
Committee Meeting

of

ASSEMBLY TOURISM, GAMING AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE

“The Committee will take testimony from invited guests on the topics of Sail250 and the upcoming semiquincentennial celebration of the United States’ independence”

LOCATION: Central Railroad of New Jersey Terminal
Liberty State Park
Jersey City, New Jersey

DATE: June 17, 2026
12:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Assemblyman William F. Moen, Jr., Chair
Assemblyman Clinton Calabrese
Assemblywoman Margie Donlon, M.D.
Assemblywoman Lisa Swain
Assemblyman Jerry Walker



ALSO PRESENT:

Ryan Brinkerhoff
Zachary Ostrow
Office of Legislative Services
Committee Aides

Jack Barnes
Assembly Majority
Committee Aide

Diego Romero
Assembly Republican
Committee Aide

Meeting Recorded and Transcribed by
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ASSEMBLYMAN WILLIAM F. MOEN, Jr. (Chair): Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for being here today, and welcome to the Assembly Tourism, Gaming, and Arts Committee. I first and foremost want to thank Assemblywoman Swain and Assemblyman Walker for joining our ranks today as substitutes.

I want to recognize Assemblywoman Brennan, who is -- she is on her way out; she spent a lot of time with us today. I want to thank her for joining us today. And, like I said, she had joined us with the group assembled in front of you for a park tour prior to today's meeting. This summer we've been preparing -- that we've been preparing for is finally upon us. Everywhere you go in New Jersey, residents and visitors are celebrating the World Cup, saluting our nation's 250th, and enjoying the countless attractions and destinations our state has to offer.

Our Committee is meeting at a key intersection of these festivities, and, for decades, this terminal here has welcomed immigrants in America. This summer, it's welcoming tourists exploring New Jersey, all that we have to offer, for the first time, and, for some, hopefully not the last time. For many, not the last time. The semiquincentennial isn't the only meaningful anniversary we're celebrating either; and, as we will hear, Liberty State Park celebrated its 50th birthday just this past Sunday on June 14, Flag Day. This park opened to the public during our nation's bicentennial, so it's pretty fitting that we're celebrating that milestone this year as we're celebrating the semiquincentennial. And, this July, the park is a location where residents and visitors alike can take part in an incredible semiquincentennial celebration: Sail250. Today, we will receive testimony from officials and organizations leading this unforgettable, world-class

maritime celebration. And, we'll also be hearing testimony in general from some of our State entities and quasi-public entities on their work in making sure that this next month plus is truly a success.

Before we invite our testimony, I would like to ask our OLS representative to just call the roll for the meeting.

MR. BRINKERHOFF (OLS Aide): Assemblyman Walker.

ASSEMBLYMAN WALKER: Here.

MR. BRINKERHOFF: Assemblywoman Swain.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SWAIN: Here.

MR. BRINKERHOFF: Assemblywoman Donlon.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN DONLON: Here.

MR. BRINKERHOFF: Assemblyman Moen.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Here.

MR. BRINKERHOFF: You have a quorum.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Thank you.

So, without further ado, I will call up our guests. I'd like to get this meeting started. We'd like to welcome my friend, Senator Mukherji, to join us, as well as Sam Pesin. Welcome.

S E N A T O R R A J M U K H E R J I: Thank you, Chairman, and members of the Committee.

Welcome to Jersey City, which I have the privilege of representing in the Legislature, and it's my pleasure to welcome you today.

So, at a time where it can-- Can you-- At a time when it might feel like our country's lifeblood is under attack, whether it be systemic defunding of public broadcasting and our press corps; disenfranchisement of voters; people of color and women; or immigrants reporting worms in their

food just 15 minutes from here; America's 250th birthday, it's not just an opportunity to measure ourselves against the promises we have yet to fulfill, but a reminder that milestones are also occasions to celebrate how far we've come from the days of the founding fathers. Two hundred fifty years ago, a group of imperfect people advanced a radical proposition: That liberty belonged not to kings or oligarchs, but to ordinary people. There was no guarantee that that experiment would survive. It has endured because generation after generation of Americans fought to expand and defend those ideals, and I would submit, Mr. Chairman, that each of you up there and those of us who are your colleagues in the audience today are part of that motley crew. And, that spirit feels defining here in New Jersey where so many of the major battles of the Revolution were fought. We're here today because generations of New Jerseyans did the same.

By the way, this railroad terminal, the historic terminal, in Liberty State Park, is an example of those efforts because folks like Sam Pesin and the people of the Friends of Liberty State Park had preserved this park after repeated efforts to privatize it, ensuring that this remarkable green space remains open to everyone because of that organization and assembly year after year to defend it while also expanding and improving the park to include opportunities for open space for children of our community, which, Assemblyman Walker has fought for tirelessly over the years. And, also, because New Jerseyans have built a state that welcomed newcomers from around the world, and helped drive American innovation. From the telephone to the lightbulb; to movies and transistors; New Jersey being the home of the first motion picture camera. And, very briefly as I conclude the

welcome, I want to make sure everyone is aware of the story behind Ellis Island, just a stone's throw from here.

I've heard variations and different conclusions of how the battle ended over bragging rights to Ellis Island and Lady Liberty. What actually happened is, the Compact of 1834, which came decades after Samuel Ellis bought the island, Gull Island, and then gave it its name that endures to this day, and, Oyster Island, you had the three islands -- 3 acres of island that New York claimed -- and, I think we might've conceived this in our briefs during the trial -- were New York's, even though they fell into New Jersey's waters. But, the land, the infill, the artificial fill that comprises most of Ellis Island today -- almost all of it other than a couple little buildings that the original 3 acres goes to -- were not only in New Jersey's waters, but, after the 1996 trial, the Special Master published a report in 1997 that went to the Supreme Court in 1988 (*sic*), and this was resolved in a 6-3 vote. Which is, that all that fill is New Jersey's and therefore, a little bit of New York on Ellis Island, is entirely surrounded by New Jersey sovereign land when it's not Federal jurisdiction. And, therefore, Ellis Island is in New Jersey, almost all of it; most of Ellis Island is in New Jersey. Fitting considering we have such a beautifully diverse state where the stories of immigrants are, I think, really defining for us.

So, finally, like our harbor just beyond us, these innovations have transformed our communities in the ways we connect with one another. And, that's why Sail4th 250 feels fitting for this moment. In a few weeks, our harbor will fill with flotillas and tall ships from around the world and across centuries of history, offering a vivid reminder of how far we've come. They allow us, also, to honor the service of our veterans and our service members.

And, the USCGC Eagle, one of the oldest active vessels, is still used to train Coast Guard cadets, will soon dock on our shores while also celebrating the friendships we forged with nations that are lending their ships for this occasion. And, I think above all, these vessels remind us the American story has grown far beyond even what our founders could have imagined. So, the semiquincentennial falls at a time where we need to be reminded that history is not just something that happens to us, it is something we inherit, but it's also something we have the wonderful privilege of shaping, sometimes learning from; sometimes overcoming. And, as these ships sail into New York Harbor, I hope that we all remember where America has been, but where we can push ourselves to go, as a state and as a nation. Thank you, Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Thank you, Senator, and, Senator, I want to thank you for your welcoming remarks, welcoming us to Hudson County.

I didn't think when we planned this meeting we'd be reaffirming the sovereignty of New Jersey's right to Ellis Island, but certainly that's part of today's ongoing conversation, we'll welcome that, too--

SENATOR MUKHERJI: Just to remind people, Chairman, just to remind people--

(laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: A simple reminder, yes, yes.

Well, thank you, Senator, and Sam, look-- I will not welcome you to Liberty State Park, but I welcome you to the Committee today, and say thank you for joining us.

S A M U E L P E S I N: Thank you, Assemblyman Moen, and to the Committee. I left my glasses home, so I'm going to strain to read my comments.

I want to thank the Senator for his excellent comments, and thank you all again, and Assemblywoman Katie Brennan is here today representing our county in the Legislature. So, as the President of the Friends of Liberty State Park, and the son of Morris Pesin, Liberty Park's father, I welcome you to this treasured park, three days after the park's 50th birthday. Thank you for engaging in your important work and promoting Sail250. Liberty Park is an *essential* urban quality-of-life urban oasis. The park is a cultural, historical, recreational, and natural public resource. The park is a Jersey City, Hudson County, New Jersey, American, and, I would also say, an international treasure. With its panoramic views of the Statue, Ellis Island, the New York skyline, the bay, and the river, the park has over 5 million visitors a year and is jampacked on all nice weekends. That's why it was mentioned outside, the light rail station at Liberty Park with a shuttle bus in the summer months is such a boon, and we certainly need an expansion of the shuttle bus, even the seven days a week.

So, people come here for a multitude of free recreation, nature enjoyment, pickup games, barbecues, picnics; it's a park like Central Park. And, also, people come here -- I think over 800,000 a year -- to take ferries to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. And, these sheds behind me, they will eventually be remediated; it will need funding; there's asbestos in the concrete roof of these sheds. So, that's what the latest transformation into a vital hub of all these years. But, one day it will be busy with small-scale commercial activities and food vendors, and festivals. And, the park also has

the Empty Sky Memorial, the 9/11 Grove of Remembrance. And, they -- the public boat launch at the south side of the park, and two terrific restaurants.

On Liberty Island in 1957, on a family trip to the Statue, my father, Morris, after about a three-hour trip here from the Greenville section of Jersey City, looked westward and saw the Jersey City shameful, abandoned, junk-strewn eyesore waterfront wasteland of abandoned railyards and decaying piers, and he conceived at that time of a great, free park, and access to the Statue from New Jersey. He spearheaded the 18-year movement to create the park with the fierce Audrey Zapp, whom this road outside is named after; led many of the early anti-privatization battles. The essence of park history is that many tens of thousands of people did put democracy into action to advocate time and time again for a free and green and fully accessible park, and many grassroots battles and against exclusionary privatization and commercialization plans. It's a joy to be in this park to see in this diverse city, the diversity of people who use Liberty Park; people of all religions and colors and cultural backgrounds sharing this park together -- this park which serves the public good, the common good. Now, there's a new master plan from 2025; the park has a bright future. That master plan was created and announced, unveiled, last August with over 5,000 public comments, through five years, and it is similar to 1978 master plan of a real park for the people, a Central Park-type park.

And, I do need to take this opportunity to mention -- and, relevant to tourism -- there is a current grassroots fight against Governor Murphy's wrongheaded, DEP still unsigned, new 60-year lease for the luxury marina in Liberty Park, which would allow the park -- by the Park's northern entrance along the cobblestone road and across from the 9/11 grove of trees

-- a massive commercial boat storage warehouse which would be 70 feet tall and on 2.5 acres. And, tourists and all park visitors should not be welcomed into this iconic park by a gargantuan commercial warehouse harming the park's character and openness, and history, and legacy, and purpose. So, I urge you to please urge the Governor to order the DEP to not sign that horrific, unpopular marina lease. Future generations need and deserve this great New Jersey and American park as a noncommercialized park in between -- well, behind Lady Liberty. And, this park must be, as the Senator mentioned, this is our time to -- we have the inheritance of Liberty Park -- and, it's our time to leave our legacy to future generations, and, not just the next 50 years, but, as the Senator said the other day, for the next 500 years. I do want to take a moment to thank the park staff, superintendents Josh and Chris who led our tour before, and, God bless you all; God bless Liberty State Park, and thank you for your important work on this July Fourth at our nation's milestone birthday.

So, thank you very much for this opportunity.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Thank you, Sam, and thank you, Senator, for being here; much appreciated.

SENATOR MUKHERJI: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: And, I would be remiss -- and certainly I meant to mention this at the beginning -- I want to thank Assemblyman Walker for hosting us here, this is if I remember correctly, this is your legislative district.

I would welcome you to give any welcoming remarks, if you'd like to.

ASSEMBLYMAN WALKER: Well, welcome to God's country.

(laughter)

Absolutely. I grew up, actually, 10 minutes from here, grew up on Monitor Street. So, if you take Johnson Avenue out at the first block, Monitor, we grew up right there. My family-- My mother's one of 16; my grandfather and grandparents had a really big family. My poor grandmother, she was kind of pregnant her whole life, but that's a whole other story.

(laughter)

But, no. I'm here, and I appreciate Chairman inviting me to serve on this panel here today; it's super important, and it's been a lot of talks with Liberty State Park, and there's a lot of advocacy in reference to how this park was shaped. First of all, I'm just glad that the DEP is taking notice of Liberty State Park, and I tell people about a story all the time. When I grew up, I kind of-- Ellis Island was like my playground at one point. They-- The Federal Government actually turned its back on it with all that history. And, my mom -- it was pretty dangerous in the area -- my mom said, "It's getting dangerous, you can't go out to the basketball court late." So, she tasked me to go find a pole and she'd put some concrete in the backyard. And, I walked to Ellis Island and I found me a pole. And, that pole is still in my mom's backyard to the day, so--

(laughter)

Yes, yes. I know how much it's worth; it might be worth something, I don't know. But, in saying that, I do appreciate Sam's advocacy, but, we also appreciate the fact that we open up conversations about active recreation within the park, because I think it's critical for the surrounding area, and I do represent this area, the 31st District, Ward A, Ward F, which this park sits in. So, in saying that, and plus there's like a lot of

(indiscernible) right in the same area, there's going to be almost about 10,000 units created. So, we definitely need more accurate recreation. So, that's my two cents on this, and I know we've got to continue with our business, but I appreciate that opportunity to speak, thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Thank you, Assemblyman.

I want to welcome Assemblyman Calabrese, thank you for coming, Assemblyman, much appreciated. And, so, just before we invite our next representative, I want to mention that, while I became Chairman of this Committee in 2024, and some of the best advice I got was to take the Committee on the road and host offsite hearings. If my math is right, I think this is our sixth hearing around the state, and a lot of work goes into putting these together. And, I'm sure for those who've been asked to testify, you've heard from our staff, and whether Majority Office or OLS, really, this is something that comes together over weeks and sometimes months of planning. So, I do want to thank the team that put this together today. And, that's our-- Really, our desire is to continue to do these types of events. And, as you can imagine, as we are so close to the nation's semiquincentennial, and what's to happen here, this was a natural fit to take this step to have the conversation today.

There's a quote that my Committee members have heard me say that Benjamin Franklin once said -- when he was asked about New Jersey -- and, he said that, "New Jersey is a keg that's tapped at two ends." And, I'm proud to say I represent one of the ends of the tap in South Jersey with the 5th District that holds the City of Camden and the Walt Whitman and Ben Franklin bridges. I think, though, when Franklin was talking about that top tap, if you will, he was probably talking about this area of the state. And, I

think it's naturally fitting to be here today to have this conversation. And, so, we are here to talk not just about the nation's semiquincentennial and the planning that's happening, and the tour that we took to understand what's going to happen, perhaps from a regional perspective, but, specifically we wanted to hear about ultimately Sail250 and the work that's going to go into putting that together, and what type of impact that will have on Hudson County, North Jersey, and, ideally, the State as a whole.

So, we would like to welcome next Captain Bill Armstrong, who is the Director of Communications from the Port of New York/New Jersey.

WILLIAM G. ARMSTRONG, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Members of the Assembly, thanks for having us here and out. I'm Bill Armstrong, I'm the Communications Director for Sail4th 250, and I'm also on the Board, I've been on the Board for about five years. Putting together this series of events we're going to describe to you today and share how you can participate. With me today is April Cardena, who is our Government Affairs Manager and who's done a super job in reaching out to all of our publicly elected constituents. And, I'll explain a little bit about what Sail4th 250 is and then we'll go back and forth and share information with you.

If you're going to be anywhere near New York City-- I know, Mr. Chairman, you have to be in your home district for this because there's something big happening there, too; but, you'll see some spectacular things. Sixteen days from now, 16 days from now when our Parade of Sail comes into the Port of New York and New Jersey, this is the official maritime celebration for the country. It's the biggest thing going on the water; it's the largest gathering of international tall ships and naval vessels in U.S. history,

so it's a really big deal. And, of course we share this port with two important states.

Why is this important to anybody? This is a once-in-a-generation activity. Is there anybody who's seen a tall ship parade before? Some of you have, so, anybody who's seen this knows exactly where they were standing, who they were with, and what they saw. These events -- especially the tall ship events -- create lasting memories. We're doing this for a whole new generation of families who will see this and appreciate this magnificent thing. About 40 tall ships and also 40 naval vessels will be in the Hudson River for this whole series of things. Untold numbers of spectators and visitors not only on land on both sides of the river, but also on the water - It gives us an opportunity to teach about basic seamanship; about brotherhood; about international sharing; and cultural exchange; lots of international significance to what we're doing here. But, New Jersey really owns this whole story, I think, because this was the crossroads, as you know, of the American Revolution. And, the war began in 1776, but it goes on for quite some time, and I know you got events planned throughout the state over the coming years, so this is the kickoff for what New Jersey will celebrate. More Revolutionary battles were fought in New Jersey than any other place. A quarter of the time that George Washington spent in uniform and commanded his troops was spent in New Jersey. The whole story of what we're doing cannot be told without talking about this state, where I once lived. I lived in Montclair for a long time; so, I feel like I'm home again.

What is-- What are we doing here? I'll tell you a little bit about the whole setup. On July Fourth-- Let me start with July 3. Governor Sherrill will see the first of the tall ships coming in to Sandy Hook; she will be the

official welcoming person for the international fleet that'll arrive at Sandy Hook the day before the Parade of Sail. We'll have about 18 or 20 vessels out there, and she'll make some remarks, and participate right after the Captain's briefing for the pre-sail parade. We will have-- Those ships will be at anchor until the following morning when they'll begin parading up the river, coming under the Verrazzano Bridge about 9:30 in the morning, following up to the George Washington Bridge where all these ships will turn and come parade down the Hudson River and go to their respective piers throughout the region.

The-- What else can I tell you here? The best views-- Where-- People ask me all the time, "Where's the best place to see the Parade of Sail?" I think if you just open the window out here, you look out from this venue, you'll have the most commanding view of the entire Parade of Sail. And -- it happens -- one of the vessels, the tall ships, called -- excuse me -- Ernestina-Morrissey will be berthed in Elizabeth, so visitors here can easily go over and see that ship. I could talk more about what our plans are; what else is happening that morning, just very briefly. The Navy is conducting an International Naval Review, 40 warships from allied nations and the U.S. Navy, and military academies will be lined up on the west side of the Hudson River. So, early in the morning, about 7:30 in the morning of July Fourth, a single U.S. Navy vessel embarking -- probably the Secretary of the Navy -- will transit from the G.W. Bridge all the way down to the Verrazzano. And, they'll pass and review, it's sort of a solemn and time-honored tradition to do the International Naval Review; it's only the seventh in U.S. history, and it's the fourth time in this harbor. So, it's a rare and special thing.

With the conclusion of the International Naval Review, there is-- Our parade begins under the Verrazzano. And, that coincides with -- there's a lot going on here -- that coincides with a flyover of about 180 aircraft led by the Navy's Blue Angels, including participants from Great Britain and from France. We expect the French Mirage fighters will be blowing smoke over New Jersey's Statue of Liberty. And, there's-- I could just answer more questions about what's going on, but, I want to introduce April to give a little bit of context about who we're working with and why it's important to have a collaboration here.

A P R I L C A R D E N A: Yes, so, thank you to the Committee, thank you, Chairman, for having us here.

So, I came on fairly recently, and people ask, "Why was April hired in April?" And, it's really, we want to ensure that, although this is a national and momentous, historic moment, this is also a moment for both New York and New Jersey to take pride in the fact that we're hosting this. This is happening along the east coast; there are five different locations, but we get to have this on July Fourth. Because we, I mean, I can say this, we're simply the best. But, it really is such a historic thing for us to be hosting, so we wanted to ensure that our government partners, and both -- as both elected officials, but also in our agencies, have the entire scope of what's happening, but, also, invite them to the programming that's taking place. And, so, with that, we are partnered with both and we have support from both Governors of New York and New Jersey. We are planning to have some kind of-- As the Captain said, we are already in the process of planning something with Governor Sherrill, but we are also working with Governor Hochul to do something on the New York side to ensure that folks know that

this is a moment for our elected officials and our representatives to take pride in their states. But also, at the local level, we were reaching out to our Mayors, our Senators, our Assemblymembers of said areas to ensure that they know what's happening, and invite them to be a part of the local programmings and happenings. Along with that, our different State and City agencies have been amazing partners from Port Authority, to Emergency Management, to our State police, our local municipal counties and police have also been such great forces, knowing that this is going to take everybody.

Did you want to add something, Bill? Did I miss anything?

MR. ARMSTRONG: No, you-- We could just go on and on and talk, but, talk about the partnerships that we have had to work with to build this event: United States Coast Guard, Captain of the Port, Jon Andrechik, has been a wonderful with us; Navy's been partnered with us.

I have to mention Bethann Rooney, who is here today; you'll hear from her in a few minutes. She is an ex officio official member of our board, been instrumental in paving the way for all these events to occur. So, thank you, Bethann. What else can I tell you? There's economic impact on both sides of the river; it's going to be enormous. The number of visitors spending money for hotel rooms, for food, for souvenirs-- And, this is -- I don't know if there's a study done on this side of the river -- but, the multiplier effect of all the money being spent here will be good for the whole region. So, that's worthy of note. This is only the seventh time we've had an event like this; we have a successor organization to Operation Sail; we've been doing this -- and my predecessor has been doing this -- since 1964, we did it '76, and '86, and '92, and 2000, and 2012 for all four patriotic American milestones. That always works out very well, a lot of moving parts

to make it all happen. But, New Jersey will be on the global stage here; all the cameras-- By the way, NBC is going to broadcast the entire day from Governor's Island looking this direction, starting at seven o'clock in the morning with *Today Show*, continuing with coverage six hours straight through to one o'clock in the afternoon. So, it'll be a saturation coverage, and I know that Fox and CNN both want to have broadcast platforms set up here on Liberty State Park. So, there'll be -- like I said -- a saturation of coverage all around the world of the participants here.

April, what else do you want to talk about?

MS. CARDENA: I think it's just worthy to note -- this question comes up a lot -- in well, "What is the point of this? How did you start this? Are you partisan?"

And, the question is, we are a nonprofit. And, I think that's the beauty of the work that we do. We have a small, very small but very mighty team, and we have incredible connections with all elected officials from both parties, and I think that it speaks to sort of what the Senator was saying earlier about this being a moment in time where we find that this has brought so many people together; folks that didn't really know the nuances of what's going on. And, so, we have incredible support from those officials, but also from some of our private sponsors, Coca-Cola; Bulova; Jefferson's Bourbon; Korbel; Northville House; and, just recently, we were over at Yankee Stadium with Charles Fazzino who is our official artist and has done a lot of these incredible, momentous artworks to be presented for 250, so, we're very proud of that. And, sort of, the ability to us not have to take any type of partisan stance and do the work solely for the work of celebrating the 250.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Just to underscore that point, we are an independent, nonpartisan, nonaffiliated group. We built this event on our own using some of the partnerships that go down as mentioned, and the public partnerships that we've developed. But, we are not directly sponsored or affiliated with the other two major legs of the triad here that are also commemorating major -- that holiday.

I could answer your questions and go on at length about all our plans and details, but, I'd just like to say in closing, I think back on what this all means. The playwrights Gilbert and Sullivan had a line in one of their plays, "What is life without a touch of poetry?" And, I think-- I'd like to think that what we're doing here at Sail4th is bringing a touch of poetry to a city and a region and a nation that really badly needs it right now. So, if we're successful on that, I'll be very happy. But, thank you for your time, and, I'm happy to take any questions you may have.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Great.

Thank you, Bill and April, thank you. And, certainly, if any members of the Committee would like to ask questions, feel free; I'll begin. For-- Say, perhaps, for any spectator vessels that might see this news and say, "I want to get there; I don't necessarily want to drive there." What would you recommend for New Jersey residents that might want to take their boats into the harbor to see these activities?

MR. ARMSTRONG: That's a really great question.

And, you may have seen photographs of the 1986 event when there were thousands of spectator vessels in the harbor, almost congesting the harbor. The Coast Guard has -- of course, in a different era now, in the post-9/11 era -- and, we want to be more cautious about who goes out there and

we know who they are. So, those-- We've got a lot of registrants on -- by our website for spectator vessel anchorages; we have nine Coast Guard who has helped us designated nine specific anchorages for spectator vessels, keeping a clear channel for the military vessels and all the tall ships coming through. But, I encourage people to register for an anchorage, get a (indiscernible) pennant from us. It's all on our website, sail4th.org, and it's a good place to get more information. Because, also, and a really wonderful app that is free to everybody who registers there, it's called AquaMap, and it shows in real time the location of every vessel that's participating in this. So, if you want to see what's passing in front of you or what your boat is coming near, you'll see it in real time. You can also track the arrival of these ships into this port from right now, you want to see where the Oostershelde of Netherlands is, or the Gorch Fock of Germany is right now, where our Coast Guard Cutter Eagle is right now, today, in real time you can track that on AquaMap. It's a wonderful tool for boaters.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: And, I-- In my part of the state, I think it was back in 2014 or 2015, we welcomed the tall ships to the Camden Waterfront, and into Philadelphia as well.

We could see firsthand how much work went into building that out. Out of curiosity with the World Cup here-- Has your organization-- Has it differed in the planning or the work that you've all had to do to get to the point where we're celebrating this in a couple weeks, perhaps and maybe compared to some of the other cities that you're hitting before or after coming to New Jersey and New York?

MR. ARMSTRONG: Well, the World Cup is a coincident event, just like that victory of that basketball team, I think of--

(laughter)

-- was an unanticipated coincident event that's going to bring more people into the region to celebrate. Lot of soccer fans out there; I know Mayor Mamdani is a huge soccer fan, and he's been a big cheerleader for all the events taking place on the Jersey side, by the way. So, we work closely with them to deconflict and keep this particular space here open for spectators. I know there was some early concern that this might be a place that might be a viewing area for soccer, but it's sort of opened up since then to be a spectator zone for everybody who wants to see our parade and whatever else they want to do.

MS. CARDENA: And, just to add to that, also, I think this also comes -- and, comes full circle where we have continuous tabletop activities and exercises with folks from the FBI, FDNY, and NYPD; folks from Port Authority, Jersey--

So, everybody who's involved is continuously having these conversations as these events change, as events culminate. There are plans A-Z of what ifs, and different scenarios, and as different watch parties pop up as things happen. And, so, that's the communication that we strive to have, and we have a great line of communication with all of the agencies and municipalities and those elected representatives as well to ensure that we have every plan in place for whatever might come up.

MR. ARMSTRONG: These planning sessions Ms. Cardena has mentioned involve about 400 people at a time.

For every -- top level of secret service and FBI down to the State police on both sides of the river, and municipalities who are all working together, very integrated, to ensure that the success of this whole series of

events, that whole week. By the way, July Fourth is not the end of the story because the fifth, sixth, and seventh, all of the tall ships that are participating here are open for free public visiting at their respective piers. So, it's a community exchange; it's an international goodwill exchange. The sailors who embark -- the men and women who embark on these ships -- are the goodwill ambassadors from their respective nations. They're here to showcase their culture, their heritage, their traditions, their basic seamanship skills, and they're doing a super job. They love being here, and of course, we always give them a great welcome. So, it's a wonderful exchange; that's really what it's all about is to teach and share, and the brotherhood of the sea.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Any other questions from the Committee?

ASSEMBLYMAN CALABRESE: I have a question.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN CALABRESE: How far north along the Hudson River will the ships be anchored?

MR. ARMSTRONG: The newest-- The Navy International Naval Review will be close to the G.W. Bridge; the Navy ships -- military ships -- will be anchored that far up, as far as the G.W.B., and then the Secretary of the Navy will embark his ship -- probably a guided missile destroyer just prior -- north of the bridge -- and, then, pass at six knots and review south of that.

But, military ships will not be moving, they will be at anchor during the July Fourth.

ASSEMBLYMAN CALABRESE: And the tall ships, will they sail up past the bridge then come back around to their respective locations?

MR. ARMSTRONG: Tall ships turn at the bridge then come back, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CALABRESE: Understand.

MR. ARMSTRONG: So, if you're here, you're going to see them coming up the river and down the river at the same time--

ASSEMBLYMAN CALABRESE: Yes.

MR. ARMSTRONG: --and you'll have the best view from the New Jersey side of the river.

I mean, you'll see the military ships in the foreground; you'll see ships going up the river and down the river, and you have that little skyline behind you, if that means anything to you.

ASSEMBLYMAN CALABRESE: And then -- last question -- you said July 3 was the flyover?

MR. ARMSTRONG: July Fourth is the flyover.

ASSEMBLYMAN CALABRESE: July Fourth, I'm sorry.

MR. ARMSTRONG: So, my little joke is, time is nature's way of preventing everything from happening at once; but, everything is happening at once--

ASSEMBLYMAN CALABRESE: Oh.

MR. ARMSTRONG: --on July Fourth.

(laughter)

So, there's a lot going on in the sea, in the air, and on land. There are no bad viewing areas to see this spectacle, whether you're looking straight ahead, looking up at the sky, or if you're on the water. It's going to be a memorable event, and everybody will just take a piece of it home with them.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Any other questions?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN DONLON: So, I represent District 11, which is in Monmouth County--

MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN DONLON: --and a few events that are happening in Monmouth County: One is at the Atlantic Highlands Yacht Club, the other one that I'm going to be attending is at the Shrewsbury River Yacht Club. And, I'm just curious to know, are some of the ships that are in the harbor coming down to these other events? Are these separate ships that are coming? And, then, also, second question, how many events across New Jersey are there with Sail4th 250?

MR. ARMSTRONG: Well, first question, I think you'll see the ships begin to arrive in this region in Monmouth County and the Sandy Hook area on July 1 and 2, and 3 is the Captain's briefing, so they'll all be assembled there on the morning of the third for the pre-sail conference, then Governor-

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ASSEMBLYWOMAN DONLON: So, these are ships that are going -- they're going to be going up?

MR. ARMSTRONG: These are ships that'll be participating in the parade--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN DONLON: So, it's like the preview.

MR. ARMSTRONG: --the next morning; that's right.

I don't have a number for you on how many events are starting in New Jersey on that weekend, but you'll have a lot more going on, I think, as they will in New York as the war was fought -- continued upstate from here. But, you've got-- New Jersey played -- I don't have to tell you this --

you know what role New Jersey played in the American Revolution, and so, you'll have continuing teaching moments for all the school kids here.

MS. CARDENA: And, we're more than happy to provide contacts and follow-up if there are any additional questions or thoughts of programming.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN WALKER: First of all, it is a tall task, and I appreciate you guys coordinating. I know it's got to be sort of a nightmare to try to coordinate all the stuff in terms of security and everything else.

But, you did mention an economic boon. Is it a process for locals to get involved in terms -- I'm not sure if it's a DEP question -- or, is it a possibility for local vendors to take part in these festivities so they can have an economic boon as well?

MR. ARMSTRONG: Well, I'm sure that local vendors will be active on that -- on the weekend of July Fourth, 16 days from now.

MS. CARDENA: Also, Assemblymember, one of the things that we're doing is while we're -- with surrounding areas -- we're working with the local chambers of commerce; we're working with the local bids -- if there are in those districts -- to promote or to assist in getting the word out and saying, "Hey, this is a public viewing spot."

If some folks are offering 20% off if they go and they take a selfie with the ship or something along that sort of -- promote the local merchants and vendors to really get that revenue directly rather than people going elsewhere. So, I'm more than happy to connect on that or reach out to folks there to really share our events that folks know where to go and who to buy from.

MR. ARMSTRONG: We think it's best to leave the local event management to the local--

MS. CARDENA: Yes.

MR. ARMSTRONG: --municipalities themselves, and figure out how they can participate and capitalize on it.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: My last question is, which cities are before and after visiting here?

MR. ARMSTRONG: So, the series of events started in New Orleans 10 days ago, then the ships -- more ships -- will be added to that fleet and arrive in Norfolk this weekend, and after Norfolk, they go to Baltimore for a couple days.

Then, of course, this port New York and New Jersey for the weekend for the events we described here, and many of them move up to Boston from here. So, it's a series-- It's the same series of ports that we instructed in 2012 for the whole eastern seaboard. And, the people want to participate in this, nations, and the naval attachés who want to participate in this. We had to work years ago, that's why we started our board five or five and half years ago to start work with the naval attachés who can direct the schedules of their participating tall ship training vessels.

The Latin-American navies have about a third of the world's tall ship fleet, and they do an annual circumnavigation of South America. And, it was supposed to happen in 2026, but, as we explained, what we were doing here, they deferred that circumnavigation to next year, so they'll all be participating with us. It's a big multicultural opportunity for-- I don't know if that answered your--

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: No, no.

MR. ARMSTRONG: --going on, I could just go on and tell you more than what I don't know about.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: No, I think, I certainly appreciate the -- really -- the national impact of where these stops are happening, kind of how it all ties it together; and, then you put the World Cup on top of that that are playing in some of these cities, you could really see how there's that cultural connection to maybe some of the attachés that are coming here that are tied to those teams that might be playing here, and that's an interesting concept.

MR. ARMSTRONG: I think we calculated the other day that there are 16 nations sending their tall ships who also have teams in the World Cup.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Yes.

MR. ARMSTRONG: So, we did a little--

MS. CARDENA: It's really cool.

MR. ARMSTRONG: --did a little social media post the other day with showing the tall ship and the star of that team --

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Yes.

MR. ARMSTRONG: --side by side.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: So, maybe, if one of the countries wins and they have the ship here, they could do the parade on the ship instead of--

(laughter)

--just a suggestion.

MS. CARDENA: Don't give them many ideas.

MR. ARMSTRONG: You want to come back and help us organize that?

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Yes.

We'll look, Bill, April, thank you for joining us. We have some other folks that we want to welcome up to testify. Very much appreciate your time, thank you, thank you.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you so much.

MS. CARDENA: Thank you so much.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: So, next we'll hear from the New Jersey DEP.

We'd like to welcome Commissioner Ed Potosnak, and Assistant Commissioner John Cecil to join us for testimony. Commissioner, welcome, and thank you for coming--

ED POTOSNAK: Yes, no, thanks--

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: --and welcoming us.

MR. POTOSNAK: Yes, thanks for having me; thanks for being here.

Appreciate it, Chairman Moen, members of the Committee. And, of course, having the Assembly Tourism, Gaming and Arts Committee right here at Liberty State Park is exciting for us. I'm Ed Potosnak; I'm the Acting Commissioner at the Department of Environmental Protection under Governor Mikie Sherrill. It's really pleased to serve in that role, and I also brought with me, our Assistant Commissioner John Cecil; and, want to acknowledge Chief of Staff Henry Gajda who's here, and our Deputy Commissioner Joe Seebode; also, our Regional Park Superintendent Josh Osowski. And then, the folks that you took a tour with a little bit earlier

today, you got a chance to meet Chris Ford, and he manages this park unto itself, and does a great job. And, as you know, the Department of Environmental Protection has a wide breadth of the topics that it covers, and the places that it has an impact, with over 3,000 dedicated professionals across the state working every day to protect our air, water, and land. I know you concluded a tour of Liberty State Park; it's a gem, it's a real beauty, and a pleasure -- again -- to host you today. I think this'll be your sixth, and probably one of the best field visits--

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: So far, so far.

MR. POTOSNAK: --so-- Good, we'll try to keep it that way.

But, this is the most visited park in our park system in the State of New Jersey, but it's also important to recognize it's one of the top five most visited parks in our nation. So, top five most visited parks in our nation. And, it's something we all should take immense pride in. Just this past weekend, they celebrated their 50th anniversary, and you heard from Senator Mukherji and Sam Pesin, President of the Friends of Liberty State Park. So many generations of folks made that work possible, and helping to maintain that for future generations is important for all of us to make sure it has all the amenities as modern time requires as well. The park opened on June 14 of 1976; it was the nation's bicentennial gift -- excuse me -- New Jersey's bicentennial gift to the nation, and the first urban state park in the Garden State. And, Governor Brendan T. Byrne described the park as, "An appropriate background for our country's most revered monuments: Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty." And, the Governor was right. And, we're currently in the historic railroad terminal. It's the New Jersey terminal which played that vital role in our nation's history. It is estimated that half to two-

thirds of the 12-17 million immigrants started their new lives in America by taking a train from this terminal, all in search of something that is core to the American spirit, and the center of the ethos of what it means to be a New Jerseyan, and that is liberty. And, that includes my own family. In fact, there's one train that lists all the towns where all my family's from; different family members, my grandparents through here.

And, so, you guys can imagine New Jersey, our state parks, forests, and historic sites are now entering one of the busiest seasons and times of year. Over the coming months, millions of visitors will enjoy New Jersey's public lands for hiking; they'll come out to come swimming and camping; picnicking; bird watching; and, countless other nature-based activities, as well as we know the sort of tourist opportunities that we're highlighting today in the nation's most densely populated state.

In this summer, however, it's very significant, because we're going to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the United States. The semiquincentennial for the country around the world is being celebrated, but here in New Jersey, we are the crossroads of the Revolution. And, General George Washington and the Continental Army landed in Mercer County in New Jersey after crossing the Delaware in 1776. And, in celebration of the nation's 250th anniversary, visitors will soon be able to have an immersive experience of the historical event at the state-of-the-art museum and visitor's center at Washington Crossing State Park this coming year. And, I just want to mention, the visitor's center is New Jersey's gift to America for its 250th birthday. So, we're very generous people, giving away all these wonderful gifts on our--

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Every 50 years, right?

(laughter)

MR. POTOSNAK: Yes, not too often, you got to be careful.

But, also on July Fourth, around in the Delaware region, we're partnering with Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The Washington Crossing Historic Park is going to have a Day of Living History Programs, and musical performances on both the New Jersey and Pennsylvania sides of the river, and it's going to be capped off with a beautiful fireworks presentation. So, Chairman, you mentioned the keg with two taps; there's events here, that's the northern tap; and, also, in the southern tap as well in our state parks. Additionally, it's anticipated that visitors will be able to take a sneak peek of New Jersey's new museum and visitor's center. And, I'll highlight, there's a 4D experience where you get to be on one of the boats with George Washington with projections of what that crossing was like. Not sure if that's going to be open in time; a lot of moving pieces in all of this. But, at least get a sense of all the different aspects that are available.

And, right here at Liberty State Park, we will play a major role in these celebrations over Independence Day. The park is expected to provide optimal viewing location, as you heard, for the International Naval Review. The International Aerial Review; Sail4th 250 Parade, which is going to be spectacular of tall ships. And, the Fourth of July fireworks in two major cities: Jersey City and Manhattan with the Macy's fireworks. In addition, Liberty State Park will host performances by the U.S. Army Band on July Fourth. And, then, if you're around the day before, the Navy Aviation Display as well on July 3. All the activities come in addition to the experience visitors would have typically expected on a holiday weekend at Liberty State Park.

Gathering with their family and friends; enjoying a picnic; taking the views of Manhattan in, which are spectacular, better than in Manhattan; and, enjoying programming in the State Park's nature center, which is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. And, the Liberty Science Center Ferry Service, the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, restaurants, park's concession operations all will continue to serve visitors throughout the holiday weekend. And, to prepare for the anticipated crowds, I just want you to rest assured that the State Park Police have been coordinating very closely with the State and local and Federal partners on a comprehensive public safety plan. These efforts include revised traffic and parking operations; emergency medical planning; and extensive public messaging for visitors to understand what can they expect when they get here before arriving. I will just say, get here early; anticipate delays, because this is going to be a fantastic opportunity.

So, I want to thank you all for being here today, for choosing Liberty State Park for this location for the Assembly Tourism, Gaming, and Arts Committee meeting. I hope that we will see you again in many of our state parks, forests, and historic sites, because they're ready to give you a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and experience and create memories for your families for generations to come. So, thanks so much. And, if there's any questions, I brought my Assistant Commissioner to help answer them.

(laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Thanks, Commissioner.

I think we have -- as you mentioned -- we had the pleasure of taking the tour of the grounds prior to the meeting. I think we see the potential of the work that's underway and where we'll go. I'm curious -- just to follow up to Assemblyman Walker's question -- for local vendors that

might want to participate in the activities that are coming within the next few weeks, do we know-- Is there an opportunity for them on the grounds here to do so, is that something that-- I understand from our conversations with the superintendent, long term, as these structures are completed, that there may be more of like a market feel for that. But, I'm curious if that question can be answered through the work that you all are doing?

MR. POTOSNAK: Yes, I'll take a quick first look at it, which is, we're always looking to provide those amenities in the park for folks who are coming to visit. In fact, today, in this open air, you smelled the popcorn and sort of some of the temporary tables-- A vendor is starting their very first day and providing what will be a contract 'til the end of the year.

But, with State Government, too, also many years in the making, of securing that site and working with them to make sure that they're doing food preparation and everything consistent with the health standards. But, I'll pass it over to our Assistant Commissioner to talk a little bit more about specific activities around the July Fourth, Sail4th activities.

JOHN CECIL: I mean, with respect to vending opportunities, we have to go through a pretty deliberate process for that, that usually takes some time, which involves our leases and concessions program, putting out bidding opportunities that are done in a very fair and transparent way.

So, it's not like something would be done in a quick manner. We are excited for the vendors that are -- the vendor that's here today -- that's a very new relationship for us that we've just finalized the paperwork for in the last week, and so they're here operating today. But, as we go forward we will look for, certainly, additional opportunities; we have work underway now with this historic train shed. This is the largest Bush-style train shed that was

ever built. We're hopeful to begin demolition on parts of it in order to ultimately restore it and open -- create an open space where we could have, potentially, farmers' markets or other programming within that space, which could create quite a number of vending opportunities. Similarly, we've worked, as you saw, on the plaza just outside this building; very significant project to restore that plaza. It's almost complete; we're going to hit the pause button right before the Fourth of July weekend and then finish it up after the Fourth, but that will create another, really, great opportunities for other vending and programming within the park. So, lots to come, I think, here at Liberty State Park.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Yes.

And, I think from taking the tour it was obvious, from the outside perspective, is that obviously over the next few months you're going to see the number of ferry slips, if you will, open up, which then you'd expect to accommodate more people coming in each day to this site. You couple that with the interior work that's going to take place at the park, and you really see there's a combination here that seems to be a combination for success, but a heck of a lot more people coming here. I'm curious if there's any bigger picture thoughts on that and how this all fits in together?

MR. POTOSNAK: Certainly having amenities for the people that are here is critically important; that's everything from bathrooms, which people rely on, all of us, and opportunity to have food that's available as well.

And, doing it through our lease and concessions process is a little bit cumbersome, but maybe you could talk a little bit about the vendors that are already here, that, on a regular basis, that will be able to take advantage

of the sort of rush that we're seeing, and then also growth over time to make sure that we're providing all the amenities that folks need.

MR. CECIL: Right, so, as we mentioned there's a new vendor out here in the terminal building, which is brand new, we have not had a vendor in the building in quite some time.

And, there are a few food trucks that will operate in the park under an approved license. We certainly have a number of-- Well, there are some food opportunities at Liberty Science Center, which also operates through a lease with the Park Service. And, through the restaurant at the marina, there are opportunities for food service there, as well. I think, as we look forward, we spent many years or the last several -- many of the last several years really working through a public engagement process to build what is the Liberty State Park Revitalization and Master Plan. That's a document that you can view on our website that walks through a vision for the future that's got short-, medium-, and long-range goals. Those short-range goals are what we're working on now, the plaza and the train shed. Medium-range, we see the restoration of the interior with natural resource features; there's areas set aside there for active recreation, as Assemblymember Walker spoke to. And, then a long-range vision for the southern portion of the park where we have set a bulkheaded area, our administrative building is there; that's the core of the park that opened in 1976. And, so, there's a vision for revitalizing all of that. Of course, all of that master plan work depends on the financial support that we can secure through the Legislature and the Governor; through the Federal resources that we've been able to draw upon; and we have a new State Parks Foundation

that we've recently kicked off and look forward to engaging with them to bring additional resources to the Park Service.

So, I think as we see those amenities developed, we will certainly look for additional leasing opportunities for small vendors, in large part, those food vendors. Frankly, we've struggled over time to get the vending opportunities that we'd like to see here in the park. Some of that's due to the ebb and flow of the visitation. It is one of the most visited state parks in the country, and, so, on a weekend in the summertime, it is quite off the charts, right, the parking lots are filled; people everywhere. But, then in the winter months it quiets down, and, so, ensuring that we can have a consistent opportunity for those vendors, I think, is part of our challenge. But, bringing new amenities online we expect will help and support that.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Yes, that's a great point.

I think one last thing I would say is, just from my conversations with Liberty Science Center is, with them receiving the New Jersey EDA CAFE Grant, they certainly have exterior plans that are underway, that, I think, when you couple that with what's happening on this side here, this could look entirely different over the next few years, and really be an opportunity for us.

Are there any questions from the Committee members? (no response)

Thank you.

MR. POTOSNAK: Thank you.

MR. CECIL: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: And, so, lastly, we're going to hear from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Director Beth Rooney.

BETHANN ROONEY: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Welcome.

MS. ROONEY: When you're last up, it's kind of hard to say anything new, but I'm going to do my best.

(laughter)

So, thank you for the opportunity to be here. Bill and April in particular gave you a great overview of all of the events and the amount of activity that's been going on to plan for this. This is arguably the world's biggest birthday party you could possibly imagine. And, the planning has been going on much longer than the Taylor Swift wedding. (laughter) So, we're two years-plus into the planning, and every Federal, State, local agency that you could possibly imagine has been involved. And, there has been, under the Coast Guard and the Navy's leadership, a very, I'll say, rigid and structured process to keep us all aligned, and marching towards the goals. So, there have been, over the course of the last two years, the better part of probably two different -- two dozen different subcommittees that have been working under the guise of an executive steering committee. Bill referenced some of these meetings that pull together a couple of hundred people. Because, when you talk about even an agency as the Port Authority, when we participate in something like this, there are impacts to the Port Authority not only from the Maritime Port Operation, but there are impacts of where vessels are anchoring in the harbor when it relates to our PATH tunnels, and the Holland and Lincoln Tunnel; impact on the shaft building, the airshaft buildings; impacts to our tunnels and bridges departments in terms of the George Washington Bridge. The International Aviation Review is impacting

our airports. The ferry services that are going to be operating in support of these dozens of vessels that are going to be anchored in the harbor, are going to be using our ferry terminals that are directly adjacent to the World Trade Center Complex.

So, when you think about that, just for our -- and, let alone the Port Authority Police Department and emergency operations -- just our agency alone has a couple of dozen people that are involved in every aspect of these planning committees that have been underway for the last two years. But, I'll say that I would say if you asked any one of us maybe five or six months ago how we were feeling about our readiness for it, weren't too sure that we were going to get to this point and be as ready as we are. But, I think the confidence level is very, very high at this juncture, and everything has come together quite nicely.

The orchestration of the logistics is one thing. We've got 49 different countries that are going to be playing in one aspect or another over this concentrated period of time. Both from the vessel side of the house as well as from the aircraft side of the house. So, doing that and coordinating all of those moving parts is one element. The other very, very important element that we haven't talked about yet this afternoon is the safety and security of all of that.

So, again, every three-letter agency in the Federal Government from the Secret Service, FBI, CIA, Customs and Border Protection, and many, many others have been involved and are coordinating across jurisdiction and planning for every type of contingency event that you could imagine, whether it could occur on land, on water, underwater, in the air, cybersecurity events that could all impact any part of this operation. The

safety of spectators on both sides of the river obviously has a lot of play involved from the State and local municipalities in planning and coordinating access to the waterfront to view all of these fantastic activities that are going to be taking place, but to do so safely. If we've got 100-degrees temperatures out there, then there's medical situations that we need to be prepared with, and, as a result, EMS and fire departments, and others have been involved.

From my perspective, it's also important as the Port Director -- and Bill mentioned that I'm also on an ex officio member on the Board of Directors for Sail4th -- but, wearing my normal hat that I get paid for as Port Director, it's keeping the commercial port of New York and New Jersey open and operating with all of this other activity that's going on. And, if you just look out into the harbor on a day like today, you've got hundreds of ferry vessels a day that cross between here and Manhattan, and between Manhattan and South Jersey. We've got anywhere from 40-50 commercial ships that are -- deep draft international commercial ships -- that are arriving in New York Harbor, and many, many more in terms of tug boats and barge activity that is moving around the harbor. So, keeping the Port open during these nine days of activity is a priority; it is a priority that the Port Authority has communicated to the Coast Guard Captain of the Port. And, it has been the cornerstone of all of our planning so that we are able to do that. The Port, the commercial port, will remain open with the exception of July Fourth itself. And, that is predominantly because all of the tug boats and the pilots that navigate the vessels are going to be tied up serving the parade of ships, and then moving the ships to either back to anchorage or to a berth afterwards. And, that's OK; we have planned with our commercial operators, our ocean carriers and our terminal operators; we have planned as best as we

can around that; and encouraged those commercial vessels to go to another U.S. port first before coming to New York and New Jersey. So, just as a bus will make several stops along the route at a designated time, these ocean carriers do the same thing. Seventy-six percent of the time, they come to the Port of New York and New Jersey first, and then they go to another U.S. east coast port. So, in the event that a ship was expected to arrive here on the Fourth, we've encouraged them to just change their schedule and make a routing adjustment. In the event that they choose not to do that, there will be an opportunity for them to anchor outside and wait until the morning of the fifth in order to come in.

In terms of the parade of ships, what will be happening -- and, I'm not sure if it was clear earlier, so I just want to be clear -- that, while the parade of tall ships is taking place, and the tall ships are going to be going from the Verrazzano Narrows north to the George Washington Bridge, the International Aviation Review is going to be happening at the same time. So, as the tall ships are operating up the Hudson River, the aircraft, up to 180 aircraft, U.S. and foreign aircraft, fixed and rotary-wing aircraft, are going to be flying over the Hudson River at the same time as the parade. So, it is going to be really a spectacular show for folks to be lined up on the New Jersey coast watching all of this activity. There are a number of commercial and smaller general aviation airports in New Jersey that will be involved in the staging of those aircraft. And, then, after the parade of ships is over and the aircraft have gone back to wherever they came, the ships, many of the ships will begin to move to a berth, and, with the exception of three vessels that will tie up at Port Authority facilities in New Jersey, all of the vessels are going to tie up on the New York side. So, there will only be three tall ships

and foreign navy vessels that will tie up on the New Jersey side; there will be two here in Port Jersey at our facilities adjacent to the container terminal; and, there will be one in Port Newark.

For those vessels, and as well for the vessels that are all going to be on the New York side, Bill mentioned that there will be public touring available. There will also be a series of VIP receptions on board most of the tall ships and the navy vessels. So, we will be coordinating closely with the Navy and with the foreign consulate and -- embassy offices and Navy attachés in order to help facilitate those VIP receptions that will be held on board. We also can't lose sight of the fact that each of these 80-plus vessels that are going to be in New York Harbor are all going to have seafarers on board, looking to come into shore and get some shore leave. And, I can say as a former Merchant Marine operating on these vessels myself, the ability to get shore leave and get your land legs back and perhaps have a beverage or two is going to be very important. So, again, there's going to be areas all in Manhattan that are going to serve as fleet landing areas for vessels that are going to remain at anchor.

So, just as if you've been on a commercial cruise line and you've gone to a port that is -- you're unable to go directly alongside the dock and you take a tender to go ashore, there will be tender-like services that will leave a number of terminals from the west side of Manhattan, and go out to the vessels that are anchored, pick up the sailors for shore leave, bring them to land, and then bring them back at the end of their shore leave.

The last point that I think is important to make is with regards to the fireworks that'll take place on the evening of July Fourth. So, it is also the 50th anniversary of Macy's fireworks, and they're going to have the largest

display ever of fireworks going off from the East River, and, at the same time, Jersey City is going to be having a concurrent fireworks show. So, I would expect, particularly at a fantastic venue as we have here at Liberty State Park, that folks are going to come in at 7 o'clock in the morning with their picnic baskets, and probably not be departing until nine, nine-thirty at night after the fireworks are over and make a day of it. So, we're ready; we've planned - - we think -- for every contingency you possibly could imagine. All of those same Federal, State, and local agencies are going to be operating under a unified command structure. That unified command is going to be located in the City and we're all going to be together as close personal friends for the duration of the July 1 to July 9. Again, continuing to coordinate and orchestrate all of the activities and then being able to jointly respond to any contingency and anomaly that might take place during the events.

So, happy to take any questions.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Thank you, Beth.

Are there any questions?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SWAIN: I apologize if you did go over this and I missed it, but, from a security standpoint, what happens-- Because, it's all open to anyone who has a boat, small or larger?

So, somebody goes out on their boat from a little dock along the coast, is the Coast Guard screening?

MS. ROONEY: Yes, yes.

So, I'll say, obviously, don't want to talk in detail about the plans, but, there will be known and unknown security resources on the water. As Bill mentioned, there is a designated spectator area. Individuals are asked to reserve a spot for those spectator areas. If you don't have a reservation for

those areas, you will not be able to get anywhere near them. And, those spectator areas for the vessels are largely here on the waterfront between here and our facilities in Bayonne and Jersey City where the Port Jersey Channel is.

So, you will not be able to come close, and, if you have a ticket for the spectator area, the spectator area opens at, I believe, 15:00, so 3 p.m. on the third. And, if you are going to come in on the third, you've got to be able to be self-sustaining with everything. And, then, you've got to be out on the morning of the fifth. So, there also has been back and forth with the Coast Guard on human-powered craft -- canoes and kayaks and jet skis and the like. And, after a public rulemaking process, there have been concessions made to allow human-powered craft. But, there are, again, very specific timelines and timeframes in which human-powered craft can be out there and where they can be and when they need to be there. There's a lot of security on the water.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SWAIN: Thank you.

Good luck. You have got your hands full.

MS. ROONEY: Well, I've been asked several times where I'm going to be, and I'm going to be in the unified command center; and, I'd love to be out there seeing it all myself, but we've been working on it for two years and we're going to see it comes together and celebrate afterwards.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: You'll be one of the few that can see it all in one room, probably.

MS. ROONEY: Well, we're going to be in a windowless room--

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: OK.

MS. ROONEY: --without view of the harbor, and we'll be watching it based on the TV broadcasts on a big screen like that. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Any other questions?

ASSEMBLYMAN WALKER: First of all, thank you for your service, appreciate you.

In terms of the ferry service, would they be operating that day, or?

MS. ROONEY: Yes, so, there are going to be periods, and there's going to be lanes in which the ferries can cross the harbor within their continued service, so, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN WALKER: Similar to like a marathon, right?

MS. ROONEY: Yes--

ASSEMBLYMAN WALKER: OK.

MS. ROONEY: --and, one thing the Coast Guard is good at is managing all of these waterside activities.

So, there are often regattas, this is a massive event, but it's similar to when there's a regatta, and there's security zones, and moving security zones, and we've got to move commercial activity, and it's all planned around.

ASSEMBLYMAN WALKER: Thank you.

MS. ROONEY: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Any other questions?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SWAIN: I'm good, thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: Thank you.

MS. ROONEY: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOEN: So, ladies and gentleman, that is the end of our list of folks who testified today.

I just want to conclude by thanking those who have testified who joined us. Also, my fellow Committee members who traveled and changed some of their schedules for today to be here. And, I want to thank the Office of Legislative Services, our partisan staff offices, our legislative offices, in addition to, I think-- I want to make sure that the staff here at DEP certainly this-- As I said earlier, this did not come together overnight. And, we know a lot of work went into this. But, I think from what we heard today, there really was a need to get an understanding of what's happening, which is scary to say, starting in about two weeks from now. And, how much work goes into that, not just from the DEP, not just from the Port Authority, and certainly from the organizations that we're getting to host for a few days here in the state. It's important for us, as the Legislature, to understand that, not just for what's going to happen over the next two to three weeks, but then using this, I think, as the model for these kinds of events in the future. Maybe every 50 years, or every 10 years, however we shake that out. And, I think, certainly, it's information that we can take back not just to Hudson County, not just to North Jersey, but other parts of the state as we begin to plan other events around the state as we're celebrating those different milestones.

And, so, with that said, I want to thank everybody, and consider us adjourned.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)