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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

**Testimony of Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President for the  
Joint Oversight Hearing on the OneNYC plan by the New York City Council Committees on  
Recovery & Resiliency and Environmental Protection  
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My name is Gale A. Brewer and I am the Manhattan Borough President. I want to thank Chairs Treyger and Constantinides and the members of both committees for the opportunity to testify today.

One of our most important responsibilities as public servants is comprehensive planning for the impact of climate change on dense coastal urban cities like ours. Human activity is causing dramatic shifts in the earth's weather patterns and temperature, increasing the likelihood of super storms like Hurricane Sandy and raising sea levels that threaten coastal cities.

As we saw in Paris this week climate change requires a significant commitment of government resources and coordination. Local threats require local leadership and municipal governments must develop their own resiliency plans. According to a 2014 study from the organization Local Government for Sustainability, a body comprised of over 1,000 cities, towns and metropolises dedicated to building a sustainable future, "75% of cities now see climate change as an essential element in their overall planning strategies." Cities are not only vulnerable; they produce almost of 70% the greenhouse gases that cause global warming.

So whether it's by reducing carbon emissions or creating natural shoreline buffers like sand dunes and wetlands, improving storm drainage systems, or building protective barriers, we must act now. Research by the New York City Panel on Climate Change suggests that by mid-century, sea levels could rise up to 30 inches, threatening most of Manhattan. As Hurricane Sandy showed, the impacts will alter life in the city as we know it; time is short; and the cost of remediation and prevention is huge.

Thankfully we have a Mayor and a City Council committed to reducing our impact on global climate change and to the protection of our most vulnerable areas. The Mayor's OneNYC plan outlined an ambitious vision for a sustainable, resilient, and equitable city and the City Council has acted its own plan to incentivize energy efficiency and reduce our carbon footprint.

Most recently the city has submitted its Lower Manhattan Protect and Connect proposal to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as part of the National Disaster Resilience Competition (NDRC). In addition to other coastal resiliency efforts around the edges of Manhattan, The Lower Manhattan Protect and Connect proposal weaves together housing and small business preservation with coastal protection in a strategic plan addressing the significant economic and human risks caused by climate change. The allocation of over \$100 million of city funds to this project highlights the administration's commitment.

Because the costs are huge, the federal government must take the lead in integrated coastal protection and storm water management, improved urban design, and preparedness. But locally, support has come from both the private and public sectors. While New York City must develop additional measures, OneNYC plan can be a foundation for a viable, long-term resiliency plan.

Resolution 909, introduced by me and Council Member Chin, calls on HUD to support New York City's application for National Disaster Resilience Competition funding. Its passage would be a strong signal to our federal partners that our city's leaders are unified and committed to strengthening our defenses against climate change.

I want to thank the members of the committee for their commitment to making this a greener, safer city and developing standards that will make New York City a leader in combating global warming. I commit myself and the office of the Manhattan Borough President to working alongside you.

Thank you.