17 process, and established stakeholder committee

18 meetings of organizational representatives in the

19 project area which were held throughout the

20 development of the Draft Environmental Impact

21 Statement.

22 This is one of two formal public
23 meetings that are being held in communities nearest
24 to the project. We are here to hear, again,
25 comments on the Draft EIS.

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2 The other meeting was held
3 yesterday, July 8th at City Hall, Elizabeth, New
4 Jersey between the hours of 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.

5 This public meeting is conducted
6 under the authority granted to the Coast Guard
7 under Section 115.60 of Title 33 of the Code of
8 Federal Regulations.

9 The decision to hold this meeting
10 was announced in the Federal Register on May 28,
11 2009.

12 Once again, the purpose of this
13 meeting is to obtain views of interested and
14 affected parties and to gather information
15 concerning the impacts of the proposed project on
16 navigation and its effect on the quality of the
17 human environment.

18 A brief presentation describing
19 the proposed action, its purpose and need, project
20 alternatives, and potential mitigation will follow
21 my remarks.

22 Informational boards located in
23 the room behind us are provided for your review
24 along with the handout that can be taken home for
25 you to study further.

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2 In addition, members of the
3 consultant team are available to provide answers
4 for clarification wherever possible.

5 It's important to note the
6 discussions held in those areas will not be made
7 part of the official record. So I encourage you to
8 make -- to make oral comments here in this room or
9 submit comments by the various methods available so
10 that they can be included in the official record.

11 We will address comments received
12 and statements made in the ensuing Final
13 Environmental Impact Statement. Therefore we are
14 here to listen to you.

15 This meeting is not an adversarial
16 proceeding, rather it is one in which all
17 interested parties have the opportunity to present
18 a full and frank statement of their views regarding
19 the impact of the proposed project.

20 Statements will not be given under
21 oath and cross-examinations of speakers will not be

22 permitted. However, the presiding official may ask

23 for clarification or amplification of statements

24 made.

25 Shortly, Maura will provide the

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2 ground rules for conducting this meeting.

3 The record of this meeting will

4 remain open for the receipt of comments until July

5 28, 2009.

6 The Port Authority of New York and

7 New Jersey, the project sponsor, submitted a

8 preliminary bridge permit application to the Coast

9 Guard in June 2004. The U.S. Coast Guard, pursuant

10 to the General Bridge Act of 1946, found at 33 U.S.

11 Code 525, will ultimately make a decision on the

12 bridge permit application based on the merits of

13 the case.

14 At this point it's important to

15 state that the U.S. Coast Guard has not made a

16 final decision on the merits of the case or the

17 application before us. Our decision will be based

18 upon an evaluation of the probable impacts of the

19 proposed activity on navigation and on the quality

20 of the human environment.

21 Pertinent factors such as

- 22 information concerning public parks, wetlands,
- 23 water quality, fish and wildlife, coastal zone,
- 24 historic and archeological sites and navigational
- 25 safety, among others, will be made part of the case

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2 record and will be fully considered prior to taking
3 final agency action on the bridge permit
4 application.

5 Having said that, I welcome you
6 once again. And I'd like to introduce Mr. Ken
7 Hess.

8 THE MODERATOR: Before you do
9 that.

10 MR. GARY KASSOF: Oh. Okay.

11 Mr. Philip Maravolo of Assemblyman
12 Cuzik's office, I would like to recognize you and
13 thank you for coming and for participating.

14 Ken Hess.

15 MR. KEN HESS: Thank you, Gary,
16 and thanks to all of you for being here today.

17 I know many of you have probably
18 been involved from the beginning during the scoping
19 process and it's been great to have you involved
20 and we're going to give you more opportunity to
21 hear from you today.

22 As has already been mentioned, we
23 really want to hear from you so I'm going to give a
24 very abbreviated presentation on materials that
25 have been presented in the past. And specifically

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2 focusing on the purpose and need for the project
3 and how that purpose and need has led to the
4 conceptual bridge design that's currently proposed.

5 We will also talk about some of
6 the key project impacts and mitigation measures
7 that have been identified in the Draft EIS. And
8 we'll talk about the public comment period that we
9 are in and next steps.

10 There's a number of elements of
11 purpose and need for this project. The first is
12 the need to address design deficiencies that make
13 the bridge functionally obsolete. Given that the
14 bridge was constructed in 1928, the substandard
15 ten-foot lane widths really are not adequate for
16 handling the sizes and the volumes of vehicles that
17 are currently using the bridge.

18 There's also a need -- there is
19 also a lack of emergency shoulders and a very
20 difficult span alignment from the approach on the
21 New Jersey side.

22 There's also a need to provide
23 safer operating conditions and to reduce the number
24 of accidents on the Bridge as well as to improve
25 traffic service on the Bridge and its approaches.

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2 And I'll be talking more about the traffic aspects
3 in a few minutes.

4 There's also a need to enhance
5 structural integrity and reduce the lifecycle cost
6 with the aging Bridge.

7 Just to keep the existing Bridge
8 going to another hundred years would require an
9 investment of hundreds of millions of dollars and
10 that would not include any of the other benefits of
11 the other needs mentioned here.

12 There's also a need to provide
13 reliable transportation system redundancy to ensure
14 that there's an adequate number of lanes between
15 New Jersey and Staten Island at all times.

16 There's a need to provide for safe
17 and reliable truck access for regional goods
18 movement which is particularly important in light
19 of the fact that the ongoing and anticipated future
20 growth at New York Container Terminal at Howland
21 Hook.

22 There's also a need to provide
23 additional width on the Bridge so as not to
24 preclude potential future transit in the corridor
25 so that if there was at some point in the future a

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2 rapid rail transit or a light rail system that is
3 determined to be feasible and warranted, that this
4 could accommodate that.

5 So in looking at the various
6 elements of need, it was determined that a
7 cable-stayed design would fully meet all of those
8 elements of need and that's what we're showing
9 here. It's a concept of that cable-stayed bridge
10 and this is what it could look like.

11 It generally follows the alignment
12 of the existing bridge, but depending on which
13 alternative is actually selected, would either be
14 to the north or to the south a little bit of the
15 existing bridge.

16 In this particular scenario, it's
17 a bit to the south of the existing bridge.

18 Regarding the alternatives, I'm
19 not going to be getting into that in the
20 presentation today, but we do have display boards
21 set up in the other room that you can look at, find

22 out about the four alternative alignments. And

23 we've got people that would help to explain those

24 alignments to you.

25 The basic concept is that it's a

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2 single bridge with cable-stayed supported roadway
3 decks and with two roadways, one in each direction.
4 Each roadway would contain three 12-foot wide
5 lanes, a 12-foot wide outer shoulder, and a 5-foot
6 wide inner shoulder.

7 Now on this cross section, these
8 are the two roadways that I've just described,
9 westbound and eastbound, with three lanes and the
10 shoulders involved.

11 The area in the middle is the area
12 that I talked about in the beginning for potential
13 future transit corridor. The areas between this
14 potential future transit and the two roadways, this
15 is where the towers would be located as well as the
16 inner support cables. You've got outer support
17 cables coming down at the outer edges of the Bridge
18 and then also on the north side would be a
19 bicycle/pedestrian facility.

20 So we've taken that basic concept
21 as applied to the various alternative alignments

22 and that's what was evaluated in the Draft EIS. We
23 looked at the full range of disciplines that you
24 see on this board here. However, as was mentioned
25 earlier to you, we really want to hear from you

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2 today so I'm not going to have much time to really
3 talk about all of these.

4 I'm going to highlight or focus on
5 the ones that we've highlighted in red and
6 underlined here because I think those are the ones
7 that you're probably most interested in hearing
8 about anyway.

9 I do want to call to your
10 attention that one of the handouts that you
11 received is a matrix. And that provides a summary,
12 in a very summary fashion, the impacts and
13 mitigation for all of the different environmental
14 disciplines that you see on the screen and for the
15 various alternative alignments so you get a better
16 idea there.

17 So let's start with
18 socioeconomics.

19 And one of the key elements of
20 socioeconomics are the displacements that would
21 occur, specifically businesses and residences.

22 Regarding businesses, depending on
23 which alternative alignment is selected, would be
24 anywhere from nine to twelve business impacts. And
25 that would involve, I would say in most cases, it

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2 would be the actual taking of the business, full
3 displacement, or in some cases it could be an
4 operational impact where it would be encroachment
5 on some developed facility of the property such as
6 a parking lot or some kind of a support structure.

7 In the case of residences, once
8 again, dependent on the particular alternative, it
9 would range anywhere from zero to 51 residences
10 that would be displaced. They're all located in
11 Elizabeth in the Krakow Street neighborhood.

12 Regardless of what the final
13 number is and what the final alternative would be,
14 compensation will be provided in accordance with
15 the law.

16 Now, also during the construction
17 period, which would range anywhere from 56 to 70
18 months depending on the alternative, actually there
19 would be jobs that would be generated.

20 For construction jobs specifically
21 on an annual basis it would be 400 to 500

22 construction jobs throughout that period on an
23 annual -- annually. There would also be 5500 to
24 5900 jobs that would be indirectly generated during
25 the construction period. And that would be through

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2 expenditures and services that would be provided.

3 We also looked at historic and
4 archeological resources. The State Historic
5 Preservation Offices for both New York and New
6 Jersey have concurred with the Coast Guard's
7 determination that there's no known adverse effect
8 on any archeological resources in either state.

9 We also agreed that there is an
10 adverse effect on three historic architectural
11 resources, all of which are considered to be
12 eligible for listing on the National Register of
13 Historic Places.

14 Those three resources are: The
15 Goethals Bridge itself and that would be adversely
16 affected because of the fact that it will be
17 demolished, the existing bridge.

18 The Staten Island Railroad,
19 historic district in New Jersey, and the Staten
20 Island Railway -- I don't know why this isn't
21 working well -- but the Staten Island Railway Lift

22 Truss Bridge over the Arthur Kill.

23 Those are -- there's a visual

24 relationship between those resources and the

25 Goethals Bridge, and as a result there will be --

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2 they would be visually adversely affected.

3 So the next step is during the

4 development of the Final EIS, there will be a

5 Memorandum of Agreement worked out with the two

6 State Historic Preservation offices to establish

7 appropriate mitigation for these resources. And

8 it's anticipated that that would be worked out at

9 the time of the Final EIS when that's released.

10 Regarding wetland impacts,

11 permanent impacts. As you can see by the numbers

12 here, what a permanent impact is, is any impact

13 that's in place for greater than six months and

14 those are the ones that are really the most

15 important to look at.

16 And the differences between the

17 four alternative alignments are not that great.

18 It's only about 5.2 to about 5.1 acres and so it's

19 about three-tenths of an acre separating them.

20 The greater difference is really

21 in the actual location of those impacts.

22 Regarding temporary impacts, which
23 are those impacts that would be in place for less
24 than six months, usually related to cofferdam
25 construction, we're only talking about a quarter of

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2 an acre or so. Most of the impacts are in New York
3 because that's where the greatest tidal wetlands
4 system is located.

5 Mitigation is being explored and
6 being proposed. And there's a plan that has been
7 coordinated and it's being continuously coordinated
8 with the regulatory agencies and we're working on
9 all of that to provide full mitigation for the
10 impacts.

11 Going onto traffic.

12 The way that traffic is normally
13 evaluated is you look at level of service which is
14 really an operational condition that you identify.
15 And level of service is like a report card where
16 you have level of service A is considered to be the
17 best. Level of service F is the worst and you have
18 various grades in between.

19 Level of service A is defined as a
20 free-flowing condition with high travel speeds.

21 Level of service F is a breakdown

22 condition with excessive congestion and delay.

23 And what we do is we look at the

24 design year, which in this case is 2034 which is

25 about twenty years beyond when it's anticipated

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2 that the construction would be completed. So in
3 this case here, we're looking at the AM peak
4 period. And this is the No Build Condition so this
5 would be with the existing bridge in place with no
6 replacement, no improvement.

7 And what we see here is that red
8 is level of service F which is the lowest. In the
9 westbound direction on Goethals it would be the
10 level of service F. The eastbound would be level
11 of service E which is also considered to be
12 operationally deficient.

13 The Outerbridge crossing you've
14 got level of service F in both directions. Now,
15 what happens when you look at that same time
16 period, the AM peak period in 2034, for the Build
17 Condition, which is with the replacement bridge,
18 this -- this is the brown and it correlates with
19 level of service D. So you're getting improvement
20 in both directions on Goethals Bridge to what's
21 considered to be operationally acceptable.

22 At the Outerbridge Crossing, you
23 also get some improvement going from a level of
24 service F to E in the westbound direction.

25 Now we also looked at the PM peak

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2 period and in the No Build analysis it's the same.

3 You get level of service F and E and level of

4 service of F in both directions at Outerbridge.

5 The Outerbridge with the

6 improvement to Goethals, the same basic improvement

7 occurs. You got to level of service D in both

8 directions on Goethals Bridge and you do get some

9 improvement on the westbound version on the

10 westbound direction of Outerbridge Crossing to a

11 level of service E.

12 So there is definite improvement

13 on the bridges and as a result, to the region as a

14 whole. However, by doing the project, there would

15 be some locations that would experience some

16 increased congestion and reduced speeds. And those

17 locations we're talking about maybe individual

18 local intersections or they could be expressway

19 ramps, off and on-ramps. And you can see that

20 there are locations in both New York and New Jersey

21 in the AM and PM peak hours.

22 So as part of the project, what's
23 being proposed is mitigation. And there's two
24 types of mitigation proposed. And the first is that
25 there will be a managed use lane on the new bridge.

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2 I talked about the two 3-lane roadways, one in each
3 direction. So for each of those roadways, two of
4 the lanes would be for general use and then the
5 third lane would be a managed use lane to
6 accommodate buses and high-occupancy vehicles,
7 autos. And that would work to serve only during the
8 peak commuting hours in the morning and afternoon.

9 The other -- the other type of
10 mitigation are the local improvements at some
11 select intersections that would have been impacted.
12 And we're talking about things like signal timing
13 changes, new signals, street re-striping, removal
14 of on-street parking, as appropriate, for each
15 intersections.

16 And by applying these mitigation
17 measures, most of the areas that I've identified to
18 you, which would have been impacted, will eliminate
19 the impacts that the operational level will come
20 back at least to what the No Build Scenario is. It
21 would not be any worse than that.

22 There are a few locations,
23 however, in New York that would remain unmitigated
24 and they are basically some of the on and off-ramps
25 along the Staten Island Expressway.

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There's a couple of locations in New Jersey as well and once again, their ramps in the vicinity of the Interchange 13 of the New Jersey Turnpike.

Regarding air quality, there will be some improvement in air quality because there's going to be some decrease in regional greenhouse gases and other mobile source emissions.

In the case of noise, there are a couple of locations which will receive only imperceptible noise level increases. And as a result, no mitigation is really required or proposed.

We've looked at or we will be looking at also construction phase air quality and noise once a preferred alternative has been identified. And that analysis will be conducted as part of the Final EIS and will be recorded in the Final EIS document.

So those are the basic

22 environmental impacts and mitigations that I wanted

23 to discuss.

24 As was mentioned, we are in the

25 middle of a public comment period which ends on

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2 July 28th. One of the handouts that was given to
3 you, which was a newsletter, that identifies where
4 you can submit, if you want to submit your comments
5 by mail or by fax or online.

6 We will be taking your comments
7 into consideration and addressing them in the Final
8 EIS. And then it's anticipated at this point that
9 the Final EIS will be coming out some time in early
10 next year with a Record of Decision, which is the
11 decision document by the Coast Guard, some time a
12 little bit later that year.

13 And with that, we want to hear
14 from you and I'll give it back to Maura right now.

15 THE MODERATOR: Okay. I'm now
16 going to be calling up people in the order in which
17 you signed up, the people who have registered to
18 speak.

19 We will be here till eight p.m.
20 and you can register to speak at any time between
21 now and then by filling out one of our registration

22 cards.

23 When I call your name, I'm going

24 to ask you to come up to this microphone that I'm

25 pointing to because we're going to be taking down

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2 your statement. Marc, our stenographer, will be
3 taking it.

4 I would ask you to state your
5 name, please, and your organizational affiliation,
6 if you have one.

7 And if you have any problem coming
8 up to the microphone, just please alert one of the
9 team members. We all have our badges around our
10 neck and we'll be happy to accommodate you in
11 another manner.

12 Okay. And I'm going to actually
13 ask you to limit your comments to three minutes if
14 we could.

15 And I want to remind you, and Gary
16 had said this earlier, we're not going to be
17 responding to your comments here in this room. We
18 are taking down testimony and all comments received
19 will be addressed in the Final Environmental Impact
20 Statement. However, in our informal area in our
21 open house area where the boards are, we will be

22 able to discuss and answer your questions, but

23 those comments made in that room, I want to remind

24 you again, are not part of the formal record.

25 So with that, I think I've covered

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2 all the ground rules. So I would like to introduce
3 our first speaker and ask him to come up to the
4 microphone, and that's Richard Gualtieri.

5 Hi, Richard. How are you?

6 MR. RICHARD GUALTIERI: Okay.

7 I am Richard Gualtieri and I'm
8 speaking on my own behalf.

9 I would like to state that I feel
10 that this hearing could be much more fruitful if
11 more of a presentation were offered in terms of the
12 alternatives being considered, being discussed
13 openly and some of the pluses and minuses of all of
14 the decisions that the organization is having to
15 make.

16 And in this way I feel that people
17 would be able to comment much more intelligently
18 about what their feelings are about these various
19 alternatives.

20 The other thing that I would like
21 to stress is the importance of doing something

22 about the Outerbridge which is obviously in as
23 serious a condition in terms of its physical
24 attributes as is the Goethals Bridge. So I would
25 most strongly urge that something should be done

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2 about improvement -- replacement probably for the
3 Outerbridge which would help to balance
4 transportation on this Island.

5 The other thing is that I think
6 that it's very important that we have public
7 transportation to and from New Jersey. It's fine
8 that you provide a special use lane, but I wonder
9 -- but I feel that by the time that the Bridge is
10 open, we should have some public service for this
11 lane because I think that it's vitally important.

12 Thank you.

13 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

14 Thank you, Mr. Gualtieri.

15 Our next speaker is Kyle Wiswall.

16 Hi, Kyle.

17 MR. KYLE WISWALL: Hi.

18 Good afternoon. My name is Kyle
19 Wiswall and I'm the Staff Attorney at the Tri-State
20 Transportation Campaign.

21 Tri-State's a regional nonprofit

22 organization working for a fiscally responsible,

23 equitable and environmentally friendly

24 transportation system.

25 Tri-State supports many aspects of

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2 the new Goethals Bridge design as presented in the
3 Draft EIS. The Port Authority and the Coast Guard
4 demonstrate foresight by providing space for future
5 transit on the span. And the planned bus and HOV
6 three-lane will help mitigate traffic congestion at
7 the peak hours.

8 However, even with the mitigation,
9 we're concerned about the level of traffic
10 projected in the areas on either side of the Bridge
11 and the effects these increases will have on the
12 surrounding communities.

13 The DEIS notes that the new
14 capacity will attract 28 percent to 40 percent more
15 traffic on the roads and approaches to the bridges.

16 We support, as I said before, the option 3
17 mitigation plan contemplated in the DEIS. This
18 includes the bus and HOV 3 lane over the Goethals
19 and traffic system management upgrades.

20 The mitigation will go a long way
21 to ameliorate the traffic increase. However, the

22 mitigation only brings traffic back to the No Build

23 levels which is still a very high level of

24 congestion.

25 In the hopes of providing deeper

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2 congestion relief for the new Goethals, the
3 approaches and for other Staten Island crossings,
4 especially the Outerbridge Crossing, we urge the
5 Port Authority and the Coast Guard to further
6 investigate variable tolling to respond to
7 different volumes on the roadways.

8 In addition, Tri-State has long
9 been supportive of the Port Authority's study of
10 electronic and cashless tolling and supports these
11 technologies being implemented on the Goethals as
12 well.

13 Traffic growth on the Staten
14 Island Expressway and the West Shore Expressway
15 will increase due to the to Goethals project and we
16 recognize that improvements on these roads are out
17 of the scope of the Port Authority in this project.

18 We agree that traffic relief on
19 these roads and for some of the other roads on
20 either side of the Bridge will require the
21 participation of the New York State Department of

22 Transportation primarily.

23 Especially problematic for us

24 right now, however, is the proposed HOV 3 lane on

25 the bridge and the interaction with the so-called

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2 pilot program, HOV 2 lane that has taken over the
3 bus way on the Staten Island Expressway. The New
4 York State DOT's decision to allow HOV 2 cars in
5 the dedicated bus way undermines the utility of
6 that lane and has been strongly opposed by
7 Tri-State, by my organization.

8 The traffic projections on the
9 Goethal's DEIS underscore the critical role that
10 dedicated bus lane plays in moving people
11 efficiently during the peak hours. At the very
12 least, the DOT's HOV Pilot project should be
13 limited to HOV 3 which offers more congestion
14 relief than HOV 2, as you know.

15 Now, the Port Authority can help
16 with this by keeping the implementation of HOV 3 on
17 the Goethals Bridge and then request that the DOT
18 reconcile their HOV lane and the differences
19 between the two towards HOV 3. So working with the
20 DOT to get the entire corridor HOV 3.

21 Having different requirements at

22 different points in these proximate projects causes

23 confusion, enforcement problems and increased

24 delays.

25 Finally, Tri-State is happy to see

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2 the inclusion of a pedestrian and bikeway on the
3 north side of the new Bridge. But it's concerned
4 that no mention is made of efforts to work with
5 communities on either side to ensure that access to
6 the facility is safe, easy and guaranteed.

7 As you're well aware, the current
8 sidewalk has been closed for some time.

9 We urge the Port Authority and
10 Coast Guard to pursue agreements with the
11 communities regarding access to the Bridge for
12 pedestrians and cyclists and to include
13 documentation and access plans in the Final EIS.

14 Thank you very much for the
15 opportunity to comment.

16 MR. GARY KASSOF: Thank you.

17 THE MODERATOR: Thank you,
18 Mr. Wiswall.

19 Our next speaker is Michael
20 Arvanites.

21 Hi, Michael.

22 MR. MICHAEL ARVANITES: Hello.

23 Thank you for getting that right.

24 It's been a while.

25 Michael Arvanites, State Senator

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2 Diane Savino's office.

3 I appreciate the opportunity to
4 speak and applaud your efforts with this Goethals
5 rebuild.

6 And I noticed that a lot of the
7 concepts that we originally spoke of at the last
8 meeting were taken under consideration.

9 I would like to highlight access,
10 as the previous speaker did, and that the HOV lane
11 will be open to general use after it's -- you said
12 it was just going to be used during rush hour. I
13 want to clarify if it's going to be open to general
14 use after that rush hour period is open.

15 As well as just the 135-foot
16 height, maximum height, the super panamax ships.
17 And anyone who's dealing with the Bayonne Bridge,
18 including yourselves, will know that that's causing
19 some problems with the Bridge that is actually, it
20 did have future use for transportation alternatives
21 and trestles.

22 We want to make sure that if we
23 build this bridge to those specs, that it allows
24 for the GATX site or sites on the Jersey side of
25 the Arthur Kill to access those ships, super

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2 panamax and the panamax ships that are calling the
3 Port of New York and New Jersey home more and more
4 often. And that's it.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. GARY KASSOF: Thank you.

7 THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Mr.

8 Arvanites.

9 And just to remind you, you could
10 get your questions answered, but in our open house
11 area.

12 That is currently everybody who
13 signed up to speak.

14 Again, we will be here all
15 afternoon and evening. And at this point we would
16 welcome you to return to our open house area and
17 you can have discussions with the project staff.
18 And if you change your mind and want to speak, just
19 please by all means, fill out a form.

20 And we'll be repeating the
21 presentation again at 6:30 p.m.

22 (At 5:03 o'clock p.m. the
23 afternoon proceedings were concluded.)

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July 9, 2009

(6:30 p.m.)

EVENING SESSION

THE MODERATOR: Good evening.

I just want to introduce myself.

I'm Maura Fitzpatrick and I'll be facilitating this evening's hearing for you, our public meeting. And I'm here to welcome you on behalf of the United States Coast Guard.

And I just want tell everybody and remind you that if you want to speak this evening, you need to fill in a speaker request card and you can do that in the back corner. And we will be giving a short presentation of about fifteen minutes and then we will be taking your comments.

So without further adieu, I'd like to introduce Gary Kassof who is the Bridge Program Manager of the First Coast Guard District.

Thank you.

22 MR. GARY KASSOF: Good evening.

23 Welcome, to the public meeting for the Draft EIS

24 Goethals Bridge Project.

25 As Maura indicated, I'm Gary

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2 Kassof, the Bridge Program Manager of the First
3 Coast Guard District.

4 The Coast Guard is an agency
5 within the Department of Homeland Security. And by
6 virtue of its authority to consider the issuance of
7 a bridge permit for the proposed action, we are the
8 lead federal agency in accordance with the National
9 Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and its enabling
10 regulations found at Title 40 Code of Federal
11 Regulations Part 1500.

12 Therefore, because of that
13 responsibility, we do have responsibility for
14 ensuring that the Federal Environmental process is
15 properly conducted.

16 In addition, this process is being
17 conducted in compliance with Section 106 of the
18 National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

19 With me this evening are members
20 of my staff as well as members of the joint venture
21 consultant team of Louis Berger Group and PB World

22 who assisted the Coast Guard in preparing the Draft
23 EIS about which we're going to hear comments from
24 you.

25 Again, we are hear to listen to

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2 your comments and they are very critical in the EIS
3 process.

4 There are numerous federal, state
5 and local agencies with expertise or jurisdiction
6 in the environmental review process that have
7 provided consultation to the Coast Guard through
8 the Technical Advisory Committee and Environmental
9 Task Force in order to ensure conformance with
10 existing laws and regulations.

11 Further, public input has been a
12 key component of the process to date via the EIS
13 scoping meetings held in October of 2004, two
14 rounds of public open houses at key milestones in
15 the process, and established stakeholder committee
16 meetings of organizational representatives in the
17 project area which were held throughout the
18 development of the Draft EIS.

19 This is one of two formal public
20 meetings that are being held in communities nearest
21 to the Bridge to hear comments on the Draft EIS.

22 The other meeting was held

23 yesterday in Elizabeth at the Elizabeth City Hall

24 between the hours of 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.

25 This public meeting is conducted

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2 under the authority granted to the Coast Guard by
3 Section 115.60 of Title 33 of the Code of Federal
4 regulations.

5 The decision to hold this meeting
6 was announced in the Federal Register on May 28,
7 2009.

8 The purpose of this meeting, again
9 is to obtain views of interested and affected
10 parties and to gather information concerning the
11 impacts of the proposed project on navigation and
12 its effect on the quality of the human environment.

13 A brief presentation describing
14 the proposed action, its purpose and need, project
15 alternatives, and potential mitigation will follow
16 my remarks.

17 Informational boards located
18 outside of this meeting room are provided for your
19 review along with handouts that can be taken home
20 with you.

21 In addition, members of the

22 consultant staff are available to provide answers

23 or clarification, wherever possible.

24 Discussions held in those areas

25 will not be made part of the official record. So I

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2 encourage you to make oral comments here in this
3 room or submit comments by the various methods
4 available so that they can be included in the
5 official record.

6 We will address comments received
7 and statements made in the ensuing Final
8 Environmental Impact Statement. We are here to
9 listen to your comments.

10 This meeting is not an adversarial
11 proceeding, rather it is one in which all
12 interested parties have the opportunity to present
13 a full and frank statement of their views regarding
14 the impacts of the proposed project.

15 Statements will not be given under
16 oath and cross examinations of speakers will not be
17 permitted. However, the presiding official may ask
18 for clarification or amplification of statements.

19 Shortly, Maura will provide the
20 ground rules for conducting the meeting.

21 The record of this meeting will

22 remain open for receipt of comments until July 28,

23 2009.

24 The Port Authority of New York and

25 New Jersey, the project sponsor, submitted a

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2 preliminary bridge permit application to the Coast
3 Guard in June 2004. The Coast Guard, pursuant to
4 the General Bridge Act of 1946, found at 33 U.S.
5 Code 525, will ultimately make a decision on the
6 bridge permit application based on the merits of
7 the case.

8 At this point it's important to
9 state that the U.S. Coast Guard has not made a
10 final decision on the merits of the case or the
11 application before us. Our decision will be based
12 upon an evaluation of the probable impacts of the
13 proposed activity on navigation and on the quality
14 of the human environment.

15 Pertinent factors such as
16 information concerning public parks, wetlands,
17 water quality, fish and wildlife, coastal zone,
18 historic and archeological sites, navigational
19 safety, among others, will be made part of the case
20 record and will be fully considered prior to taking
21 final agency action on the bridge permit

22 application.

23 Having concluded that, I would

24 like now to introduce Mr. Ken Hess of the

25 consultant team to make a short presentation.

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Thank you, Ken.

MR. KEN HESS: Thank you, Gary.

And I'd like to thank you all for being here this evening as well.

When we started this process back in 2004 with the initial scoping and subsequent meetings, we've received a lot of great input in this forum and we hope to get more tonight.

And as a result, we want to -- because we want to offer you the maximum time to be able to comment, I prepared a brief presentation on a lot of materials that we have presented in the past, starting with the purpose and need for the project and how that has led to the conceptual bridge design that is currently proposed.

We will also be talking about some of the key project impacts and mitigation measures that have been presented in the Draft EIS. And we'll talk some about the public comment period that we're in and some of the next steps.

22 There's a number of elements of

23 purpose and need for this project.

24 The first is the need to address

25 design deficiencies that make the Bridge

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2 functionally obsolete. Given that the Bridge was
3 constructed in 1928, the substandard 10-foot lane
4 widths really are not adequate for handling the
5 types of traffic and the volumes of vehicles that
6 are currently used on the Bridge.

7 There's also a lack of emergency
8 shoulders and a very difficult span alignment from
9 -- on the New Jersey approach to the bridge.

10 There's a need to provide safer
11 operating conditions and reduce the number of
12 accidents on the Bridge, and also to improve
13 traffic service on the Bridge and its approaches.
14 And I'll be talking about that aspect in a little
15 more detail in a few minutes.

16 There's also a need to enhance
17 structural integrity and reduce lifecycle cost with
18 the aging Bridge.

19 In order to keep the Bridge
20 functional for the next hundred years, an
21 investment of hundreds of millions of dollars would

22 be required and that's without the benefit of

23 accommodating some of these other needs.

24 There's also a need to provide

25 reliable transportation system redundancy to ensure

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2 that there's an adequate number of lanes connecting
3 Staten Island to New Jersey at all times.

4 There's a need to provide for safe
5 and reliable truck access for regional goods
6 movement which is especially true now with the
7 ongoing and anticipated future growth at New York
8 Container Terminal at Howland Hook.

9 There's also a need to provide
10 additional width on the bridge so as not to
11 preclude potential future transit in the corridor
12 so that it could accommodate a light rail transit
13 system or a bus rapid transit system, for instance,
14 if and when determined to be warranted or feasible
15 in the future.

16 So looking at the various elements
17 of need, it has been determined that a cable-stayed
18 design would fully be able to address all of those
19 elements of need. And that's what we're showing
20 here. This is a concept of what the cable-stayed
21 design could look like.

22 Basically it's along the alignment
23 of the existing bridge, although some alternatives
24 would be slightly to the north and some would be
25 slightly to the south.

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2 In this particular case, what
3 you're seeing here, it's slightly to the south of
4 where the existing bridge is.

5 Regarding the alternative
6 alignments, I'm not going to be getting into that
7 in the presentation today, but we have display
8 boards that are set up in the other room that you
9 can look at and people are there to help explain
10 the information on those boards so you have a
11 better understanding of the differences between the
12 various alternative alignments.

13 The basic design concept is that
14 it's a single bridge with cable-stayed supported
15 roadway decks, with the roadways, one in each
16 direction. And each roadway would contain three
17 12-foot wide lanes, a 12-foot wide outer shoulder
18 and a five-foot wide inner shoulder.

19 Now what we see here is the cross
20 section for the entire Bridge. I just mentioned the
21 roadways. Here and here are the eastbound and

22 westbound roadways, three lanes in each direction

23 as well as shoulders.

24 I talked in the beginning about

25 the potential future transit corridor which will be

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2 right behind the center. Between that potential
3 future transit corridor and the two roadways, would
4 be located the towers and the inner support cables.
5 At the outer edges of the Bridge is where the outer
6 support cables would connect with the Bridge. And
7 then on the north side is where the
8 bicycle/pedestrian facility is proposed.

9 So taking that general concept and
10 applying it to the various alternatives, that's
11 what was analyzed in the Draft EIS. We looked at
12 impacts and came up with, where appropriate,
13 various mitigation measures.

14 The full range of types of
15 environmental disciplines, you can see on this
16 slide here. Because of the fact that we're looking
17 to hear from you tonight, I'm not going to be able
18 to get to all of these, the disciplines in the
19 presentation. So I'm just going to focus on those
20 that are shown in red and underlined. I think
21 those are probably the ones that you're most

22 interested in hearing about anyway.

23 I should say though, that one of

24 the handouts that you had received is a matrix.

25 And on that matrix, it does show, in a summary

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2 fashion, the environmental impacts associated with
3 all of the alternative alignments and for all of
4 the individual environmental disciplines that are
5 shown on the slide.

6 So let's first talk about
7 socioeconomics.

8 One of the key elements of that
9 would be the number of displacements, especially
10 businesses and residences.

11 And that number is entirely
12 determined on the basis of, depending on the
13 particular alternative alignment that would be
14 selected. The range of displacements would be nine
15 to twelve businesses. And that actually is, or
16 would be in most cases, outright full displacement
17 of the business. In some cases we're talking about
18 operational impacts where some encroachment would
19 occur on some support facility for that business,
20 whether it be a parking lot or some kind of a
21 support structure.

- 22 Also depending on the particular
- 23 alternative selected, there would be anywhere from
- 24 zero to 51 residences that would be displaced.
- 25 These are all located in Elizabeth in the Krakow

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2 Street neighborhood.

3 Regardless of what the final
4 alternative is that's selected and the actual
5 number of displacement, compensation will be
6 provided in accordance with the law.

7 Now, during the construction
8 period, which would range anywhere from 56 to 70
9 months, once again, depending upon on the specific
10 alternative alignment, there would be jobs that
11 would be created during that period. Four hundred
12 to 500 construction jobs would be directly
13 generated on an annual basis throughout that
14 construction period.

15 In addition, there would be 5500
16 to 5900 jobs that would be generated throughout
17 that period, in an indirect fashion, you know,
18 through expenditures or services that would be
19 required.

20 We also looked at historic and
21 archeological resources. And the State Historic

- 22 Preservation offices for both New York and New
23 Jersey have concurred with the Coast Guard's
24 determination that there's no known adverse effect
25 on any archeological resources in either state.

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2 We have also agreed that there is
3 an adverse effect on three historic architectural
4 resources, which are all considered to be eligible
5 for the National Register of Historic Places.

6 And those three resources are:

7 First of all, the Goethals Bridge, which would be
8 adversely effected because it's going to be
9 demolished. The other two resources would be the
10 Staten Island Railroad Historic District in New
11 Jersey and the Staten Island Railway Lift Truss
12 Bridge over the Arthur Kill.

13 And those are included as being
14 visually adversely affected because there is a
15 visual relationship between those resources and the
16 Goethals Bridge.

17 So the next step in this regard is
18 that we'd be working with the New York and the New
19 Jersey State Historic Preservation offices in
20 developing a Memorandum of Agreement. That would
21 be done as the Final EIS is being prepared.

22 And the purpose of that agreement
23 is to establish appropriate mitigation measures for
24 those three resources and with the intent that that
25 MOA would be in effect at the time of the Draft

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2 EIS, the Final EIS.

3 Going onto wetland impacts.

4 Permanent impacts are those that

5 would be in effect for at least six months and

6 that's the majority of the impact that would be

7 involved.

8 What you can see here though, the

9 spread between the four different alternative

10 alignments, it ranges anywhere from 5.2

11 approximately to about 5.1 acres of taking. So the

12 difference is not that great between the four

13 alignments. It's more the location that would be

14 different.

15 There's also temporary impacts to

16 wetlands. And those are the ones that would be in

17 effect for less than six months. They're usually

18 associated with the cofferdam construction which

19 would be removed after a few months. And as you can

20 see here, the number there is very small in

21 comparison.

22 Most of the impacts are on the New
23 York side and that's because you've got a large
24 tidal wetlands system on both sides of the Bridge.

25 There are various mitigation

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2 options that have been identified and they're being
3 pursued and are being discussed with the regulatory
4 agencies. And we're working very closely with the
5 regulatory agencies to make sure that the adequate
6 mitigation is presented to satisfy the requirements
7 in both states.

8 Now moving onto traffic impacts.

9 The basic way to evaluate the
10 traffic impact is looking at level of service and
11 that's really an operational condition of a
12 roadway. And it's like a report card. It starts,
13 ranges from level of service A to a level of
14 service F with level of service A being the best,
15 level of Service F being the worst and various
16 grades in between.

17 Level of service A is considered
18 to be a free-flowing condition with high travel
19 speeds, while level of service F is a breakdown
20 condition with excessive congestion and delay.

21 And what we're showing here, what

22 we looked at is the design year, 2034, which is
23 twenty years into the future after the bridge would
24 be constructed and completed.

25 So in that 2034 period, in the AM

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2 peak period for the No Build -- and that No Build
3 would mean with the existing bridge in place and
4 not the improvement -- what would happen on the
5 Goethals Bridge is that we have level of service F
6 which is noted by red, level of service F in the
7 westbound direction, which is the worst and you'd
8 have level of service E in the eastbound direction
9 which is the next worst.

10 On Outerbridge Crossing you would
11 have level of service F in both directions. Now,
12 what happens in that same AM peak period in the
13 Build Scenario, which would be with the No Build in
14 place, where you had level of service E and F
15 before, it now goes to level of service D, it
16 improves, so that it becomes what's considered to
17 be operationally acceptable.

18 On Outerbridge Crossing where we
19 have level of service F in both directions, we
20 actually get some improvement on the -- in the
21 westbound direction going from level of service E.

22 The reason you get improvement on
23 Goethals Bridge -- on the Outerbridge is that there
24 are vehicles that would otherwise be using the
25 Outerbridge that will now travel up to the Goethals

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2 Bridge because of increased capacity.

3 Now we did a similar analysis for
4 the PM peak period and essentially the results are
5 the same, level of service F and E on Goethals
6 Bridge and then level of service F in both
7 directions on the Outerbridge.

8 And then with the project in place
9 and the Build Scenario, level of service D, once
10 again, in both directions and some improvement to
11 the level of service E in the westbound direction.

12 So despite the fact that there's
13 going to be great improvement on the bridges and in
14 the region as a whole as a result of this project,
15 there are some locations that actually will
16 experience some increased congestion and reduced
17 speeds.

18 And some of these locations would
19 be, we're talking about local intersections, some
20 expressway ramps, on and off-ramps. And you can
21 see here that there's a number of them in both New

22 York and New Jersey during the AM and PM peak

23 hours.

24 So in order to eliminate those

25 impacts as much as possible, there's a couple of

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2 mitigation measures that have been incorporated
3 into the project.

4 One of them is to include a
5 managed use lane on the new bridge during peak
6 commuting hours. And that would mean for each of
7 the three-lane roadways, two of the lanes would
8 serve as general use lanes and one would be a
9 managed use lane for buses and high-occupancy
10 vehicles, autos, once again, during the peak
11 commuting hours.

12 The second type of mitigation
13 would be local improvements that would be provided
14 at select locations where we determined that there
15 would be an impact. And some of those mitigation
16 measures may include signal timing changes, new
17 signals, street re-striping, and removal of
18 on-street parking.

19 So based on those mitigation
20 measures, most of these problematic areas go away.
21 We're going to be able to get the level of service

22 back up to at least the level of service that would

23 be in the No Build Conditions.

24 There are a few locations,

25 however, in New York that will remain unmitigated

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2 and they are primarily on and off-ramps along the
3 Staten Island Expressway.

4 There's also a couple of locations
5 in New Jersey that would not be fully mitigated and
6 those are primarily ramps in the vicinity of
7 Interchange 13 of the Turnpike.

8 Now in terms of air quality, there
9 would actually be some improvement in air quality
10 because there would be a decrease in the regional
11 greenhouse gases and other mobile source emissions.

12 In terms of noise, there would be
13 only imperceptible noise level increases at a
14 couple of locations so no mitigation is really
15 required for air or noise on the project.

16 As far as air and noise impacts
17 during the construction period, once the Preferred
18 Alternative has been identified during the course
19 of developing the Final EIS, then there will be a
20 detailed construction phase air quality and noise
21 analysis that would be performed and the results of

22 those analysis will be presented in the Final EIS

23 document.

24 So that completes the

25 environmental impacts that I wanted to present to

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2 you today.

3 As was mentioned earlier, we're in
4 the midst of a public comment period that is
5 proposed to end on July 28th. There's a handout
6 that you've been given, one of the newsletters,
7 that identifies where you can submit comments
8 either by mail or by fax or online.

9 And what will happen is, any
10 comments that are received either tonight or
11 subsequently during this comment period, we will
12 review those comments, address them and incorporate
13 them, as appropriate, in the Final EIS.

14 And then the Final EIS will be
15 released. And at this point we anticipate some
16 time in the early part of next year. And then
17 there would be a Record of Decision which will be
18 the decision document on the part of the Coast
19 Guard and that's envisioned for some time mid-year.

20 And that completes the
21 presentation. We want to hear from you all today

22 and I'm going to pass it back to Maura.

23 Thank you.

24 THE MODERATOR: Okay. Thanks,

25 Ken.

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2 What I'm going to be doing now is
3 calling the names of the people who have signed up
4 to speak. And we are going to be here until 8:00
5 and you can register to speak at any time between
6 now and then by filling out a speaker request form
7 in the back corner.

8 When I call your name, we would
9 like you to come up to this microphone, please that
10 I'm pointing to. And if you could identify your
11 name and your organization for us and Marc will be
12 taking your statement, our stenographer here.

13 I would like you to limit it to
14 three minutes if possible. And if for any reason
15 you have any difficulty approaching the microphone,
16 please just let one of the team members with badges
17 around their necks know and we'll accommodate you
18 as best we can.

19 We just want to remind everybody
20 that we are only taking statements in this room and
21 we will not be responding to your comments and

22 questions here. The comments and questions that
23 are made here will be responded to in the Final
24 Environmental Impact Statement. However, in our
25 open house area we're free there to converse to

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2 answer your questions. But the comments made in
3 the open house area are not part of the official
4 record.

5 We are also happy to take written
6 comments, as Ken said. And there's a number of
7 ways in which you can give them to us all of which
8 are available in the back.

9 So without further adieu, I would
10 like to ask Jim Devine to please come up to the
11 microphone.

12 Hi, Jim.

13 MR. JIM DEVINE: Good evening.

14 My name is Jim Devine. I'm the
15 President and CEO of GCT U.S.A., which is the
16 parent organization which oversees New York
17 Container Terminal.

18 Just a couple of brief comments.
19 I will paraphrase my written statement in deference
20 to time and the fact I didn't bring my glasses up
21 here with me.

22 (Laughter.)

23 MR. JIM DEVINE: But basically,

24 first, we were extremely pleased to see the project

25 moving forward. We were here at the early, four

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2 years ago, I guess it was and I'm glad to see it
3 moving forward. We think it's vital to the safety
4 and well being of the residents of both New York
5 and New Jersey. And it's equally vital to the
6 health and well being of the New York Container
7 Terminal, both near term and perhaps more
8 importantly, long term.

9 Without the increased capacity
10 that the Bridge will provide and the safety that it
11 will provide, New York Container Terminal would
12 not, would not continue be able to expand as is
13 currently planned. So it is a vital component of
14 our growth plan.

15 In terms of the alignment, I would
16 like to make a second comment.

17 As we look at the diagrams and we
18 read the report, we feel very strongly that the
19 southern alignment is going to create a much safer,
20 more efficient operation for the current and future
21 traffic of New York Container Terminal.

22 As we look at what would be the
23 ramifications of a northern alignment, it would
24 change the entrance, queuing on North Goethals
25 Bridge Road. And that would, as currently

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2 depicted, would create what we perceive to be an
3 unsafe condition in terms of requiring this truck
4 traffic to make a 90-degree turn, which would not
5 only impede the traffic, but would have the
6 potential for safety issues with trucks being
7 over-turned or flipped over.

8 So we feel very strongly that the
9 southern alignment, southern alignments, item 1,
10 would be much preferred.

11 If there's any further questions
12 on or thoughts on that, we'd be glad to point out
13 more specifics.

14 The third and final comment is
15 that we believe that the economic benefit of the
16 Bridge is going to be significant in terms of
17 allowing the Terminal to grow which means more
18 truck traffic, but in the Bridge more efficiently
19 and with the truck traffic, I think it's going to
20 be a benefit to the Port Authority financially to
21 expand this bridge capacity.

22 Thank you very much.

23 THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Mr.

24 Devine.

25 And if you would like to leave a

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2 copy of your comments with Marc, that would be
3 terrific.

4 Thank you.

5 Next is Olaf Olsen, please.

6 Hi.

7 MR. OLAF OLSEN: I have a prepared
8 statement.

9 Good evening, ladies and
10 gentlemen. Thank you very much.

11 My name is Olaf J. Olsen and I am
12 representing the New York City District Council of
13 Carpenters and Joiners of America. We represent
14 40,000 active and retired members in the New York,
15 New Jersey and metropolitan area.

16 We are proud to boast that our
17 active members are the most highly skilled and
18 productive in the construction industry.

19 The New York City District Council
20 of Carpenters wholeheartedly supports the EIS
21 process and ultimately the construction of a new

22 Goethals Bridge utilizing the southern alignment.

23 The Carpenters Union applauds the

24 United States Coast Guard for this inclusive public

25 process and also greatly appreciates and admires

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2 the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey for
3 taking on such a great construction initiative and
4 being a strong leader in regional transportation.

5 The end result and approval of the
6 environmental review process will be the creation
7 of several hundred good-paying union construction
8 jobs with benefits for several years.

9 We have worked with the Port
10 Authority before and I know they will ensure that
11 the workplace will be safe, secure, clean and have
12 the least impact to the surrounding communities in
13 both New York and New Jersey.

14 Both states will greatly benefit
15 from local economic boosts for merchants and
16 construction services and material, food and other
17 retail industries. Our hope is that others here
18 tonight will join us in supporting this long
19 overdue and extremely important connection between
20 the great States of New York and New Jersey.

21 Thank you.

22 THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Mr.

23 Olsen.

24 We currently have no one else

25 signed up to speak. So if there are no other

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2 interested takers, we would invite you back to our
3 open house area to have some conversation with us
4 and have some cookies.

5 And we will be here to 8.

6 (At 6:59 p.m., the hearing was
7 temporarily recessed.)

8 (At 8:00 p.m., the hearing
9 resumed.)

10 MR. GARY KASSOF: Can I have
11 your attention, please.

12 On behalf of the Coast Guard, I
13 thank everyone for your participation and I
14 compliment you on your adherence to the rules set
15 forth at this public meeting.

16 In closing, everyone is reminded
17 that the Coast Guard will be accepting written
18 comments on the proposed project through 28 July,
19 2009.

20 Once again, this meeting was
21 intended to solicit comments and should in no way

22 be construed as a decision being made or opinion

23 formed by the Coast Guard on the merits of the

24 proposed project before us.

25 The time is now 8 p.m. this

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2 meeting is adjourned.

3 Thank you and have a good, safe

4 trip.

5 (At 8:00 p.m., the proceedings

6 were concluded.)

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CERTIFICATION.

STATE OF NEW YORK)

SS.

COUNTY OF NEW YORK)

I, MARC RUSSO, a Shorthand
(Stenotype) Reporter and Notary
Public within and for the State of
New York, do hereby certify that the
foregoing pages 1 through 65 taken
at the time and place aforesaid, is
a true and correct transcription of
my shorthand notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have
hereunto set my name this 23rd day
of July, 2009.

MARC RUSSO

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