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Hudson Highland Fjord Trail Hearing

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January 14, 2025

6:04 p.m. (EST)

Before: Garry J. Torres, a Stenographer,
and Notary Public of the State of New
York.

* * *

1 ALJ MCBRIDE: Good evening,
2 everyone. Thank you for joining us
3 this evening. My name is Molly
4 McBride. I'm the administrative law
5 judge with the office of hearings and
6 mediation services of the New York
7 State Department of Environmental
8 Conservation. I am joined by my
9 colleague, administrative law judge
10 Daniel O'Connell. At the request of
11 the New York State Office of Parks,
12 Recreation and Historic Preservation,
13 Judge O'Connell and I have been
14 assigned to conduct this public
15 comment hearing concerning the draft
16 generic environmental impact statement
17 for the proposed Hudson Highland Fjord
18 Trail. For the review required by the
19 State Environmental Quality Review
20 Act, the Office of Parks, Recreation
21 and Historic Preservation is the lead
22 agency.

23 The purpose of today's public
24 comment hearing is to provide members
25 of the public with the opportunity to

1 comment on the draft generic
2 environmental impact statement.
3 During today's hearing session, agency
4 staff will not be available for
5 comments or questions about the
6 proposal. As the lead agency, staff
7 from the Office of Parks, Recreation
8 and Historic Preservation will review
9 those comments made today as well as
10 the written comments submitted and
11 develop a responsiveness summary that
12 will be incorporated into the final
13 generic environmental impact
14 statement.

15 Notice for today's hearing was
16 published in the Department of
17 Environmental Conservation's
18 environmental notice bulletin on
19 December 4th, 2024. In addition, the
20 notice was published in the Putnam
21 County News, the Beacon Free Press and
22 the Southern Dutchess News on
23 December 4th, 2024, and in the
24 Highland Current on December 6th,
25 2024.

1 Please note that written and
2 oral comments are given equal weight
3 in the review process. If you would
4 like to submit written comments,
5 please send them to Nancy Stoner,
6 environmental analyst at the New York
7 State Office of Parks, Recreation and
8 Historic Preservation. Her mailing
9 address is 625 Broadway, second floor,
10 Albany, New York 12238. That address
11 is also available on the screen. You
12 may also submit comments by email to
13 hhtf.plan@parks.ny.gov (sic). Written
14 comments will be accepted until
15 March 4th, 2025. This is an extension
16 of what was appeared in the initial
17 notice. Please note the change. The
18 revised due date is now March 4th,
19 2025. Again, these addresses will be
20 on the slide for those who have joined
21 by the Internet. Speakers are
22 encouraged to submit lengthy
23 statements in writing and provide only
24 a summary of their comments here
25 today. Given the number of speakers

1 who have registered, I will limit the
2 comments of all speakers to
3 two minutes. If anyone is having a
4 technical issue here this evening,
5 please call the following phone number
6 for assistance. The phone number to
7 call for any technical issue is
8 518-402-8028. That number again, if
9 you are having any technical issue, is
10 518-402-8028.

11 If you spoke at today's
12 2:00 p.m. session, we will not be
13 calling your name again today. We
14 will be calling all new registered
15 speakers for this evening's session.

16 In a moment, Linda Cooper,
17 regional director for the Taconic
18 region from the Office of Parks,
19 Recreation and Historic Preservation,
20 will make a brief presentation on
21 behalf of the lead agency about the
22 environmental review. Then I will
23 call the name of each person including
24 any elected officials who
25 preregistered to speak. After I call

1 your name, your line will be unmuted,
2 and you may present your statement.
3 Again, all speakers are asked to limit
4 their comments to two minutes.

5 If you have joined today by
6 phone, when we call your name, please
7 press star three on your phone to
8 raise your hand, and we will know
9 which phone line to unmute. If I
10 mispronounced your name, please
11 correct me when you begin speaking.
12 If you are speaking today on behalf of
13 another individual or group, please
14 identify who are you representing here
15 today. Again, I will remind you that
16 we would like for all speakers to wait
17 until we call your name, and it is not
18 necessary to raise your hand until we
19 have called your name.

20 At this time, I'd like to
21 introduce Linda Cooper, regional
22 director for the Taconic region from
23 the Office of Parks, Recreation and
24 Historic Preservation.

25 MS. COOPER: Thank you.

1 And let me first just get the
2 slides up so I will be ready to begin.
3 (Pause.) Try that again. Didn't open
4 up correctly. My apologies. Where am
5 I? Where are you? Share.

6 My apologies. Is that up
7 correctly now?

8 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

9 CRAIG PETTINGER: Yes, it's up
10 there.

11 MS. COOPER: Sorry for that.

12 So welcome to the public hearing
13 on the proposed Hudson Highland Fjord
14 Trail draft generic environmental
15 impact statement. As noted, my name
16 is Linda Cooper. I'm the regional
17 director for State Parks Taconic
18 region. The New York State Office of
19 Parks, Recreation and Historic
20 Preservation -- better known as State
21 Park -- is the lead agency under the
22 State Environmental Quality Review Act
23 and its regulations -- otherwise known
24 as SEQR -- for this environmental
25 review process. Hudson Highland Fjord

1 Trail Inc. is the applicant, and
2 hereafter, we'll generally refer to
3 them as Hudson Highland Fjord Trail.

4 Our thanks to the Department of
5 Environmental Conservation -- locally
6 known as DEC -- for facilitating this
7 public hearing.

8 Excuse me one sec.

9 Here's a brief summary of
10 planning and public engagement efforts
11 conducted by the applicant, Hudson
12 Highland Fjord Trail Inc. There were
13 multiple public workshops held and
14 public surveys conducted in 2014 and
15 2015. The preliminary draft master
16 plan for the proposed fjord trail was
17 published in 2015. A steering
18 committee was engaged periodically
19 over the past eight years. There have
20 been ongoing site investigations, data
21 gathering and design work over that
22 same period. Public webinars were
23 conducted in 2019. The Hudson
24 Highland Fjord Trail established an
25 ecology working group that met a

1 couple of times in 2019 and 2020. In
2 2020, the applicant published the
3 draft master plan, but continued
4 presentations, workshops and meetings
5 over the next few years.

6 In its role as lead agency,
7 State Parks issued a positive
8 declaration of environmental
9 significance in 2015 requiring the
10 preparation of a generic environmental
11 impact statement or GEIS. This was
12 followed by a draft scoping document
13 in 2016 and the final scoping document
14 in 2017. Planning and analysis have
15 been ongoing since that time. On
16 December 4th, 2024, State Parks issued
17 a draft generic environmental impact
18 statement for public comment. We are
19 holding two public hearings today,
20 January 14th, 2025, and again, thank
21 you to DEC for facilitating these
22 hearings.

23 Following the close of the
24 public comment period which was
25 extended to March 4th, State Parks

1 will consider and respond to
2 substantive comments received during
3 the development of the final generic
4 environmental impact statement. After
5 publication of the final generic
6 impact statement, State Parks will
7 issue a finding statement. This
8 public comment process is part of the
9 environmental review, and at some
10 point in the future, State Parks will
11 issue a final generic environmental
12 impact statement or GEIS that will be
13 available to the public.

14 The proposed action would
15 construct a nonmotorized,
16 shared-use -- meaning pedestrian and
17 bicycle -- publically-accessible
18 linear park along the eastern shore of
19 the Hudson River between the City of
20 Beacon in Dutchess County on the north
21 and the Village of Cold Spring and
22 Putnam County to the south.

23 Trail components include the
24 main trail, trail meanders, trail
25 banks, water trail connections and

1 regional trail connections as well as
2 ancillary components including parking
3 areas, restroom buildings and a
4 maintenance facility.

5 The component parts of this
6 action described above were part of
7 the applicant's 2020 draft master plan
8 for the Hudson Highland Fjord Trail.
9 Public comments will be accepted
10 through the end of the public comment
11 period on March 4th, 2025. Verbal
12 comments will be accepted during this
13 public hearing. Written comments may
14 be emailed to Nancy Stoner,
15 environmental analyst, New York State
16 Parks, a division of environmental
17 stewardship and planning at 625
18 Broadway, second floor, Albany, New
19 York 12238; may be emailed to
20 hhft.plan@parks.ny.gov, and again, the
21 abbreviation is HHFT. It was
22 mentioned earlier with some of the
23 letters mixed up. So it's Hudson
24 Highland Fjord Trail
25 .plan@parks.ny.gov. The draft generic

1 environmental impact statement is
2 available at the website that's on the
3 slide, and you can find it at the
4 State Parks website, the insider
5 agency and public documents section.
6 All of that is -- the address is
7 available on the fjord trail website
8 and on Today Park's website as well.

9 Again, thank you to DEC for its
10 facilitation of this public hearing,
11 and thanks to each of you for
12 participating.

13 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you,
14 Ms. Cooper.

15 I'll now begin calling speakers
16 one by one. I will begin with the
17 registered elected officials, and then
18 we will begin calling members of the
19 public. I will call speakers in
20 groups of about ten to give you a
21 little notice that you're close to
22 being called. So I'll announce
23 approximately ten speakers at a time
24 and then unmute people one by one.

25 Our first speaker this morning

1 is Laura Bozzi. Go ahead. Laura
2 Bozzi, you've been unmuted.

3 LAURA BOZZI: Thank you very
4 much. Can you hear me?

5 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

6 LAURA BOZZI: Thank you. My
7 name is Laura Bozzi. I'm a trustee
8 for the Village of Cold Spring. Thank
9 you for the opportunity to provide my
10 comments. I'm providing some initial
11 comments now and look forward to
12 providing more in writing by the new
13 due date.

14 I wanted to mention a few
15 topics. One is that the analysis in
16 Cold Spring, while I appreciate the
17 focus on -- detailed focus on the
18 southern portion, predominantly
19 focuses on impacts to Main Street as
20 well on Dockside, and I feel that
21 there's more that needs to be analyzed
22 around impacts to community character,
23 pedestrian flows, other impacts within
24 the residential neighborhoods.

25 Second, on management and

1 maintenance, I would like to see more
2 analysis on the framework of Fjord
3 Trail, HHFT, managing and funding the
4 construction and operation. There's
5 also mention of an endowment as
6 essentially the mitigation measure,
7 but there's very little analysis of
8 this. And these are really
9 fundamental pieces of the
10 implementation and effect of the fjord
11 trail on local communities.

12 I also want to encourage greater
13 analysis in the emergency services
14 chapter. It's clear from that that --
15 that Cold Spring forces are the
16 closest to the fjord trail, and yet
17 the conclusion is that there would be
18 very little impact on existing
19 emergency services. And I would need
20 to see more much more careful analysis
21 for that to be a viable conclusion,
22 and of course, that will greatly
23 affect our residents here in Cold
24 Spring that fund and rely on those
25 services. Thanks very much.

1 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

2 Our next speaker is Barry
3 Goggin. Barry Goggin, if you've
4 joined us today by phone, please press
5 star three on your phone to -- and
6 we'll know to unmute your line. Barry
7 Goggin, if you've joined us by phone,
8 press star three on your phone, and
9 we'll unmute your line.

10 Okay. I'll call our next
11 speaker, J. Larry Wiesler.

12 J. LARRY WIESLER: Thank you.
13 It's Larry Wiesler.

14 I am not an elected official,
15 but I am a resident of Philipstown.
16 And I wanted to express that this
17 project provides unprecedented support
18 and environmentally safe access to our
19 beautiful Hudson riverfront, something
20 we've not enjoyed or had the
21 opportunity to enjoy until this time.
22 It provides a safe path to walk and
23 bike from Cold Spring to Beacon,
24 something that citizens of both
25 communities, including everyone in

1 Philipstown, has looked forward to.
2 The Dockside portion of the proposal
3 solves a key visitation solution for
4 the Village of Cold Spring. It
5 provides a flow of visitors coming off
6 the train to go directly through
7 Dockside and not throughout the
8 village, and that provides to minimize
9 the impact of the tourism in Cold
10 Spring. Sadly, to date, the increased
11 visitation has only been addressed by
12 installing parking meters on peak
13 weekend days.

14 I would remind this committee
15 that we're about -- this is about a
16 New York State park, a place for
17 everyone to enjoy. Accessibility is
18 for everyone, both young and old and
19 those in wheelchairs who can't enjoy
20 the riverfront. I realize that change
21 is challenging for everyone. I
22 encourage all elected officials to --
23 I encourage all elected officials to
24 come together and collaborate with the
25 HHFT community to work together to

1 solve this opportunity for all of us.

2 Thank you so much.

3 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

4 I'm going to read a list of the
5 next ten speakers, and then I will
6 unmute them one by one: Diego
7 Haskell-Ramirez, Michael Guillorn,
8 Shannon Bernacchia, Esther Jackson,
9 Kathleen Mclane, Paul Thompson, Joe
10 Del Santo, Freddy Martin, Eri Panasci
11 Taylorson, Richard Shea. And our next
12 speaker is Diego Haskell-Ramirez.

13 Go ahead. You've been unmuted,
14 Diego Haskell-Ramirez. Diego
15 Haskell-Ramirez, you've been unmuted.

16 DIEGO HASKELL-RAMIREZ: Hello.
17 Can you hear me now?

18 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes, we can. Go
19 ahead.

20 DIEGO HASKELL-RAMIREZ: My
21 apologies.

22 My name is Diego
23 Haskell-Ramirez. I've lived in Cold
24 Spring for several years now as well
25 as worked on Main Street, both at a

1 cheese shop as well as at the visitor
2 booth, and I am in support of the
3 fjord trail because I think it
4 provides a critical piece of
5 infrastructure to help ease our
6 congestion problem.

7 When people get off the train,
8 are visiting our town, they usually do
9 one of three things: They seek the
10 trails, they seek food or they go down
11 to the riverside. And this creates a
12 problem where all of the visitors are
13 either walking up Cold Spring -- Main
14 Street and flooding Fair Street, or
15 they go under the underpass and they
16 get trapped in the riverfront with the
17 only ways out being pedestrian
18 unfriendly, being the path under the
19 railway as well as Lind Terrace.

20 The fjord trail, in my opinion,
21 will provide, like, a critical, like,
22 piece of relief for the point for all
23 of the visitors who are going to the
24 riverside. They can't leave unless
25 they go -- they leave the train, they

1 go under the pass, they're on the
2 riverside, and then their only way out
3 is to just go back through and walk up
4 Main Street again. But if we put the
5 fjord trail entrance at the end of
6 Dockside Park, it'll double our ways
7 out of town as well as double the ways
8 out of the riverside allowing us for
9 much greater passage between the town.

10 As well as this, all of the
11 hikers who are getting off the path --
12 or off the train, rather, they just
13 walk up Main Street and go down Fair
14 Street where, with the fjord trail
15 addition, this will double their paths
16 to get safely to the trails which is
17 very badly needed. Thank you.

18 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

19 Our next speaker is Michael
20 Guillorn. Go ahead.

21 MICHAEL GUILLORN: Can you hear
22 me?

23 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes, we can.

24 MICHAEL GUILLORN: Okay. Thank
25 you.

1 My name is Michael Guillorn. I
2 live in the Village of Cold Spring at
3 15 Orchard Street. I moved to Cold
4 Spring in 2015 with my wife and
5 two sons, in part, to be closer to
6 resources like the Hudson Highland
7 State Park, Fahnestock State Park and
8 the Appalachian Trail. I visit these
9 parks year-round, multiple times a
10 week, for hiking and trail running,
11 alone, with my family and with my
12 friends. I want to unequivocally say
13 that I support the construction of the
14 fjord trail including a section from
15 Dockside Park to Little Stony Point,
16 outlined in detail in DGEIS,
17 section four.

18 Data collected by the parks
19 department and published online
20 clearly shows that visitation to
21 Little Stony Point and Bull Hill is as
22 popular as Breakneck Point and Mount
23 Beacon. Offering visitors a safe
24 route to get from the Cold Spring
25 train station to the Little Stony

1 Point, Cornish and Washburn Trailheads
2 without routing them on village
3 sidewalks should remain a priority of
4 this project. I understand the
5 concerns that putting the trailhead at
6 Dockside Park will create an untenable
7 situation for traffic and parking.

8 I'm not an elected official, nor
9 am I a member of emergency service.
10 So I cannot speak to those unique
11 concerns. I do want to say, though,
12 that, as a resident, after reading the
13 DGEIS, I believe these concerns are
14 sufficiently addressed by the options
15 presented in section three,
16 specifically in section 3.L.

17 Thank you very much for your
18 time and your work on this project.

19 That's all I have to say.

20 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

21 Our next speaker is Shannon
22 Bernacchia. Shannon Bernacchia, if
23 you've joined us today by phone,
24 please press star three on your phone
25 and you can raise your hand, and we

1 will know to unmute your line.

2 Shannon Bernacchia, if you've joined
3 us by phone, please press star three
4 on your phone.

5 Our next speaker is Esther
6 Jackson. Go ahead.

7 ESTHER JACKSON: Hi. Can you
8 hear me okay?

9 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

10 ESTHER JACKSON: Okay. Great.

11 My name is Esther Jackson. I
12 live in the Village of Fishkill. I'm
13 not an elected official; I am on the
14 Village of Fishkill planning board.

15 I just want to speak in great
16 support of the fjord trail. I think,
17 for me, the biggest thing about the
18 fjord trail is accessibility,
19 accessibility to this incredible
20 resource that we have in New York
21 State for people of all different
22 levels of mobility, from different
23 walks of life and different points of
24 origin, to all converge and have
25 access to this incredible natural

1 resource. So that's all I have to
2 say. Thank you very much for your
3 time and for having this hearing.

4 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

5 Our next speaker is Kathleen
6 Mclane. Kathleen, if you've joined us
7 by phone, please press star three on
8 your phone, and we'll know to unmute
9 your line. Go ahead.

10 KATHLEEN MCLANE: Hi. Can you
11 hear me?

12 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes. Is this
13 Kathleen Mclane?

14 KATHLEEN MCLANE: Hi. Yes.

15 My name is Kathleen Mclane, and
16 I live at 2066 route 9D in Cold
17 Spring, a neighbor of Little Stony
18 Point. And I want to speak in support
19 of the Hudson Highland Fjord Trail.

20 I moved to Cold Spring in 2014,
21 and I noticed how the park, Little
22 Stony Point, was in need of care and
23 attention. I spent the next few years
24 learning about the area and the
25 players and the issues, the park --

1 the issues the park was dealing with
2 including safety, visitation and
3 trash. In 2017, I joined a local
4 group called Philipstown Community
5 Congress, and I learned that Little
6 Stony Point was in the midst of
7 transformation, as the previous
8 caretaker was no longer managing the
9 site. My main concern at that point
10 was trash, and I really wanted to
11 raise money for animal-proof trash
12 cans. Later, in 2018, I ended up
13 joining the Little Stony Point
14 Citizens Association, and I've been
15 working with the group ever since.
16 About 2020, the New York State Office
17 of Parks, Recreation and Historic
18 Preservation set up some offices at
19 Little Stony Point, and we also
20 underwent the construction of the
21 Little Stony Point volunteer center.
22 And I saw immediate improvements to
23 the park, and I thought that the
24 community, along with State Parks,
25 were laying the ground work to promote

1 stewardship of this most precious
2 place. It really is beautiful.

3 Later, in the winter of 2021,
4 I -- a grant was received from Little
5 Stony Point Citizens Association, and
6 I was hired as their community
7 outreach coordinator. I no longer
8 have that position, but I worked over
9 the next two to three years to help
10 create programming and was able to
11 cement a relationship with one of the
12 local libraries, Julia L. Butterfield
13 Memorial Library, and they are
14 continuing to host programming --
15 programming at the park for ages 2 to
16 100.

17 And then, just full circle back,
18 in the summer of 2023, we finally
19 received animal-proof trash cans from
20 funding from Hudson Highland Fjord
21 Trail, and it was a great day. I
22 was -- you know, had -- I had put a
23 lot of time in to try to fix this
24 seemingly small issue which just kept
25 building on itself.

1 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

2 Ms. Mclane, your time is up. Thank
3 you.

4 KATHLEEN MCLANE: Okay. No
5 worries. That's great.

6 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Paul
8 Thompson. Go ahead.

9 PAUL THOMPSON: Hi. Yes. Can
10 you hear me?

11 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

12 PAUL THOMPSON: Okay. Great.

13 Okay. I live with my wife on
14 Main Street, just around the corner
15 from Dockside Park in the Village of
16 Cold Spring. My wife and I moved here
17 in late 2020 after spending 12 years
18 in Peekskill. So Cold Spring is my
19 home. I love it here, the place, the
20 people, and I've put in my roots. And
21 that's why I care, really, about what
22 happens here.

23 As a consequence, I serve as a
24 volunteer on two advisory committees
25 to the town, and with Kathleen Mclane

1 and Michael Guillorn who have just
2 spoken, we created a grassroots group
3 called Frenchtown Advocates for
4 Trails. We have a home base
5 website -- that's
6 frenchtownadvocatesfortrails.org --
7 and have 200 followers. I can't
8 pretend to represent them; all I know
9 is that they generally welcome the
10 trail.

11 Now, nice that it is here, I
12 think we can make it better,
13 especially for the next generation,
14 our kids. They will have to live with
15 what we leave behind, and yet they
16 have little or no voice in this
17 debate.

18 I'm very supportive of the fjord
19 trail. I think it's a great asset,
20 especially for residents; most of all,
21 residents who stand to use it the
22 most, and that's the local kids. At
23 long last, the local kids will have a
24 safe and scenic place to hike, bike,
25 skate and run, all the better it's

1 directly from here and Dockside. And
2 while I share the concerns of
3 neighbors here at Dockside about too
4 many people, too many cars, I think we
5 can sort these problems out. For
6 example -- parking policy on Dockside
7 that puts those that live or work here
8 and ADA visitors first and charges
9 anybody else that comes by car.
10 Metro-North can do more with the
11 Breakneck station, maybe fewer trail
12 expresses that don't stop at Cold
13 Spring and discounted fares that get
14 off there. The Shoreline Trail
15 doesn't have to resemble a station
16 platform fitting above the tracks.
17 They can keep the trail low -- with
18 mesh fencing -- high tides.

19 Last but not least, many say the
20 trail will damage the natural
21 environment. I think that's rubbish.
22 HHFT are working with good people to
23 improve the environment, and let's not
24 forget the environment is one that's
25 already been badly damaged. The trail

1 will reconnect us with that river,
2 just like the Wappinger people before
3 us. Thanks for listening if you were.

4 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

5 Our next speaker is Joe Del
6 Santo. Joe Del Santo. We can unmute
7 Joe Del Santo. Go ahead. You've been
8 unmuted.

9 JOE DEL SANTO: I just want to
10 say that I'm a strong supporter of the
11 trail, and to have river access along
12 this magnificent stretch is something
13 that I've dreamed about for decades.
14 And in addition, it would go a long
15 way to relieving that pedestrian
16 traffic through the village to have
17 the people coming from the train going
18 along the river. It's going to
19 certainly relieve the traffic --
20 pedestrian traffic on River Road and
21 on 9D. And if we're concerned about
22 people's safety, this would be a giant
23 step in that direction. Thank you.

24 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

25 Our next speaker is Freddy

1 Martin. Go ahead, Freddy Martin.

2 FREDDY MARTIN: Can -- you can
3 hear me now?

4 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

5 FREDDY MARTIN: Thank you.

6 32 years ago my wife and I fell
7 in love with this community,
8 spellbound by the beauty of the river
9 and the highlands. We decided, right
10 on the spot, to get married at
11 Dockside and raise our family in this
12 community. Over these years, our
13 communities have seen an increase in
14 visitation, and for almost as long, we
15 have been looking to find solutions to
16 some of the safety and other issues
17 posed. The fjord trail project was
18 born of this, and its leadership has
19 been working hard for at least
20 ten years now to provide these
21 solutions. Our community needs
22 infrastructure to safely channel the
23 crowds that come to see the majesty of
24 the Hudson Highlands, the
25 infrastructure to safely channel them

1 to our states parks so many have come
2 to visit. I am a friend of New York
3 State Parks. As a member of Little
4 Stony Point Citizens Association,
5 first of now many friends groups to
6 New York State Parks, I have
7 volunteered thousands of hours
8 alongside my fellow friends organizing
9 clean-ups, trail building, hosting
10 free community events, obtaining
11 grants, fundraising to create safer
12 access to the park and to preserve its
13 beauty.

14 For years, the LSPCA has had a
15 representative on the steering
16 committee for the fjord trail
17 including myself, and we have
18 partnered on grants with Fjord Trail
19 to improve the safe access to the park
20 for persons of all abilities and
21 disabilities.

22 Now, the fjord trail presents
23 our community as well as broader --
24 the broader Hudson Highlands
25 communities and the park-going

1 community with solutions covering safe
2 access for the persons of all
3 abilities, a trail-specific train
4 station to relief traffic, shuttles,
5 dispersed parking areas, working with
6 DOT for other traffic improvements,
7 bathrooms, wayfinding and other
8 amenities to ease the burdens of
9 visitation.

10 As corporate secretary for
11 LSPCA, I note that, over a year ago,
12 our board unanimously passed a
13 resolution in support of the fjord
14 trail project, substantially in accord
15 with our mission of safe access to and
16 preservation of this wonderful natural
17 beauty that surrounds us. We plan to
18 include this resolution and additional
19 written comments to the DGEIS in
20 coming weeks.

21 Thank you so much for this
22 opportunity to speak and for all your
23 efforts to provide these solutions.

24 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

25 Our next speaker is Eri Panasci

1 Taylorson. Go ahead.

2 ERI PANASCI TAYLORSON: Hi.

3 ALJ MCBRIDE: Go right ahead.

4 ERI PANASCI TAYLORSON: Hello.

5 I'm Eri Panasci. Myself and my young
6 family are six-year residents of Cold
7 Spring and homeowners on Church Street
8 in the village. I've spent much of my
9 youth outdoors which shaped the life I
10 enjoy today and the passion for nature
11 that I hope to pass on to my son.

12 So in reviewing the document, I
13 was particularly interested in
14 chapter 4G, scenic resources, as it
15 can't be denied that a major source of
16 division around the preferred route
17 centers on whether or not the Fjord
18 Trail South will spoil the natural
19 beauty of the area, particularly the
20 views from village limits.

21 I don't want to minimize this
22 concern that many of my fellow
23 townspeople have expressed. We've
24 each chosen to live in this beautiful
25 place for our own reasons, but those

1 breathhtaking views are definitely at
2 the top of many people's lists. I'll
3 admit that I've shared concern over
4 mention of the eight-foot metal safety
5 fence along portions of the trail and
6 how this could affect the view from
7 the shoreline. So I was pleased to
8 see the updated renderings included in
9 the DGEIS document, figure 4G7 in
10 particular, of a less
11 visually-intrusive style of fence than
12 the traditional chain link.

13 We accept the Metro-North
14 railroad tracks as a necessary
15 component of the existing scenery
16 here, and with the projected elevation
17 of the Fjord Trail South at just one
18 to four feet above the existing
19 tracks, taken into consideration
20 alongside some of the design decisions
21 addressed in the chapter 4G mitigation
22 section, I do trust that the DGEIS
23 assessment of the trail will be
24 consistent with the existing visual
25 character of the area, will -- and the

1 degree of visual impact will be
2 minimal. I know there will be the
3 annoyance of the height and visual
4 impact during construction and in the
5 period before vegetation fully matures
6 around the new structure, but my
7 opinion is that this will be far
8 outweighed by the many benefits we'll
9 reap over the decades to come, the
10 added ease of exploring the Hudson
11 River shoreline, the direct access to
12 village residents without the reliance
13 on a car to get to and from and a
14 safer place for year-round family
15 recreation. Thank you very much.

16 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

17 Our next speaker is Richard
18 Shea. Go ahead. Go ahead, Mr. Shea.

19 RICHARD SHEA: Good evening.

20 My name is Richard Shea, and I'm
21 a lifelong resident of the Town of
22 Philipstown. And I currently reside
23 on route 9D in Cold Spring along the
24 route of the proposed trail. My
25 family has lived in Cold Spring for

1 over 150 years and have a long legacy
2 of service to the community. I served
3 on the town board for 20 years, 12 of
4 those as supervisor. I hold a degree
5 in natural resources conservation from
6 the State University of New York,
7 worked for the United States Forest
8 Service, served on the conservation
9 advisory committee for the Town of
10 Philipstown. I was also the original
11 caretaker at Little Stony Point with
12 the Little Stony Point Citizens
13 Association.

14 If I thought for one minute the
15 construction of the fjord trail would
16 in any way harm the place that I love
17 and call home, I would have never
18 become involved in the effort to make
19 it a reality. The idea for a trail
20 that connects communities and people
21 to the Hudson River came about over
22 20 years ago, and I have supported it
23 since its inception. The fjord trail
24 will mitigate many of the long-term
25 problems faced by the Village of Cold

1 Spring like overcrowding, lack of
2 facilities and parking while restoring
3 habitat and protecting the overused
4 landscape of the Hudson Valley. The
5 fjord trail will serve as a great
6 leveler, providing access to the
7 incredible beauty of the Hudson Valley
8 to underserved communities,
9 encouraging physical activity and
10 providing safe walking space for
11 people of all abilities, all
12 accomplished while working with the
13 most qualified organizations of field
14 of habitat restoration, land
15 preservation and education.

16 This is why I offer my
17 unqualified support for this process
18 and the ultimate success of this
19 unique undertaking. Thank you.

20 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

21 I'd like to read the next group
22 of speakers, and then we will call
23 everyone individually and unmute the
24 speakers one by one. The next group
25 of speakers: Christa Martino, Peter

1 Henderson, Heidi Wendell, Andrew Hall,
2 Malachy Labrie-Cleary, Katherine
3 Lukacher, Jon Erickson, Stephanie
4 Hawkins, Judith Mogul, Cybill Fishman,
5 David May.

6 And our next speaker is Christa
7 Martino. Christa Martino, if you've
8 joined us today by phone, please press
9 star three on your phone to raise your
10 hand. Christa Martino.

11 Our next speaker is Peter
12 Henderson. Go ahead.

13 PETER HENDERSON: Good evening.

14 I live in Cold Spring. I have
15 four points I'd like to make this
16 evening.

17 One, the applicant is not being
18 honest about the impact of
19 construction on the Village of Cold
20 Spring. I've followed this project
21 closely, but what I'm learning only
22 now is -- about construction impacts
23 within the village is new and deeply
24 concerning. DIS (sic) describes that
25 we'd be subject to intense noise and

1 five years of rock-breaking, drilling
2 and hammering 284 piles into the river
3 between Dockside and old Stony Point,
4 and how do we include peaceful access
5 to those two beautiful spots during
6 the six year construction period.

7 Hammering 284 piles each up to
8 120 feet long at four hours per pile
9 and 90-decibel noise level. The claim
10 that construction noise would be,
11 quote, temporary and transient and
12 that, quote, Fjord Trail South would
13 not result in any significant adverse
14 noise impact is just untrue.

15 Two, how practical is this
16 trail? The elevated sections would
17 only be ten feet wide with fences on
18 each side, not wide enough for the
19 anticipated high-level of walkers,
20 families with young children in
21 strollers, people with disabilities
22 and cyclists.

23 Three, is it even feasible? The
24 applicant hasn't demonstrated the
25 shoreline trail can be built while

1 achieving two conflicting
2 requirements: A, Metro-North's
3 requirement that the trail be at least
4 25 feet from the nearest track and, B,
5 the Department of State's prohibition
6 on over-water structures or
7 non-water-dependent uses when an
8 upland alternative exists.

9 Finally, how much is the
10 shoreline trail expected to cost? The
11 Breakneck bridge alone is estimated to
12 cost over \$60 million. Does HHFT and
13 its lone major donor have the funds to
14 see this through, and if they don't,
15 is the taxpayer left to foot the bill?

16 Thank you.

17 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker is Heidi
19 Wendel. Go ahead.

20 HEIDI WENDEL: Can you hear me?

21 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

22 HEIDI WENDEL: Hi. I'm a
23 resident of Nelsonville, and I would
24 like to speak about my concerns about
25 the development based on the

1 acknowledged loss of habitat that's
2 discussed in the DGEIS. There are
3 both direct and indirect losses of
4 habitat and wildlife value discussed
5 in the DGEIS, both due to part -- new
6 paving for new parking lots, access
7 roads for the parking lots, the wide
8 developed trail development -- I hate
9 to call it a trail because it's not,
10 like, a trail like we hikers use; it's
11 a development -- and the other aspects
12 of the development that would impact
13 wildlife as is acknowledged in the
14 DGEIS among which is rare, threatened
15 and endangered wildlife and wildlife
16 that includes species of special
17 concern in the state.

18 My concern is that we have very
19 little area in the state left for
20 wildlife, and we cannot afford habitat
21 loss. My child strongly loves
22 wildlife and wildlife habitat. We're
23 losing habitat through this project.
24 It's obvious that, around parking
25 lots, invasive species move in. Look

1 at the current Washburn parking lot;
2 surrounded by invasive species that
3 creep into the woods. It's virtually
4 unstoppable. It's already degraded
5 wildlife habitat. That is not a
6 reason to destroy it further, but
7 rather, a reason for the state to try
8 to restore it. It's acknowledged that
9 there is important ecological
10 communities in the area where the
11 development would be located, and I
12 urge the state to protect those
13 communities, not further degrade them.

14 We have a 30 by 30 goal in New
15 York. Let's follow it. Let's get
16 30 percent open space for wildlife by
17 2030 rather than retreat further from
18 that goal. Thank you.

19 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Andrew Hall.
21 Go ahead, Andrew Hall.

22 ANDREW HALL: Thanks. This
23 DGEIS is not a sufficiently
24 comprehensive, inclusive or dynamic
25 statement of impacts and needs to be

1 re-scoped and revised. Here are
2 two reasons why.

3 One, economics. You can
4 romanticize the fjord trail all you
5 want, but what you can't romanticize
6 is: It will cost upwards of 200 to
7 \$500 million over the lifetime of the
8 cooperative agreement. Parks on the
9 fjord trail are too scared to talk
10 about this. According to the fjord
11 trail's own annual reports, they have
12 raised, absent money from Chris Davis,
13 \$60,000 or .0003 percent of the total
14 cost based on the lowest estimate. At
15 that rate, it will take the fjord
16 trail a minimum of 6,666 years to
17 cover its costs from individuals and
18 foundations. The Davis Foundation,
19 where the fjord trail gets its big
20 bucks from, has assets of roughly
21 \$2.4 billion. Is it really going to
22 commit up to 20 percent of those
23 assets to a single project? Has Parks
24 conducted the requisite financial
25 analysis and due diligence to ensure

1 that the \$20 million in taxpayer funds
2 that it has committed will not be
3 wasted? If it has, on what grounds
4 can it justify this is wise
5 expenditure giving the huge funding
6 gap faced by its private partner with
7 no fundraising track record? Who
8 exactly is going to end up paying for
9 all this?

10 Impacts on the village, these
11 are mostly ignored in the DGEIS. Last
12 week, in a five-minute period outside
13 the Cold Spring coffee house, I saw a
14 FedEx truck exit Fair Street on the
15 wrong side, park in the crosswalk on a
16 fire hydrant on the wrong side of
17 main, block a driveway, block the
18 sidewalk, back out into Main and park
19 on the wrong side of the street again,
20 all the while an 18-wheeler was
21 backing up main street on the wrong
22 side of the road. This all took place
23 on a quiet, cold Friday in early
24 January. Can you imagine what this
25 would have looked like on a busy

1 Friday in summer with Fjord Trail
2 construction vehicles added to the mix
3 and more trafficking pedestrians on
4 the street? The position of Parks on
5 the fjord trail is: They have no
6 binding obligation to mitigate the
7 impacts in the village beyond the
8 narrow footprint of the Village of the
9 proposed trail -- one more sentence --
10 is that because they don't care or
11 can't afford it or both?

12 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

13 Our next speaker -- Malachy
14 Labrie-Cleary, go ahead.

15 And I would ask all speakers,
16 when you're making your comments, to
17 please speak slowly so the court
18 reporter can make an accurate record
19 of all of your comments.

20 Go ahead, Malachy.

21 MALACHY LABRIE-CLEARY: Okay.

22 Thank you for the opportunity to
23 speak. My name is Malachy
24 Labrie-Cleary. I am a lifelong
25 resident of the Village of Cold

1 Spring, and I strongly support the
2 fjord trail's preferred alignment
3 starting at Dockside Park. I believe
4 the fjord trail is a gift to our
5 village and the surrounding community,
6 and I am proud that Cold Spring will
7 be an entry point to this magnificent,
8 visionary and future-minded linear
9 park. While overcrowding and
10 over-tourism are very real concerns, I
11 believe it is unfair to characterize
12 the fjord trail as an unnecessary
13 attraction that will exacerbate these
14 issues. The fjord trail is a
15 sorely-needed visitation management
16 solution that will improve the quality
17 of life for our village by increasing
18 public safety and access to our
19 wonderful natural resources for the
20 benefit all, residents and visitors
21 alike.

22 It also represents only part of
23 a wider network of existing and
24 proposed multiuse trails stitching
25 communities together across the Mid

1 Hudson Valley. We need more
2 infrastructure that provides
3 alternatives to car transportation
4 here and across the nation. Staying
5 true to the environmental legacy of
6 our region, let's not miss this
7 opportunity to provide a model for the
8 rest of the country to follow.

9 Thank you.

10 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

11 Our next speaker is Katherine
12 Lukacher.

13 CRAIG PETTINGER: I'm unable to
14 unmute Katherine.

15 ALJ MCBRIDE: Okay. Thank you.

16 We have an attendee with the
17 first name of Katherine. I don't know
18 if that's Katherine Lukacher, but we
19 were unable to unmute you, if that's
20 you. I apologize. You may want to
21 change your audio input, or you can
22 call, again, if you're having trouble,
23 518-402-8028 -- oh, I believe we've
24 unmuted you.

25 KATHERINE LUKACHER: Can you

1 hear me now.

2 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes, we can.

3 KATHERINE LUKACHER: Oh, great.

4 Thank you.

5 I'm Katherine Lukacher, and I
6 live in the lower Village of Cold
7 Spring. I have grave concerns about
8 this devastating loss and
9 fragmentation of wildlife habitat as
10 stated in the DGEIS. The DGEIS notes
11 that Fjord Trail North and Fjord Trail
12 South will result in the combined
13 potential disturbance of 53.9 acres of
14 habitat. A large portion -- about
15 38 acres -- of the potential habitat
16 disturbance would occur within wooded
17 areas along Fjord Trail North.

18 Loss of habitat in conjunction
19 with an overwhelming number of
20 visitors will most significantly
21 impact birds, whether they're
22 endangered or threatened already or
23 will be in the near future. U.S. Fish
24 and Wildlife Service states, the top
25 threats to bird populations is the

1 loss and fragmentation of important
2 migratory bird habitats. All around
3 the world, birds try to fatefully
4 return to places that, sadly, no
5 longer exist.

6 And while conducting studies
7 that conclude that birds don't mind
8 loud construction or bright lights or
9 paving over grassy fields, we don't
10 know that, and these species will only
11 adapt to a certain point to
12 accommodate our recreational needs.
13 Then they don't return, and sadly,
14 they become lost to us. I think we
15 must consider what has been done in
16 the past and try to see the future as
17 a long-term concept before we alter
18 the present, particularly related to
19 this project. Thank you.

20 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

21 Our next speaker is Jon
22 Erickson. Jon Erickson, if you've
23 joined us by phone, please press star
24 three on your phone, and we'll know to
25 unmute your line. Jon Erickson.

1 Our next speaker is Stephanie
2 Hawkins.

3 CRAIG PETTINGER: We have Jon
4 Erickson.

5 ALJ MCBRIDE: Jon Erickson is
6 here. You've been unmuted.

7 JON ERICKSON: Thank you.

8 My name's Jon Erickson. I'm a
9 resident of the lower Village of Cold
10 Spring. I feel deeply concerned about
11 the proposed construction of Fjord
12 Trail South and its potential impacts
13 on our community. While I appreciate
14 the intention of enhancing
15 recreational activities, I believe the
16 project's drawbacks far outweigh its
17 benefits. Construction of the
18 shoreline boardwalk from Dockside to
19 Little Stony Point will undoubtedly
20 disrupt the peace and tranquility we
21 cherish in Cold Spring. DGEIS states
22 that 284 pilings will have to be
23 driven into the shoreline between
24 Dockside and Little Stony Point to
25 build the elevated boardwalk, and all

1 construction materials will have to be
2 trucked in to the construction sites.
3 The noise generated by heavy
4 machinery, pile driving and
5 construction vehicles over an extended
6 period of five years will be a
7 significant burden on residents,
8 particularly those living on -- near
9 the construction zones including those
10 on Fair Street and near Dockside.

11 Moreover, I'm worried about the
12 long-term consequences of increased
13 vehicular traffic that the fjord trail
14 bring to our small village. Cold
15 Spring's already a popular
16 destination, and a significant
17 increase in visitors could overwhelm
18 our existing infrastructure and
19 resources. The DGEIS identifies
20 145 municipal parking spaces, the
21 200 parking spaces in the Metro-North
22 parking lot that will serve the fjord
23 trail. The influx of vehicles,
24 specifically by drivers seeking to
25 avoid paid parking at HHFT's parking

1 lots, will further strain our already
2 limited parking supply within Cold
3 Spring and increase traffic
4 congestion, potentially impacting
5 emergency response times.

6 The charm and character of Cold
7 Springs which draws both residents and
8 tourists alike could be irreversibly
9 altered by the crush of cars that
10 often accompany such projects. I urge
11 a thorough reconsideration of the
12 Fjord Trail South project prioritizing
13 the preservation of Cold Spring's
14 unique character. Thank you.

15 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

16 Our next speaker is Stephanie
17 Hawkins.

18 STEPHANIE HAWKINS: Thank you.
19 Thank you. My name is Stephanie
20 Hawkins. I live in the Town of
21 Philipstown, and I have a home in the
22 Village of Cold Spring as well.

23 I'd like to flag the statements
24 of support for this project made by
25 staff, executive leadership, board

1 members of Hudson Highland Fjord
2 Trail, Scenic Hudson and New York
3 State Parks. They're contractors,
4 they're consultants, they're grantees
5 and any spouses, children or other
6 family members of the supporters
7 cannot be deemed impartial, and those
8 people, however well-meaning, do have
9 clear conflict of interests as they've
10 made statements of support for this
11 project.

12 Next, the proposed plan is not a
13 solution to over-tourism. Building
14 and promoting an elevated linear park
15 will exacerbate over-tourism already
16 impacting local communities here, and
17 as already pointed out by my neighbor
18 just recently, Jon Erickson, the
19 development will not solve existing
20 parking problems.

21 And finally, a development of
22 this mass and scale built on hundreds
23 of pilings in the river is neither
24 ecologically, nor visually consistent
25 with the forest, mountains, river and

1 wildlife habitat that we enjoy along
2 one of the most iconic stretches of
3 the Hudson River.

4 In conclusion, I do not support
5 the proposed project. Thank you.

6 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Judith
8 Mogul. Go ahead.

9 JUDITH MOGUL: Good evening.

10 My name is Judith Mogul, and I
11 am strongly in favor of the proposed
12 project. I live right on route 9D
13 immediately south of the Breakneck
14 tunnel. In the more than 20 years
15 that I have lived there, I have seen a
16 steady increase in pedestrian and
17 vehicular traffic along 9D as people
18 flock to Breakneck and its surrounding
19 trails. I am concerned about their
20 safety as well as the safety of the
21 drivers trying to navigate that
22 stretch. I am not concerned about the
23 enormous interest and enthusiasm for
24 the Hudson Highlands. The more people
25 who visit the Highlands, the more they

1 will feel connected and committed to
2 preserving that ecosystem specifically
3 and the environment more generally.
4 We should welcome them. We all
5 recognize that the flow of people to
6 the area has to be managed, whether
7 you see their presence as a problem or
8 as a benefit. The fjord trail is a
9 welcome effort to address the existing
10 and future pressure of visitors on the
11 environment as well as the town's
12 infrastructure.

13 Additionally, the trail will
14 give people back their river. More
15 than 170 years since the construction
16 of the railroad, people have been
17 literally cut off from the river, and
18 the trail opens that world back up and
19 does so in an
20 environmentally-protective and
21 ecologically-resilient and attractive
22 manner. Indeed, we believe so
23 strongly in the benefits of this
24 project that my husband has joined the
25 boards -- the board of the fjord

1 trail.

2 I'd like to make one last final
3 point about cars. I share concerns
4 about increased vehicular traffic.
5 The overall goal should be to
6 encourage access to the trail by
7 public transportation to cut down on
8 traffic and emissions. For that
9 reason, I strongly favor the preferred
10 alignment through Dockside.

11 Thank you very much, and thank
12 you for the work that you've put in to
13 creating the report.

14 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you. Our
15 next speaker is Cybill Fishman.
16 Cybill Fishman, if you've joined us by
17 phone, please press star three on your
18 phone, and we'll know to unmute your
19 line. Cybill Fishman.

20 Our next speaker is David May.
21 Go ahead, Mr. May.

22 DAVID MAY: Good evening.

23 My name is David May. I'm a
24 registered architect. I have resided
25 in the Village of Cold Spring for the

1 past 16 years.

2 The shoreline trail is two miles
3 in length. The sections of the trail
4 between Little Stony Point and
5 Breakneck and between Little Stony
6 Point and Dockside are each a half
7 mile in length and are termed "on
8 structure" meaning they are supported
9 on piles at the shoreline with
10 sections in the river. The remaining
11 mile of shoreline trail is on grade
12 and is not involved in this very brief
13 presentation.

14 The final scoping document
15 requires that the DGEIS includes
16 results of borings as part of the
17 engineering feasibility assessment,
18 quote: The borings are relevant to
19 the design of footings or pile-driven
20 structures in the project area.

21 The borings report included in
22 the DGEIS was the report used for the
23 design of foundations for the
24 Breakneck bridge in the previous
25 segment. These borings were not

1 located within the shoreline trail.
2 They're not relevant to the project
3 currently under review. In the
4 appendix to the current DGEIS, there
5 is no evidence that any borings have
6 been taken within the entire two-mile
7 extent of the shoreline trail.
8 Subgrade conditions cannot be
9 predicted which is the reason
10 site-specific borings are necessary to
11 design foundations.

12 For example, the deepest section
13 of the Hudson River at 200 feet is
14 located just one mile south of
15 Dockside. Absent borings, there is no
16 way to design pile foundations or
17 assess the feasibility, impacts or
18 cost of beyond-structure sections.
19 The omission of borings for the
20 shoreline trail is in direct conflict
21 with the requirements of the final
22 scoping document. The DGEIS or FGEIS
23 must be revised to include borings as
24 required by the final scoping
25 document. Thank you.

1 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you for your
2 comments.

3 I'm going to read the next group
4 of speakers: Peter Farrell, Latisha
5 Duarte, Patty Erwin, Nancy Wagman,
6 Patricia D'Amato, Julia Sniffen, Harry
7 Stein, Justice McCray, John Maasik,
8 Edwin Stein, Margaret Davidson.

9 And our next speaker is Peter
10 Farrell. Peter Farrell, if you have
11 joined us by phone, go ahead. Go
12 ahead. We've unmuted the line with
13 the raised hand.

14 PETER FARRELL: You can hear me?

15 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

16 PETER FARRELL: Hi. Good
17 evening, and happy new year.

18 My name is Peter Farrell. I
19 live at 191 Main Street in the heart
20 of the Village of Cold Spring for over
21 20 years. I strongly support Hudson
22 Highland Fjord Trail project. Cold
23 Spring is a beacon. As a father of
24 three -- trail access -- all
25 members -- our community as well as

1 visitors of all ability -- Hudson
2 Highland State Park is the Number 1
3 benefit for this project, providing
4 safe access -- Hudson Highland State
5 Park and the trailhead. Today, we
6 don't have that. There -- also,
7 immediate health benefits, wellness
8 benefits, mental health benefits for
9 all community members and visitors.
10 The surrounding community will have
11 this amazing amenity -- the Cold
12 Spring village resident, today, the
13 Hudson Highland Fjord Trail, when it
14 is complete, will no longer have to
15 drive my car the half mile to safely
16 access trailheads. Today, I have to
17 drive a half mile to get to the trail.
18 No safe path from my house in the
19 Village of Cold Spring -- trailhead on
20 route 9D. When the trail is complete,
21 I'll walk out my door, walk down Main
22 Street to Dockside Park and hop on the
23 fjord trail, and I'm safely on my way.
24 When the Hudson Highland Fjord Trail
25 is complete, village residents and

1 visitors no longer have to take a walk
2 down the unsafe Fair Street to access
3 Hudson Highland State Park trailhead
4 from route 9D. They just walk down,
5 hop on the fjord trail and be safely
6 on their way along the shoreline.

7 Hudson Highland Fjord Trail is
8 an amazing gift to our community.
9 It's a management -- a visitation
10 management solution that we
11 desperately need, improved safety and
12 the quality of life for all. Less
13 driving, more walking, more peddling,
14 more pulling, more hiking for all. I
15 strongly support the Hudson Highland
16 Fjord Trail project. Thank you, and
17 have a great evening.

18 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

19 Our next speaker is Latisha
20 Duarte. Latisha Duarte.

21 Our next speaker is Patty Erwin.

22 Our next speaker is Matthew
23 Wideman. Again, if you've joined us
24 by phone and we've called your name,
25 please press star three on your phone

1 to raise your hand.

2 The next speaker is Patricia
3 D'Amato. Go ahead.

4 PATRICIA D'AMATO: Good evening.

5 I would love to love this
6 project. And, in fact, when the plan
7 started years ago with the charette at
8 Breakneck Lodge, my husband and I were
9 strong supporters, but now it's
10 changed dramatically. I studied
11 chapter four of the DGEIS. Cold
12 Spring is described as a village of
13 2,000 inhabitants, and the village is
14 0.59 square miles. With the fjord
15 trail, we are expecting, at minimum,
16 268,000 people a year, 1,710 daily
17 visitors on peak weekends.

18 For all of my fellow citizens
19 from Garrison, North Highland,
20 Nelsonville who are planning to come
21 and to access the trail on their
22 bikes, how are you going to get there?
23 You're going to join the people from
24 New Jersey, Rockland County, Eastern
25 Westchester County and Connecticut who

1 cannot take mass transit and who will
2 come via route 301 and route 9D. I
3 think we are ignoring the fact that
4 this plan is going to be so successful
5 that we are going to be increasing the
6 number of cars. I don't think the
7 shuttle buses will be enough. I think
8 people will drive down to Dockside,
9 drop off their family members and then
10 go off in search of parking spaces.
11 They're going to ignore the variable
12 message signs that are going to say
13 Cold Spring is full, move on from
14 there. Please reconsider what's going
15 to be done to our small, viable,
16 working village. Thank you.

17 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker is Julia
19 Sniffen. Go ahead.

20 JULIA SNIFFEN: -- approximately
21 30 years, and I currently live on
22 Parsonage Street in the Village of
23 Cold Spring.

24 I greatly appreciate the work
25 everyone has done. I see value in

1 access and in education on many topics
2 surrounding this project. In reading
3 the DGEIS, I have the following
4 questions and concerns, and I seek
5 more information. Most of my comments
6 relate to youth safety and fiscal
7 responsibility.

8 The current plan does not
9 address the traffic issues that
10 already exist in our small community
11 at the intersection of Main Street and
12 9D. This already has a major problem
13 in the spring and in the fall during
14 not only the weekend, but school days.
15 With the additional people, this will
16 only add to the problem for
17 school-aged families living in our
18 village. Referring to section 4E24,
19 in addition, more traffic will result
20 in additional crossing streets for
21 students that live within the two-mile
22 walking radius of the school. Who
23 pays for the additional crossing
24 guards to ensure our children are
25 safe? We are on open campus at lunch.

1 Will crossing guards be hired at
2 multiple locations throughout the day
3 to ensure students get lunch? Haldane
4 School currently experiences multiple
5 hikers walking through campus without
6 identification. This happens multiple
7 times a week, if not daily, during the
8 spring and fall season. How will we
9 be assured hikers coming off trails
10 will not increase again and
11 potentially become a safety issue for
12 our students? We have outdoor
13 classrooms. How will we insure our
14 classrooms on the Nelsonville trail up
15 by James Pond will remain outdoor
16 classrooms for learning?

17 I have two major parking issues:
18 One is down at Mayor's Park, and the
19 other is listed in the appendix six.
20 The 9D softball field which is owned
21 land by Haldane which has games on the
22 weekends. I also must note my
23 daughter is an EMT, and I am concerned
24 about her own safety as she continues
25 to volunteer and puts a burden on our

1 emergency services. Thank you.

2 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

3 Our next speaker is Erin Sine.

4 Go ahead.

5 ERIN SINE: Can you hear me?

6 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

7 ERIN SINE: Thank you for the
8 opportunity to speak tonight.

9 I'm here to express serious
10 concerns about the incomplete analysis
11 of traffic impacts and the wildfire
12 risks tied to the oversized scope of
13 the HHFT in the DGEIS. These issues
14 threaten the safety of our roads, the
15 environment and the shared experience
16 of residents and visitors alike. The
17 DGEIS focuses on traffic at entry
18 points in Beacon and Cold Spring, but
19 ignores the critical stretch of
20 route 9D in between where multiple
21 parking lots are planned to be built.
22 This narrow, winding road cannot
23 handle the projected influx of
24 vehicles, especially when 75 percent
25 of visitations are expected to arrive

1 by vehicle. Increased congestion in
2 this corridor will only amplify
3 dangers including but not limited to
4 heightened wildfire risks. The
5 proposed parking expansion along
6 route 9D compounds these risks.
7 Vehicles near dry vegetation during
8 droughts like those we saw this fall
9 can spark fires from overheated
10 engines. High foot traffic and
11 forested areas that are not currently
12 exposed to human activity further
13 raises the risk of accidental fires
14 from careless behaviors. The
15 catastrophic wildfires in Los Angeles
16 serves as a powerful reminder of the
17 devastating consequences that can
18 arise in drought-prone, high-traffic
19 natural areas if risks are not
20 carefully managed. The DGEIS must
21 address these risks and consider the
22 parks's scope, specifically conduct
23 comprehensive traffic studies along
24 the entire route 9D corridor, update
25 wildfire risk assessments to reflect

1 today's droughts, develop robust
2 wildfire prevention and updated
3 emergency response plans before the
4 trail is approved and reassess the
5 park's scale. HHFT's expansive scope
6 attracts more visitors than route 9D
7 local services and the environment can
8 handle reducing the footprint and
9 limiting access -- better balanced
10 public use with safety and
11 preservation.

12 As proposed, this trail is too
13 large to be sustainable for this
14 region. Its expansive scope will lead
15 to excessive visitation, significant
16 congestion and elevated fire risks.
17 This plan must revisit the size and
18 scope of the fjord trail to create a
19 proposal that balances public
20 enjoyment with safety, environmental
21 preservation and the wellbeing of our
22 communities. Thank you.

23 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

24 Our next speaker is Justice
25 McCray. Go ahead. Justice McCray,

1 you've been unmuted. You've been
2 unmuted, Justice McCray. You may be
3 muted on your end; you've been unmuted
4 on our end. If you're having an
5 issue, you can call 518-402-8028. We
6 will come back to you in a minute.
7 We'll call our next speaker and then
8 come back to you.

9 Our next speaker is John Maasik.
10 Go ahead.

11 JOHN MAASIK: Can you hear me?

12 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

13 JOHN MAASIK: Great.

14 My name is John Maasik, and for
15 the past 20 years, I've had the
16 privilege of living in and
17 volunteering for various outdoor
18 recreational programs in Cold Spring
19 and Garrison. I've mostly heard
20 strong support for the fjord trail
21 from local residents, who definitely
22 view it as a positive addition to the
23 community and to Putnam County. The
24 trail seems to align well with the
25 Philipstown comprehensive plan and the

1 work that I've seen from the trails
2 committee. The DGEIS process is
3 essential for addressing any lingering
4 questions that have arisen over the
5 past decade of planning, ensuring that
6 concerns are carefully considered and
7 resolved.

8 I believe this recreational
9 asset offers tremendous benefits to
10 families of all ages in Philipstown,
11 providing a convenient riverfront
12 space for residents from Cold Spring
13 to Beacon to enjoy. Imagine a place
14 where children can learn to ride their
15 bikes, student athletes have a safe
16 area to train rather than use busy
17 roads and seniors like my mother, who
18 lives in the Village of Cold Spring,
19 can take peaceful walks along the
20 river, a setting that promotes health,
21 connection and community.

22 Once the a trail opens, it will
23 have a profound positive impact on the
24 youth in our community. As someone
25 who's volunteered extensively in youth

1 programs, I can personally attest to
2 the transformative benefits of outdoor
3 activities for children. Encouraging
4 young people to connect with nature
5 and engage in physical activity not
6 only boosts their mood, but also can
7 reduce stress and combat depression,
8 potentially making a lifesaving
9 difference.

10 Additionally, the DGEIS
11 guarantees a comprehensive review of
12 the six access points, and I look
13 forward to the implementation of a
14 managed visitation program that
15 prioritizes the safety of both
16 visitors and first responders.
17 Appendix three, transportation,
18 accident data records call out dozens
19 of such accidents that can be
20 mitigated with the proposed improved
21 infrastructure. Tackling the traffic
22 congestion along route 9D, especially
23 during those peak weekends, is crucial
24 to prevent these accidents and prevent
25 those hazards.

1 In conclusion, the fjord trail
2 is not only a solution to several
3 community challenges, but a valuable
4 recreational asset that will
5 significantly enhance the quality of
6 life for all residents. Thank you.

7 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

8 I'm going to recall Justice
9 McCray. Go ahead. You've been
10 unmuted.

11 JUSTICE MCCRAY: Can you hear
12 me?

13 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

14 JUSTICE MCCRAY: Oh, fantastic.
15 Okay. Thank you.

16 Hi. I am Justice McCray, and I
17 am a former city council person for
18 the City of Beacon and a current
19 resident of the City of Beacon and I
20 represented ward two in the last set
21 of elected officials in 2022 and 2023.
22 And during my time on council, the
23 fjord trail did host a Q&A with my
24 constituents specifically and council
25 member Dan Aymar-Blair's, ward two and

1 ward four, and addressed my
2 community's concerns regarding the
3 environment. And I know that so many
4 people in the City of Beacon,
5 including myself, are really excited
6 to have a safe pathway for people to
7 bike and hike and access Cold Spring.

8 The work that I've seen the
9 fjord trail doing between the invasive
10 species splits that that I've had the
11 opportunity to help volunteer and be a
12 part of as well as their diligence in
13 listening to the communities in
14 Beacon, Cold Spring and greater
15 Philipstown has been extensive,
16 comprehensive and absolutely
17 incredible, and I know that they're
18 approaching this project with extreme
19 care and doing what they can to listen
20 to all of the residents and addressing
21 concerns where they can and explaining
22 things that -- explaining what doesn't
23 work when.

24 I am in sole support of the
25 fjord trail. It's an amazing project

1 that increases accessibility between
2 our two communities, and I mean, as
3 somebody that actively is a part of
4 both communities as a librarian in
5 Philipstown as well -- and I'm
6 currently in Philipstown for a book
7 club right now; I stepped away -- I
8 just want to express my sole support,
9 and I know that they're doing great
10 work. I know that there's a lot of,
11 unfortunately, misinformation, and I'm
12 not saying that to -- I'm not saying
13 that to say that anybody is -- to
14 dismiss anybody's comments, but I just
15 want to vocalize my support.

16 And thank you for your time.

17 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker is Margaret
19 Davidson. Margaret Davidson, if
20 you've joined by phone, please press
21 star three on your phone, and we'll
22 unmute your line.

23 I'm going to call the next group
24 of speakers. We have Steve Voloto,
25 Matthew Umbro, Meg Oakes, Alice

1 Krakauer, Karen Sign, Dennis Meacon,
2 Rain Lee, Hayley Richardson.

3 Our next speaker Steve Voloto.
4 If you've joined by phone, please
5 press star three on your phone, and
6 we'll know to unmute your line.

7 The next speaker is Matthew
8 Umbro. Again, if you've joined by
9 phone, please press star three on your
10 phone.

11 The next speaker is Meg Oakes.

12 The next speaker is Alice
13 Krakauer. Go ahead.

14 ALICE KRAKAUER: Hi. Can you
15 hear me?

16 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

17 ALICE KRAKAUER: Okay. I
18 discovered Cold Spring in the 1980s
19 and was immediately besotted and began
20 regularly visiting to hike on Washburn
21 and watch sunsets over the river from
22 Dockside. I was gobsmacked by
23 Dockside's beauty. I now live in
24 Philipstown, and I don't only look out
25 at the river from Dockside; I look at

1 Dockside and its adjacent shoreline
2 from the river in my kayak. Boating
3 is a major draw for visitors here and
4 a wonderful way to experience the
5 highlands. If the superstructure
6 between Dockside and Little Stony
7 Point is built as planned, even if, as
8 the DGEIS states, it will not detract
9 from the view from the Hudson shore --
10 which is debatable -- it would
11 significantly degrade the viewship
12 from the river, from Dockside itself
13 and from Fair Street. For five years,
14 Dockside and LSP will be constructing
15 staging areas, there will be
16 construction vehicles on the shoreline
17 trail in order to build it and barges
18 upriver. Once built, the elevated
19 structure will be one to four feet
20 above railroad level, and with an
21 eight- to 12-foot fence on top of
22 that, its height will be between 9 and
23 16 feet above ground level. This
24 elevated concrete and steel
25 superstructure put on 284 pilings may

1 not look exactly like the
2 Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, but it
3 will look more like the BQE than it
4 will look like a trail.

5 Many of the people who support
6 the fjord trail are understandably
7 excited about the promise of family
8 bike rides or even commuting by bike
9 between Cold Spring and Beacon, but I
10 believe this promise will never be
11 fulfilled.

12 And I suggest the following
13 experiment. Measure off a ten-foot
14 distance, the width of the shoreline
15 trail, and ask yourself: Would you be
16 able to ride a bike continuously at
17 bike speed when, within that same
18 ten-foot width, there will be not only
19 bikes in both directions, but hikers,
20 runners, walkers, skaters,
21 skateboarders, wheelchair-ers and
22 families with toddlers and strollers?
23 How would that be either tenable or
24 safe for anyone?

25 Thank you very much.

1 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

2 Our next speaker is Karen Sign.
3 Karen Sign, if you've joined by phone,
4 please press star three on your phone.

5 Our next speaker is Dennis
6 Meacons. Dennis Meacons, if you've
7 joined by phone, please press star
8 three on your phone.

9 Our next speaker is Rain Lee.
10 Go ahead. Rain Lee, you've been
11 unmuted.

12 RAIN LEE: Hi. Thank you.

13 My name is Rain Lee. I'm a
14 resident of Cold Spring. I attend
15 Haldane High School, and I am in
16 support of the Hudson Highland Fjord
17 Trail because I believe that we are at
18 a point in our town's history when
19 some form of immediate relief or
20 development is due to adjust to the
21 influx of tourism and the subsequent
22 congestion problems such as crowding
23 issues near and about the middle of
24 Main Street and along the local trails
25 which has long been a point of

1 contention for local residents who
2 also believe that it infringes on
3 local parking spaces and public
4 accessibility. Fjord Trail would
5 alleviate this by providing various
6 entry points along the route as well
7 as enhanced crosswalks and designated
8 resting areas such as fences and areas
9 to onlook (sic) over the Hudson. It
10 would also connect local communities
11 such as Beacon and Cold Spring and
12 would promote equity and inclusivity,
13 providing public transit and
14 wheelchair access to residents who may
15 not be able to easily access Cold
16 Spring as much as others.

17 It would also bolster the local
18 ecology by planting native trees and
19 native shrubs and repairing existing
20 habitats and prevent -- preserving
21 them. And overall, I think it would
22 expand access to the natural beauty of
23 the Hudson River which everyone, local
24 or tourists, I believe, are entitled
25 to. Thank you.

1 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

2 Our next speaker is Hayley
3 Richardson. Hayley Richardson.

4 Our next speaker is Rosie
5 McGuire. Go ahead. You've been
6 unmuted.

7 ROSIE MCGUIRE: Can you hear me
8 now?

9 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

10 ROSIE MCGUIRE: Okay. Great.
11 Good evening, everybody. Healthy and
12 happy new year. My name is Rosie
13 McGuire Weiss. My husband Gordon and
14 I are the retired couple who reside at
15 8 Fish Street in Cold Spring.

16 To be clear, we are not opposed
17 to all of Fjord Trail's ideas or
18 endeavors; however, we are, with a
19 myriad of good sound reasons,
20 absolutely 100 percent opposed to
21 HHFT's alternative alignment number
22 nine. To clarify, that would run
23 directly behind our property. We
24 handpicked 8 Fish to be our forever
25 retirement home. If any of you

1 haven't or have purchased that kind of
2 property, I will tell you it is a big,
3 big deal. Our blood, sweat and tears,
4 hard-earned savings were spent on our
5 dream home. HHFT's proposed number
6 nine plan has all but ruined our peace
7 of mind already, and nothing's been
8 done yet. Upset days, sleepless
9 nights worrying about a trail.

10 And let's be clear, a trail, in
11 the dictionary, says a beaten path
12 through rough country. HHFT is not
13 proposing a trail, but more like a
14 boardwalk made of either concrete or
15 manmade composite with fencing on
16 either side. We will have no privacy,
17 no peace of mind. The definition of
18 peace of mind is the feeling of being
19 safe and protected. I will not feel
20 safe, nor will I feel protected with
21 human foot traffic that I will be able
22 to see and they will be able to see
23 me. I will say again -- and I said it
24 before -- would any of you choose to
25 have a boardwalk behind your home?

1 No, you wouldn't; I'd bet money on it.
2 The people who are in favor of the
3 trail are not having their homes and
4 sanity compromised. And just for
5 clarification, this is not noise or
6 emotion. Thank you very much.

7 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

8 Our next speaker is Marshall
9 Mermell. Marshall, if you've joined
10 us by phone, please press star three
11 on your phone.

12 The next speaker is Ronald
13 Zorrilla. Go ahead. You've been
14 unmuted.

15 RONALD ZORRILLA: Good evening.

16 Thank you for the opportunity to
17 speak. My name is Ronald Zorrilla. I
18 am here representing Outdoor Promise,
19 a nonprofit based in Newburgh that
20 serves urban youths and families with
21 the outdoors and promotes
22 environmental justice and inspires
23 them to become stewards of the
24 environment.

25 The fjord trail is more than

1 just an opportunity to create another
2 path; it's an opportunity to create
3 meaningful connection between people
4 and nature. For communities like
5 Newburgh where access to safe and
6 welcoming outdoor spaces is often
7 limited, this trail represents a
8 chance -- raising young people and
9 seniors to experience the beautiful
10 Hudson Valley and a more accessible
11 and inclusive trail. Each -- project
12 is the multimodal access and helping
13 connect the public with the different
14 modes of access like pedestrian,
15 bike-friendly paths and other things
16 that eliminate barriers that
17 traditionally keep our communities
18 from participating is important to us.
19 So we're happy to see a plan that
20 includes accessibility for people
21 without cars, seniors and other
22 individuals that find it challenging
23 to access the incredible resources we
24 have in our region. I believe this
25 project is about fairness and

1 opportunity. Nature should be for
2 everyone, not just those who can
3 afford the time, transportation and
4 access to these places.

5 So prioritizing safety,
6 accessibility and a thoughtful design,
7 I think the fjord trail ensures that
8 communities like ours, who are often
9 left out of the these opportunities,
10 can fully participate and benefit from
11 everything the Hudson Valley has to
12 offer. We believe access to nature
13 changes lives, inspires curiosity,
14 fosters wellbeing, strengthens
15 connections to the environment, and
16 we're proud to support this project.

17 Thank you.

18 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

19 Our next speaker is Katrina
20 Shindlecker. Go ahead, Katrina.

21 KATRINA SHINDLECKER: Can you
22 hear me?

23 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

24 KATRINA SHINDLECKER:
25 Excellent. Thank you. Good evening.

1 My name is Katrina Shindledecker, and
2 I'm the executive director of the
3 Hudson Highland Land Trust. Thank you
4 for taking our public comment today.

5 The Hudson Highland Land Trust
6 welcomes release of the fjord trail
7 draft generic environmental impact
8 statement and shares the fjord trail's
9 goal of helping people enjoy nature
10 through accessible trails. Our
11 participation in the fjord trail
12 project started over 15 years ago when
13 we joined the local effort to
14 alleviate crowding and improve safety
15 along route 9D, Breakneck Ridge and
16 related trails, an issue that's as
17 important today as it was back then.

18 As the fjord trail project
19 progressed, scenic Hudson and New York
20 State Parks became project leaders.
21 The Hudson Highland Land Trust has
22 remained engaged in an effort to stay
23 informed and make helpful
24 contributions as plans develop. This
25 is in keeping with our mission to

1 conserve and care for the lands and
2 waters of the Hudson Highlands so that
3 people and nature can flourish
4 together for generations to come.

5 Now that the fjord trail draft
6 generic environmental impact statement
7 has been released, we are assessing
8 the detailed plans and are conferring
9 with outside consultants to assist
10 with our science-based and
11 mission-centered review which is
12 ongoing. Thus, the land trust plans
13 to submit further written comments
14 once the review is complete. Thank
15 you.

16 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

17 Our next speaker is André
18 Rainey. André Rainey, if you've
19 joined by phone -- I believe you were
20 with us earlier. So if you've joined
21 by phone, please press star three on
22 your phone. I see that you have no
23 audio. André Rainey, you are in
24 attendance. Let me try and unmute
25 this one. I've unmuted former mayor

1 André Rainey. Can you hear us?

2 ANDRÉ RAINEY: Yes. Can you
3 hear me?

4 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes. Go right
5 ahead.

6 ANDRÉ RAINEY: Thank you so
7 much. Sorry for the connection
8 issues.

9 My name is André Rainey. I'm
10 the former mayor of the great City of
11 Peekskill, New York, and a new
12 resident here in Beacon, New York, and
13 I'm excited to share my belief that
14 the fjord trail project will
15 profoundly transform this community.

16 Access to state parks is
17 essential, in my opinion. This
18 initiative ensures that all New
19 Yorkers, especially those without
20 private outdoor spaces, can really
21 enjoy the natural beauty of New York,
22 and I envision people coming from all
23 sorts of -- all different places in
24 New York off the Metro-North and just
25 being greeted by the stunning

1 landscapes, removing existing barriers
2 to parks --

3 ALJ MCBRIDE: Sir, you seem to
4 have faded away. If you've moved away
5 from your microphone, can you, please,
6 come back to it?

7 ANDRÉ RAINEY: All right. Can
8 you hear me now?

9 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

10 ANDRÉ RAINEY: All right. I'm
11 sorry about that.

12 ALJ MCBRIDE: If you have
13 two connections, you'll want to
14 disconnect one because you're getting
15 some feedback. Would you like me to
16 come back to you?

17 ANDRÉ RAINEY: All right. I'll
18 try. Can you hear me now? Is this
19 any better?

20 ALJ MCBRIDE: Not very well, no.

21 ANDRÉ RAINEY: I'm sorry.

22 ALJ MCBRIDE: I'm going to come
23 back to you in a minute. We'll come
24 back in a minute to that speaker.

25 And now we'll call Paul White.

1 Go ahead, Paul White.

2 PAUL WHITE: Hello. Thank you.

3 My name is Paul White. I am the
4 executive director of Parks & Trails
5 New York. We're a statewide
6 organization that works to expand our
7 parks system and our Greenway trail
8 network. We have several hundred
9 members in the Putnam and Dutchess
10 County area, and I just have to say
11 I'm going to abandon my prepared
12 comments and speak to a woman I think
13 who compared the fjord trail to the
14 BQE. I think it's maybe more
15 appropriate to compare it to the
16 Manhattan waterfront, right, the
17 Hudson River Greenway on the west side
18 of Manhattan which is exactly as wide
19 as the proposed fjord trail and
20 accommodates millions of visitors
21 every year, almost entirely just fine.
22 There's a few times on a nice Saturday
23 when it might get too crowded for
24 folks, but for the most part, this the
25 busiest greenway in the United States,

1 and it does just fine. So I think
2 it's wide enough to do all the
3 wonderful things that the proponents
4 say it will.

5 I also want to situate the fjord
6 trail in the larger context of the
7 statewide greenway trail network, and
8 a number of speakers have spoken to
9 the connectivity benefits that the
10 trail will provide as more connections
11 are made to Beacon and Newburgh and
12 other parts of the region. And these
13 benefits, really, are amazing and
14 cannot be overstated.

15 The other benefits that I think
16 a Cold Spring resident referred to was
17 about replacing short car trips, and
18 we've see this in greenway projects
19 all around the state, that there's
20 this tremendous transportation mode
21 switching benefit, and we're very
22 excited about those benefits as well.

23 Finally, the example set by
24 taking rising visitation -- which is a
25 wonderful problem to have -- and

1 channelling it so those visitors are
2 safer and have greater access, and
3 this project does that very
4 thoughtfully. So that's why we
5 support the fjord trail. Thank you.

6 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

7 We're going to recall André
8 Rainey. Go ahead. Go ahead, André
9 Rainey.

10 ANDRÉ RAINEY: All right. Can
11 you hear me?

12 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

13 ANDRÉ RAINEY: All right. So I
14 know I already took about a minute of
15 time. So I'll just cut it short.

16 But I do want to say, for the
17 Hudson Valley families, this
18 connection is obviously invaluable.
19 It creates outdoor opportunities for
20 our children and grandchildren and is
21 making nature accessible for everyone.
22 With this inclusivity in mind, I think
23 this trail welcomes the seniors,
24 individuals with disabilities,
25 families with strollers. A father of

1 four beautiful children will take
2 advantage of it as well, and I
3 acknowledge the valid concerns
4 surrounding this project, and I really
5 hope that we can address this
6 thoughtfully, ensuring that they all
7 feel that their voices are heard and
8 valued. But ultimately, this endeavor
9 reflects my commitment to allow New
10 Yorkers to experience our state's
11 beauty, and I'm very, very happy to
12 see and support such a great
13 advancement in this area of New York.

14 So thank you again for allowing
15 us to talk and share our concerns and
16 support of such a great development.

17 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker is Theresa
19 Kraft. Go ahead. You've been
20 unmuted.

21 THERESA KRAFT: Oh, sorry.

22 ALJ MCBRIDE: Go ahead.

23 THERESA KRAFT: Thank you.

24 I have been attending these
25 meetings since 2014. The Hudson

1 Highlands Fjord Trail has officially
2 exceeded expectations in the wrong
3 direction. I believe we are looking
4 at significant issues including the
5 lack of traffic review between Cold
6 Spring and Beacon. The recent fires
7 in California must be a wake-up call.
8 Our local region has been subject,
9 over the past few years, to serious
10 droughts in our mountain range has
11 witnessed many recent wildfires. That
12 with the risk of more fires on our
13 historic highlands will be exasperated
14 by the influx of unknown numbers of
15 people flooding our trails. There
16 will be no way to effectively manage
17 this surge of numbers anticipated.

18 Additionally, there is a growing
19 concern for safety of families on
20 these trails because of the presence
21 of questionable individuals. There
22 simply aren't enough staff members to
23 monitor the situation, especially as
24 we witness an increase in crime coming
25 from the city with individuals

1 spending their days in our towns.
2 Many of these crimes go unreported to
3 maintain a positive image for
4 tourists. Historic trail connections
5 from Beacon, Fishkill and Cold Spring
6 have been successful for hundreds of
7 years without the interference of Big
8 Brother.

9 The deterioration of the natural
10 environment is already evident with
11 significant erosions occurring on the
12 existing trails. Installing signs and
13 wayfinding kiosks will not prevent
14 this ongoing wear and tear. People
15 always go off trail.

16 I urge you not to approve the
17 current plan as submitted. Please
18 consider and make the applicants scale
19 them back to the earlier iterations.
20 It is your responsibility to protect
21 the Hudson Highlands. We all care
22 about this place, and we want to
23 preserve it for the future generation
24 who, like us, will call this home.

25 Thank you.

1 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

2 Our next speaker is Randy
3 Federgreen.

4 CRAIG PETTINGER: I'm unable to
5 unmute him.

6 ALJ MCBRIDE: Okay.
7 Mr. Federgreen, we're unable to unmute
8 you. You've been unmuted. Can you
9 hear us?

10 RANDY FEDERGREEN: Hello.

11 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes. We can hear
12 you now.

13 RANDY FEDERGREEN: Oh, great.

14 Hi. I'm a resident of
15 Philipstown. I live up the hill from
16 Cold Spring, and I've been here about
17 20 years. For the past ten years,
18 we've seen traffic and we've seen
19 trauma and we've seen accidents, and I
20 have to tell you I'm in full support
21 of the fjord trail. Our current
22 Village of Cold Spring and the Town of
23 Philipstown have essentially just
24 thrown up their hands. They haven't
25 had a plan in ten years to address the

1 traffic. All they talk about is all
2 the traffic that the trail is bringing
3 on. Visitors coming to our town find
4 an unwelcome environment. There's no
5 clear path to the trails. There's
6 very limited access to restrooms.
7 Currently, on a Saturday, there could
8 be 25 people in line for one or
9 two functioning restrooms; there are
10 only two there. And there's really no
11 clear or safe walkway to the paths for
12 hikers to go onto the walking trails.

13 The Village of Cold Spring has
14 not been able to manage the influx of
15 people for the past ten years.
16 Two mayors basically just threw up
17 their hands, and the whole team, all
18 they want to do is keep the village
19 and the town the way it's been. Well,
20 it's not working, and the Hudson
21 Highlands Fjord Trail has put together
22 an incredible plan and opportunity to
23 address this. People come into Cold
24 Spring, will get an enjoyable space
25 and beautiful visit to the lower

1 Hudson Valley. The village and the
2 Town of Philipstown need to work
3 together with Hudson Highland Fjord
4 Trail on bringing this wonderful park
5 to everyone. Maybe, on 9D, they need
6 to add two more lanes for traffic and
7 widen the road and have left-hand turn
8 lanes into Cold Spring. There have to
9 be ways to make this work, but they
10 have to collaborate. This is a great
11 project and a wonderful park for
12 everyone. Thank you.

13 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

14 Our next speaker is Keith
15 Osborne. Go ahead.

16 KEITH OSBORNE: -- Osborne. I'm
17 a resident of Newburgh. I wanted to
18 emphasize the potential benefits of
19 the trail to mode-replace what were
20 once car trips to the trailheads with
21 walking or biking. I am ready to
22 replace my car trips to the trailheads
23 with cycling trips as soon as a safe
24 route is available. I prefer to make
25 my trips into Beacon and Fishkill with

1 lower speed limits via bike, and as
2 soon as it is possible to access
3 places like Little Stony Point and
4 Cold Spring safely by bike, I will do
5 so to lighten my footprint. I just
6 wanted to emphasize that potential
7 benefit of the fjord trail project.

8 That's all. Thanks.

9 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

10 Our next speaker is Christopher
11 Shields. Christopher Shields, if
12 you've joined by phone, press
13 star three on your phone, and we'll
14 unmute your line. Christopher
15 Shields.

16 Our next speaker is Joseph
17 O'Brien Applegate. Go ahead.

18 JOSEPH O'BRIEN APPLGATE:
19 Hello. My name is Joseph O'Brien
20 Applegate, and I'm representing the
21 Beacon Bicycle Coalition. As a
22 coalition, our mission is to expand
23 the safe and equitable access to
24 cycling, both as transportation and as
25 recreation, as well as increased

1 safety and options for pedestrians as
2 well.

3 The fjord trail will provide a
4 vital corridor for connecting Beacon,
5 Cold Spring and Hudson Highlands.
6 Currently, the only option for
7 accessing the south of Beacon are all
8 on 9D. That's a 55-mile-per-hour
9 speed-limited road in some places with
10 no shoulder. There is an urgent need
11 to provide an alternative for
12 pedestrians, especially still
13 currently walking alongside or inside
14 the guardrail of that very dangerous
15 stretch of 9D, and also serve to
16 potentially alleviate overcrowded
17 parking by offering alternative access
18 points to the Breakneck Ridge and
19 Washburn trailheads.

20 The fjord trail is an essential
21 piece of infrastructure in creating a
22 car-free -- car-free alternatives and
23 safe recreation for Beacon, Cold
24 Spring and all who come to visit us.

25 Thank you, and I yield my time.

1 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

2 Our next speaker is Irene Pieza.
3 Go ahead.

4 IRENE PIEZA: Hello. Can you
5 hear me?

6 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

7 IRENE PIEZA: Okay. Hi. Thank
8 you so much for this opportunity, and
9 thank you for having this public
10 hearing.

11 I do live in Cold Spring in the
12 village, and I have participated in
13 multiple group chats and educational
14 forums by the Hudson Highland Fjord
15 Trail and public meetings in Cold
16 Spring Village. I'm an active
17 participant in community civics. I
18 volunteer a lot with multiple
19 organizations. I'm active on the
20 trails.

21 I am for the fjord trail along
22 the river and an exit out onto -- with
23 sidewalks on Fair Street and extending
24 a sidewalk situation on 9D. I am for
25 it because I am very much part of the

1 disability community, and I advocate
2 for this community. And this is ADA
3 compliant with -- reaching multiple
4 State Parks.

5 That being said, I do understand
6 the concerns from my neighbors;
7 however, there has been absolutely no
8 genuine effort by the citizens, by the
9 village, by Philipstown to analyze and
10 design something to mitigate traffic,
11 to mitigate the pedestrian overflow,
12 all of the issues that keep coming up
13 and up and up. The Hudson Fjord Trail
14 is addressing those. And I have and
15 have attended the meetings, and I was
16 really impressed personally by the
17 depth of research. All of that is
18 important, and being able to connect
19 from Cold Spring -- which is not a
20 gated community -- and be able to
21 connect Cold Spring to Beacon by bike
22 or walking safely is important.

23 Thank you so much.

24 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

25 Our next speaker is Sarah

1 Mencher. Go ahead.

2 SARAH MENCHER: Hi. Can you
3 hear me?

4 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

5 SARAH MENCHER: Great. Okay.

6 Hi. I am a Beacon resident of
7 13 years. I was also the Beacon
8 representative on the volunteer
9 committee that worked over the last
10 year to review the visitation data
11 that it submitted in this DGEIS. I
12 drive 9D regularly between Beacon and
13 Cold Spring for the last 11 years on a
14 very regular basis -- nearly daily,
15 actually -- because my kids go to
16 school in Cold Spring, and I worked
17 several years ago as the manager of
18 the weekly farmer's market in Cold
19 Spring on Saturdays. So I have seen,
20 from the vehicular perspective, this
21 very unsafe stretch of 9D between
22 Beacon and Cold Spring, both weekdays
23 and then also on the weekends when I
24 was managing the farmer's market. And
25 I think -- I'm a big trail

1 supporter -- fjord trail supporter. I
2 think the Number 1 benefit is going to
3 be safety for bicyclists, visiting
4 pedestrians who are there to hike and
5 drivers along 9D. Getting those cars
6 off the shoulders and into designated
7 parking lots is a wonderful solution.
8 I think it's great that the parking
9 lots are going to be spread from north
10 to south between Beacon and Cold
11 Spring. So that's going to reduce,
12 you know, visitation that primarily,
13 right now, comes through the Village
14 of Cold Spring and causes a lot of
15 congestion.

16 And then I also just wanted to
17 mention that, you know, I'm a dog
18 walker, I'm a jogger, I'm a bicyclist.
19 So I am looking forward personally to
20 using these trails, and I think it's
21 so important that we're going to have
22 more accessibility because I have a
23 child who, when he was young, actually
24 needed to use a walker. And although,
25 we live in a place that's surrounded

1 by trails, there is very little
2 opportunity for him, as a young child
3 learning to walk with a walker, to be
4 outside in nature. So with that,
5 thank you very much.

6 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is an Andrea
8 Moed. Go ahead. Andrea, you've been
9 unmuted.

10 ANDREA MOED: My name is -- can
11 you hear me?

12 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

13 ANDREA MOED: My name is Andrea
14 Moed, and I'm a resident of Beacon
15 with two elderly parents who both have
16 mobility issues that, up till now,
17 have sadly made it difficult or
18 impossible for them to access the
19 beauty of the Hudson River. And I'm
20 so anticipating and am hoping for the
21 arrival of the fjord trail to -- so
22 that we, as a family, can finally take
23 them to spend time beside the river in
24 a safe and accessible context.

25 And while I have been hearing

1 and I understand the concerns of my
2 neighbors about crowding and about
3 capacity, I have been very encouraged
4 by the DGEIS, as I've been able to
5 read it, and I believe that those
6 issues can be resolved to the benefit
7 of us all. Thank you.

8 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

9 Our next speaker is Stephanie
10 Skiptunis. Go ahead.

11 STEPHANIE SKIPTUNIS: Hello.
12 Can you hear me?

13 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

14 STEPHANIE SKIPTUNIS: Thank you
15 for listening to me.

16 I'm a resident of Fair Street,
17 and I'm here to speak out against the
18 Dockside connector, a portion of the
19 fjord trail known as the Fjord Trail
20 South. Installing a permanent
21 structure and fencing along the train
22 tracks is an unnecessary step that
23 will create a spectacle that is not
24 nearly equipped to manage the influx
25 of visitors that it will attract. The

1 impact of construction for six years
2 of noise and vehicles on the
3 thoroughfare of Fair Street is
4 untenable to residents and to the
5 wildlife that resides here. Further
6 research on this impact is necessary
7 before approving HHFT's petition.

8 The infrastructure offered by
9 HHFT is not sufficient enough to
10 manage the millions of visitors
11 projected to walk on the trail, but
12 there is a sensible and reasonable
13 compromise that takes into
14 consideration these concerns of so
15 many residents. Starting and ending
16 the trail at Little Stony Point and
17 installing proper sidewalks on route
18 9D and Fair Street, we can help to
19 mitigate -- and these will serve as
20 capillaries to the greater fjord trail
21 and give village residents a safe and
22 ADA-compliant access to trails.
23 Hikers who are interested in becoming
24 patrons of our community will have a
25 safe and clear path into the village

1 to partake in the offerings of the
2 village, but starting and ending the
3 trail at Little Stony Point is a
4 realistic compromise that should be
5 considered more seriously, as it
6 scales back the fjord project just as
7 so many people have asked. Thank you.

8 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

9 Our next speaker is Irene
10 Karlen.

11 IRENE KARLEN: Can you hear me?

12 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

13 IRENE KARLEN: Oh, hi.

14 I've lived here for 30 years,
15 and I saw the evolution of the fjord
16 trail. And I thought it was great to
17 start with, and now, it's this
18 enormous project that looks like it's
19 supposed to be completely transforming
20 the area -- the entire area, not just
21 giving some access to the park. The
22 area is considered a scenic area of
23 statewide importance. And not just
24 the park, but the entire area, and one
25 of the reasons is that it's developed

1 to harmoniously -- and everything kind
2 of sit together and that there was a
3 lot of public access to all of the
4 beautiful parts of this area. And now
5 they're talking about -- we're talking
6 about completely transforming the
7 area, but there isn't very much
8 information analyzing -- or there
9 isn't very much analysis of the effect
10 of connecting all of these spots, not
11 just to provide access or recreation,
12 but as a -- I guess, as a
13 transportation hub or transportation
14 nexus that you're connecting
15 everything and that, somehow, we are
16 not -- I don't know -- that we are not
17 good enough or that there isn't
18 adequately accessible -- or it doesn't
19 explain how it's going to affect --
20 the halo effect of the project. When
21 similar projects have been put -- have
22 had a pretty much -- a pretty enormous
23 halo effect. And so I didn't see
24 anything in there besides, maybe,
25 people were buying more ice cream on

1 Main Street. So I would like to --
2 I'm not comfortable with how this
3 enormous world-class park will be
4 affecting the area to maintain its
5 charm. Anyway, thank you very much
6 for letting me speak.

7 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

8 Our next speaker is Delmar
9 Karlen. Go ahead.

10 DELMAR KARLEN: Yeah.

11 ALJ MCBRIDE: I'm sorry. You
12 must have two inputs. You must mute
13 one.

14 DELMAR KARLEN: Is that better?

15 ALJ MCBRIDE: No. We still have
16 feedback. So if you're logged in
17 twice -- I'll come back to you in a
18 minute.

19 DELMAR KARLEN: Thank you.

20 ALJ MCBRIDE: We'll recall
21 Patricia D'Amato.

22 PATRICIA D'AMATO: I've spoken
23 earlier.

24 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes, we've already
25 taken your comment. Is there --

1 PATRICIA D'AMATO: That's
2 correct.

3 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes. So we were
4 not going to recall speakers. We
5 still have people to call here this
6 evening.

7 PATRICIA D'AMATO: That's fine.
8 I didn't want to speak again.

9 ALJ MCBRIDE: Okay. Thank you.
10 You're hand was raised. Thank you.

11 Our next speaker is Pamela
12 Colangelo.

13 CRAIG PETTINGER: I can't
14 unmute.

15 ALJ MCBRIDE: Okay. Pamela
16 Colangelo.

17 PAMELA COLANGELO: Hi. I'm
18 here. Can you hear me?

19 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes, we can. Go
20 right ahead.

21 PAMELA COLANGELO: Okay.
22 Terrific. Thank you.

23 I am a resident of Cold Spring.
24 I live at 9 Wall Street. Wall
25 Street -- I'm sure most of you have

1 been here. So it's that really,
2 really sharp turn on Wall Street. I'm
3 just -- of being a lifelong resident.
4 My mother worked at Butterfield
5 Hospital for 40 years. Five of my
6 siblings were born there. I served on
7 the historic district review board for
8 more than 20 years, and one of the
9 contributing authors to the design
10 guidelines, now enforced. I served on
11 more school committees than I can
12 count. I have two graduates of the
13 local school. I also was -- as we
14 participated with New York State
15 historic district review office,
16 and -- to the comments I made, I was
17 invited and -- invited and suggested
18 to present to the I Love New York
19 campaign, both in Albany and in the
20 county, and the I Love New York
21 campaign was pushing for development
22 in different projects here in the
23 village.

24 And what I'm calling to ask you
25 all to listen to -- and I didn't know

1 this wasn't going to be, like, a Zoom
2 meeting. So I've printed pictures I
3 was going to hold up for you to see.
4 So I'm just going to say that I will
5 be submitting my comment in writing
6 along with the pictures for good
7 illustration to some of my points.

8 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you. Thank
9 you. We'll remind everyone of the
10 mailing address as soon as we're
11 concluded here with all of the
12 speakers. Thank you.

13 Our next speaker is Andre Van
14 Dommele.

15 ANDRE VAN DOMMELE: Hello. Can
16 you hear me?

17 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes.

18 ANDRE VAN DOMMELE: Hi. My name
19 is Andre, and I'm here in support of
20 the fjord trail project, specifically
21 Fjord Trail South starting at
22 Dockside. Growing up in Cold Spring,
23 I've witnessed how our hiking trails
24 and natural beauty have caught the eye
25 of the world and transformed the area,

1 bringing local life to businesses and
2 the streets. While at university, I
3 heard about the fjord trail proposal
4 and was instantly drawn to it on
5 principle -- didn't own a car growing
6 up. I would have loved some walkable
7 and bike-able infrastructure, and I
8 know many others would benefit. After
9 returning home, I was shocked that so
10 little has changed in our town's
11 infrastructure since I was 18. While
12 the parks like Breakneck and Washburn
13 have seen necessary upgrades, basic
14 improvements on Fair Street and 9D
15 remain untouched.

16 Opposition to the fjord trail
17 focuses on concerns on over-tourism or
18 the need for more modest alternatives,
19 but these are alternatives that they
20 aren't actively pursuing, nor do they
21 have any serious interest in pursuing.
22 They've had over ten years to build
23 some sidewalks, and they haven't done
24 it yet. If we continue rejecting
25 projects like this, I feel my

1 community will stagnate and eventually
2 deteriorate.

3 I understand there are
4 environmental impacts, but we need to
5 balance those concerns with the urgent
6 need for better infrastructure. Our
7 area already hosts infrastructure that
8 coexists with protected environments
9 such as the Metro-North Railroad
10 through the Constitution Marsh.
11 Nature will persist, and we can find a
12 right balance to serve both the
13 community and the environment.

14 The fjord trail is an
15 opportunity to Cold Spring to reap the
16 benefits for our tourism, embrace
17 progress and build for the future.
18 Thank you, and have a great night.

19 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Matt
21 Robinson. Matt Robinson, we're having
22 difficulty unmuting you. We are
23 trying to unmute you.

24 Our next speaker is Colin
25 Wright. Go ahead, Colin Wright.

1 Colin Wright, you are unmuted, and
2 your audio seems to be gone. Okay.
3 Colin Wright, you've been unmuted.
4 Okay. We'll try you again.

5 Let's unmute Gretchen Dykstra.
6 Go ahead.

7 GRETCHEN DYKSTRA: My name is
8 Gretchen Dykstra. I lived in Cold
9 Spring and New York City for 50 years
10 before moving this June to
11 Pennsylvania from where I'm calling
12 from. Public benefit corporations,
13 park conservancies and business
14 improvement districts all exist in New
15 York State, and all are public private
16 partnerships that work well. I ran
17 the Times Square bids throughout the
18 '90s. They all outline in writing
19 what the roles and responsibilities
20 will be, who pays for what and who
21 will serve on the boards including, in
22 all cases, elected officials. The
23 fjord trail has followed none of those
24 principles, and yet they keep saying
25 it's a unique partnership. What's

1 unique about it? They have shown no
2 estimated construction or long-term
3 maintenance or operation costs. Yet
4 they run ads saying they'll pay for
5 bathrooms and trash pickup, but say
6 nothing about the big-ticket items,
7 construction, liability insurance or
8 long-term maintenance costs.

9 They want pilings. The 2025
10 budget for the Hudson River park
11 includes \$6 million for one year in
12 part for the maintenance of their
13 pilings. What models, if any, did the
14 fjord trail people use to project any
15 costs, and why have we not seen them?
16 They promised to endow the trail, but
17 they have since reneged on that. And
18 they have raised a paltry \$60,000 over
19 two years in an affluent area. Let's
20 hope the state requires that they
21 return to the endowment if it ever
22 gets built. \$45 million in restricted
23 funds exist from the Davis Foundation,
24 presumably for construction, a
25 fraction of what would be needed. Has

1 the foundation signed a
2 legally-binding pledge? If so, for
3 what? Or does Davis pull out if he
4 doesn't get his way? So I ask again:
5 Who is going to pay for this?

6 Parks gave the new fjord trail
7 the right to build and manage the
8 linear park without a revenue stream.
9 I wonder what the controller will
10 think about that. They held no public
11 panels to discuss difficult
12 environmental or structural issues
13 with independent experts who could
14 have asked probing questions of their
15 consultants. We've had to FOIL every
16 substantive detail of the works from
17 Parks, DEC, the MTA, the governor's
18 office, state and local legislators.
19 Even the mighty MTA complained about
20 their process in writing. Family
21 foundations cannot be FOIL'd, yet
22 another shield from accountability.

23 So as you review their plans
24 including the segmentation that they
25 got away with, the money that would be

1 needed and the breadth and depth of
2 the opposition, please remember that
3 it's not a public private partnership
4 when taxpayers underwrite a
5 multimillion-dollar vanity project.
6 It's a billionaire's folly.

7 Thank you.

8 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you.

9 Colin Wright, we do see that
10 you're in attendance. We did try to
11 unmute you, but at this point, you
12 have no identified audio input. So we
13 can't unmute you. There's no -- but
14 we do have a call-in user with a
15 raised hand.

16 So let's unmute that line, and
17 could the call-in user, please,
18 identify?

19 COLIN WRIGHT: Hi. This is
20 Colin Wright. Can you hear me?

21 ALJ MCBRIDE: Yes, we can. Go
22 right ahead.

23 COLIN WRIGHT: So I'm just here
24 to express my enthusiastic support for
25 the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail

1 project. This initiative represents a
2 unique opportunity to enhance public
3 access to the breathtaking landscape
4 of the Hudson River Valley while
5 addressing key issues such as parking
6 and road safety and environmental
7 conservation, trail use, access to
8 public land and the control of the
9 invasive plant species.

10 The Hudson Highland Fjord Trail
11 plan to create designated parking
12 areas and improve our infrastructure
13 is a significant step towards
14 alleviating longstanding issues of
15 congestion and hazardous conditions
16 along route 9D. With increased
17 visitor numbers, ensuring the safety
18 of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers
19 is essential. This proposed parking
20 solution and traffic management
21 measures will greatly reduce roadside
22 parking and create a safer environment
23 for all. Driving along route 9D
24 between Cold Spring and Beacon can be
25 beautiful, but it is nerve-wracking

1 and hazardous. Last summer when I was
2 navigating the road on a busy weekend,
3 cars were parked along the shoulder
4 near Breakneck forcing pedestrians to
5 walk dangerously close to the road.
6 At one point, I had to brake suddenly
7 to avoid a hiker crossing
8 unexpectedly. With limited visibility
9 and fast-moving traffic, it felt like
10 an accident waiting to happen. The
11 lack of proper parking and pedestrian
12 infrastructure made it clear that this
13 stretch of road is not designed to
14 handle the growing number of visitors
15 safely as it is. This experience
16 underscores the urgent need for
17 improvements like those proposed by
18 the Highland Fjord Trail project.

19 The comprehensive environmental
20 review process undertaken by the HHFT
21 demonstrates a strong commitment to
22 preserving the natural integrity of
23 the Hudson Highland. By identifying
24 some specific habitats, protecting
25 wildlife corridor and minimizing local

1 ecological destructions, the project
2 strikes a thoughtful balance between
3 development and conservation.

4 The Hudson Highlands are a
5 cherished resource, and the Hudson
6 Highlands Fjord Trail will improve
7 access to public land while promoting
8 responsible trail use. The trail
9 system is designed to accommodate
10 hikers of all skill level and
11 providing equitable opportunities for
12 people to experience the region's
13 natural beauty. Furthermore, the
14 trail's design emphasizes sustainable
15 use, ensuring that the impact of
16 increased foot traffic is carefully
17 managed, in particular adopting the
18 Dockside trail route.

19 Invasive species poses a
20 significant --

21 ALJ MCBRIDE: Mr. Wright.
22 Mr. Wright, excuse me, but your time
23 is lapsed. Would you like to finish
24 your comment, please?

25 COLIN WRIGHT: Just noting that

1 the issue of invasive species is
2 thoughtfully addressed in the plan.

3 Thank you very much.

4 ALJ MCBRIDE: Thank you very
5 much. Mr. Wright was our last speaker
6 for this evening.

7 I would like to thank everyone
8 who has joined us this evening and
9 made your comments and those of you
10 who joined to listen. We do have --
11 the comment period, as a reminder, is
12 open until March 4th, 2025, and the
13 mailing address for the submission of
14 written comments is available on the
15 park's website. I will read the
16 address again. It's
17 hhft.plan@parks.ny.gov. That's the
18 mailing -- the email address -- excuse
19 me -- hhft.plan@parks.ny.gov. That's
20 the email address, and again, the
21 mailing address is on the screen now.
22 For those that have called in, the
23 mailing address is Nancy Stoner, New
24 York State Office of Parks,
25 625 Broadway, second floor, Albany,

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New York 12233. And again, that address is also available on the Office of Parks website. And we again thank everyone for coming here this evening, and again, the written comment period closes on March 4th, 2025. Thank you.

And we are off the record.

[Time noted: 8:10 p.m.]

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CERTIFICATION

I, Garry J. Torres, a Notary Public for and within the State of New York, do hereby certify:

That the testimony whose statements as herein set forth within the transcript is a true record of the testimony given by said speakers.

I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 27th day of January, 2025.



GARRY J. TORRES

* * *

&	2	2030 42:17	53.9 48:13
& 89:4	2 25:15	2066 23:16	55 99:8
0	2,000 62:13	25 40:4 96:8	6
0.59 62:14	2.4 43:21	268,000 62:16	6 116:11
0003 43:13	20 36:3,22	27th 124:17	6,666 43:16
1	43:22 44:1	284 39:2,7	60 40:12
1 60:2 103:2	54:14 59:21	50:22 76:25	60,000 43:13
1,710 62:16	69:15 95:17	2:00 5:12	116:18
100 25:16	111:8	3	625 4:9 11:17
80:20	200 27:7 43:6	3.1. 21:16	122:25
11 102:13	51:21 58:13	30 42:14,14,16	6:04 1:12
12 26:17 36:3	2014 8:14	63:21 107:14	6th 3:24
76:21	23:20 92:25	301 63:2	7
120 39:8	2015 8:15,17	32 30:6	75 66:24
12233 123:1	9:9 20:4	38 48:15	8
12238 4:10	2016 9:13	4	8 80:15,24
11:19	2017 9:14 24:3	40 111:5	8:10 123:9
13 102:7	2018 24:12	45 116:22	9
14 1:11	2019 8:23 9:1	4e24 64:18	9 76:22 110:24
145 51:20	2020 9:1,2 11:7	4g 33:14 34:21	90 39:9
14994 124:20	24:16 26:17	4g7 34:9	90s 115:18
14th 9:20	2021 25:3	4th 3:19,23	9d 23:16 29:21
15 20:3 85:12	2022 72:21	4:15,18 9:16	35:23 54:12,17
150 36:1	2023 25:18	9:25 11:11	60:20 61:4
16 57:1 76:23	72:21	122:12 123:6	63:2 64:12
170 55:15	2024 3:19,23,25	5	65:20 66:20
18 44:20	9:16	50 115:9	67:6,24 68:6
113:11	2025 1:11 4:15	500 43:7	71:22 85:15
191 59:19	4:19 9:20	518-402-8028	97:5 99:8,15
1980s 75:18	11:11 116:9	5:8,10 47:23	100:24 102:12
	122:12 123:7	69:5	102:21 103:5
	124:18		106:18 113:14

119:16,23	71:12 73:7	accord 32:14	64:23
a	79:14,15,22	accountability	additionally
abandon 89:11	83:5,12,14,23	117:22	55:13 71:10
abbreviation	84:4,12 87:16	accurate 45:18	93:18
11:21	91:2 96:6 98:2	achieving 40:1	address 4:9,10
abilities 31:20	98:23 99:17	acknowledge	12:6 55:9 64:9
32:3 37:11	104:18 106:22	92:3	67:21 92:5
ability 60:1	107:21 108:3	acknowledged	95:25 96:23
able 25:10	108:11 119:3,7	41:1,13 42:8	112:10 122:13
77:16 79:15	121:7	acres 48:13,15	122:16,18,20
81:21,22 96:14	accessibility	act 2:20 7:22	122:21,23
101:18,20	16:17 22:18,19	action 10:14	123:2
105:4 113:7	74:1 79:4	11:6 124:13	addressed
above 11:6	83:20 84:6	active 100:16	16:11 21:14
28:16 34:18	103:22	100:19	34:21 73:1
76:20,23	accessible	actively 74:3	122:2
absent 43:12	10:17 83:10	113:20	addresses 4:19
58:15	85:10 91:21	activities 50:15	addressing
absolutely	104:24 108:18	71:3	70:3 73:20
73:16 80:20	accessing 99:7	activity 37:9	101:14 119:5
101:7	accident 71:18	67:12 71:5	adequately
accept 34:13	120:10	actually 102:15	108:18
accepted 4:14	accidental	103:23	adjacent 76:1
11:9,12	67:13	ada 28:8 101:2	adjust 78:20
access 15:18	accidents 71:19	106:22	administrative
22:25 29:11	71:24 95:19	adapt 49:11	2:4,9
31:12,19 32:2	accommodate	add 64:16 97:6	admit 34:3
32:15 35:11	49:12 121:9	added 35:10	adopting
37:6 39:4 41:6	accommodates	45:2	121:17
46:18 56:6	89:20	addition 3:19	ads 116:4
59:24 60:4,16	accompany	19:15 29:14	advancement
61:2 62:21	52:10	64:19 69:22	92:13
64:1 68:9	accomplished	additional	advantage 92:2
	37:12	32:18 64:15,20	

adverse 39:13 advisory 26:24 36:9 advocate 101:1 advocates 27:3 affect 14:23 34:6 108:19 affecting 109:4 affluent 116:19 afford 41:20 45:11 84:3 aged 64:17 agency 2:22 3:3 3:6 5:21 7:21 9:6 12:5 ages 25:15 70:10 ago 30:6 32:11 36:22 62:7 85:12 102:17 agreement 43:8 ahead 13:1 17:13,19 19:20 22:6 23:9 26:8 29:7 30:1 33:1 33:3 35:18,18 38:12 40:19 42:21 45:14,20 54:8 56:21 59:11,12 62:3 63:19 66:4 68:25 69:10 72:9 75:13 78:10 80:5	82:13 84:20 87:5 89:1 91:8 91:8 92:19,22 97:15 98:17 100:3 102:1 104:8 105:10 109:9 110:20 114:25 115:6 118:22 albany 4:10 11:18 111:19 122:25 alice 74:25 75:12,14,17 align 69:24 alignment 46:2 56:10 80:21 alike 46:21 52:8 66:16 alj 2:1 7:8 12:13 13:5 15:1 17:3,18 19:18,23 21:20 22:9 23:4,12 26:1,6,11 29:4 29:24 30:4 32:24 33:3 35:16 37:20 40:17,21 42:19 45:12 47:10,15 48:2 49:20 50:5 52:15 54:6 56:14 59:1,15 61:18	63:17 66:2,6 68:23 69:12 72:7,13 74:17 75:16 78:1 80:1,9 82:7 84:18,23 86:16 87:4 88:3,9,12 88:20,22 91:6 91:12 92:17,22 95:1,6,11 97:13 98:9 100:1,6 101:24 102:4 104:6,12 105:8,13 107:8 107:12 109:7 109:11,15,20 109:24 110:3,9 110:15,19 112:8,17 114:19 118:8 118:21 121:21 122:4 alleviate 79:5 85:14 99:16 alleviating 119:14 allow 92:9 allowing 19:8 92:14 alongside 31:8 34:20 99:13 alter 49:17 altered 52:9	alternative 40:8 80:21 99:11,17 alternatives 47:3 99:22 113:18,19 amazing 60:11 61:8 73:25 90:13 amenities 32:8 amenity 60:11 amplify 67:2 analysis 9:14 13:15 14:2,7 14:13,20 43:25 66:10 108:9 analyst 4:6 11:15 analyze 101:9 analyzed 13:21 analyzing 108:8 ancillary 11:2 andre 112:13 112:15,18,19 andrea 104:7,8 104:10,13,13 andrew 38:1 42:20,21,22 andré 86:17,18 86:23 87:1,2,6 87:9 88:7,10 88:17,21 91:7 91:8,10,13
---	---	---	---

angeles 67:15 animal 24:11 25:19 announce 12:22 annoyance 35:3 annual 43:11 anticipated 39:19 93:17 anticipating 104:20 anybody 28:9 74:13 anybody's 74:14 anyway 109:5 apologies 7:4,6 17:21 apologize 47:20 appalachian 20:8 appeared 4:16 appendix 58:4 65:19 71:17 applegate 98:17,18,20 applicant 8:1 8:11 9:2 38:17 39:24 applicant's 11:7 applicants 94:18	appreciate 13:16 50:13 63:24 approaching 73:18 appropriate 89:15 approve 94:16 approved 68:4 approving 106:7 approximately 12:23 63:20 architect 56:24 area 23:24 33:19 34:25 41:19 42:10 55:6 57:20 70:16 89:10 92:13 107:20 107:20,22,22 107:24 108:4,7 109:4 112:25 114:7 116:19 areas 11:3 32:5 48:17 67:11,19 76:15 79:8,8 119:12 arisen 70:4 arrival 104:21 arrive 66:25 asked 6:3 107:7 117:14	aspects 41:11 assess 58:17 assessing 86:7 assessment 34:23 57:17 assessments 67:25 asset 27:19 70:9 72:4 assets 43:20,23 assigned 2:14 assist 86:9 assistance 5:6 association 24:14 25:5 31:4 36:13 assured 65:9 athletes 70:15 attend 78:14 attendance 86:24 118:10 attended 101:15 attende 47:16 attending 92:24 attention 23:23 attest 71:1 attract 105:25 attraction 46:13 attractive 55:21	attracts 68:6 audio 47:21 86:23 115:2 118:12 authors 111:9 available 3:4 4:11 10:13 12:2,7 97:24 122:14 123:2 avoid 51:25 120:7 aymar 72:25
			b
			b 40:4 back 19:3 25:17 44:18 55:14,18 69:6 69:8 85:17 88:6,16,23,24 94:19 107:6 109:17 backing 44:21 badly 19:17 28:25 balance 114:5 114:12 121:2 balanced 68:9 balances 68:19 banks 10:25 barges 76:17 barriers 83:16 88:1

barry 15:2,3,6 base 27:4 based 40:25 43:14 82:19 86:10 basic 113:13 basically 96:16 basis 102:14 bathrooms 32:7 116:5 beacon 3:21 10:20 15:23 20:23 59:23 66:18 70:13 72:18,19 73:4 73:14 77:9 79:11 87:12 90:11 93:6 94:5 97:25 98:21 99:4,7 99:23 101:21 102:6,7,12,22 103:10 104:14 119:24 beaten 81:11 beautiful 15:19 25:2 33:24 39:5 83:9 92:1 96:25 108:4 119:25 beauty 30:8 31:13 32:17 33:19 37:7 75:23 79:22	87:21 92:11 104:19 112:24 121:13 becoming 106:23 began 75:19 behalf 5:21 6:12 behaviors 67:14 belief 87:13 believe 21:13 46:3,11 47:23 50:15 55:22 70:8 77:10 78:17 79:2,24 83:24 84:12 86:19 93:3 105:5 benefit 46:20 55:8 60:3 84:10 90:21 98:7 103:2 105:6 113:8 115:12 benefits 35:8 50:17 55:23 60:7,8,8 70:9 71:2 90:9,13 90:15,22 97:18 114:16 bernacchia 17:8 21:22,22 22:2	besotted 75:19 bet 82:1 better 7:20 27:12,25 68:9 88:19 109:14 114:6 beyond 45:7 58:18 bicycle 10:17 98:21 bicyclist 103:18 bicyclists 103:3 bids 115:17 big 43:19 81:2 81:3 94:7 102:25 116:6 biggest 22:17 bike 15:23 27:24 73:7 77:8,8,16,17 83:15 98:1,4 101:21 113:7 bikes 62:22 70:15 77:19 biking 97:21 bill 40:15 billion 43:21 billionaire's 118:6 binding 45:6 117:2 bird 48:25 49:2 birds 48:21 49:3,7	blair's 72:25 block 44:17,17 blood 81:3 124:13 board 22:14 32:12 36:3 52:25 55:25 111:7 boards 55:25 115:21 boardwalk 50:18,25 81:14 81:25 boating 76:2 bolster 79:17 book 74:6 boosts 71:6 booth 18:2 borings 57:16 57:18,21,25 58:5,10,15,19 58:23 born 30:18 111:6 bozzi 13:1,2,3,6 13:7 bqe 77:3 89:14 brake 120:6 breadth 118:1 breaking 39:1 breakneck 20:22 28:11 40:11 54:13,18 57:5,24 62:8
--	---	---	--

<p>85:15 99:18 113:12 120:4 breathtaking 34:1 119:3 bridge 40:11 57:24 brief 5:20 8:9 57:12 bright 49:8 bring 51:14 bringing 96:2 97:4 113:1 broader 31:23 31:24 broadway 4:9 11:18 122:25 brooklyn 77:2 brother 94:8 bucks 43:20 budget 116:10 build 50:25 76:17 113:22 114:17 117:7 building 25:25 31:9 53:13 buildings 11:3 built 39:25 53:22 66:21 76:7,18 116:22 bull 20:21 bulletin 3:18 burden 51:7 65:25</p>	<p>burdens 32:8 buses 63:7 busiest 89:25 business 115:13 businesses 113:1 busy 44:25 70:16 120:2 butterfield 25:12 111:4 buying 108:25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">c</p> <p>california 93:7 call 5:5,7,23,25 6:6,17 12:19 15:10 36:17 37:22 41:9 47:22 69:5,7 71:18 74:23 88:25 93:7 94:24 110:5 118:14,17 called 6:19 12:22 24:4 27:3 61:24 122:22 calling 5:13,14 12:15,18 111:24 115:11 campaign 111:19,21</p>	<p>campus 64:25 65:5 cans 24:12 25:19 capacity 105:3 capillaries 106:20 car 28:9 35:13 47:3 60:15 90:17 97:20,22 99:22,22 113:5 care 23:22 26:21 45:10 73:19 86:1 94:21 careful 14:20 carefully 67:20 70:6 121:16 careless 67:14 caretaker 24:8 36:11 cars 28:4 52:9 56:3 63:6 83:21 103:5 120:3 cases 115:22 catastrophic 67:15 caught 112:24 causes 103:14 cement 25:11 center 24:21 centered 86:11</p>	<p>centers 33:17 certain 49:11 certainly 29:19 certification 124:2 certify 124:6,11 chain 34:12 challenges 72:3 challenging 16:21 83:22 chance 83:8 change 4:17 16:20 47:21 changed 62:10 113:10 changes 84:13 channel 30:22 30:25 channelling 91:1 chapter 14:14 33:14 34:21 62:11 character 13:22 34:25 52:6,14 characterize 46:11 charette 62:7 charges 28:8 charm 52:6 109:5 chats 100:13</p>
---	--	---	--

cheese 18:1 cherish 50:21 cherished 121:5 child 41:21 103:23 104:2 children 39:20 53:5 64:24 70:14 71:3 91:20 92:1 choose 81:24 chosen 33:24 chris 43:12 christa 37:25 38:6,7,10 christopher 98:10,11,14 church 33:7 circle 25:17 citizens 15:24 24:14 25:5 31:4 36:12 62:18 101:8 city 10:19 72:17,18,19 73:4 87:10 93:25 115:9 civics 100:17 claim 39:9 clarification 82:5 clarify 80:22 class 109:3	classrooms 65:13,14,16 clean 31:9 clear 14:14 53:9 80:16 81:10 96:5,11 106:25 120:12 clearly 20:20 cleary 38:2 45:14,21,24 close 9:23 12:21 120:5 closely 38:21 closer 20:5 closes 123:6 closest 14:16 club 74:7 coalition 98:21 98:22 coexists 114:8 coffee 44:13 colangelo 110:12,16,17 110:21 cold 10:21 13:8 13:16 14:15,23 15:23 16:4,9 17:23 18:13 20:2,3,24 23:16,20 26:16 26:18 28:12 33:6 35:23,25 36:25 38:14,19 44:13,23 45:25	46:6 48:6 50:9 50:21 51:14 52:2,6,13,22 56:25 59:20,22 60:11,19 62:11 63:13,23 66:18 69:18 70:12,18 73:7,14 75:18 77:9 78:14 79:11,15 80:15 90:16 93:5 94:5 95:16,22 96:13,23 97:8 98:4 99:5,23 100:11,15 101:19,21 102:13,16,18 102:22 103:10 103:14 110:23 112:22 114:15 115:8 119:24 colin 114:24,25 115:1,3 118:9 118:19,20,23 121:25 collaborate 16:24 97:10 colleague 2:9 collected 20:18 combat 71:7 combined 48:12 come 16:24 30:23 31:1	35:9 62:20 63:2 69:6,8 86:4 88:6,16 88:22,23 96:23 99:24 109:17 comes 28:9 103:13 comfortable 109:2 coming 16:5 29:17 32:20 65:9 87:22 93:24 96:3 101:12 123:4 comment 2:15 2:24 3:1 9:18 9:24 10:8 11:10 85:4 109:25 112:5 121:24 122:11 123:6 comments 3:5 3:9,10 4:2,4,12 4:14,24 5:2 6:4 10:2 11:9,12 11:13 13:10,11 32:19 45:16,19 59:2 64:5 74:14 86:13 89:12 111:16 122:9,14 commit 43:22 commitment 92:9 120:21
---	--	--	---

committed 44:2 55:1 committee 8:18 16:14 31:16 36:9 70:2 102:9 committees 26:24 111:11 communities 14:11 15:25 30:13 31:25 36:20 37:8 42:10,13 46:25 53:16 68:22 73:13 74:2,4 79:10 83:4,17 84:8 community 13:22 16:25 24:4,24 25:6 30:7,12,21 31:10,23 32:1 36:2 46:5 50:13 59:25 60:9,10 61:8 64:10 69:23 70:21,24 72:3 87:15 100:17 101:1,2,20 106:24 114:1 114:13 community's 73:2	commuting 77:8 compare 89:15 compared 89:13 complained 117:19 complete 60:14 60:20,25 86:14 completely 107:19 108:6 compliant 101:3 106:22 component 11:5 34:15 components 10:23 11:2 composite 81:15 compounds 67:6 comprehensive 42:24 67:23 69:25 71:11 73:16 120:19 compromise 106:13 107:4 compromised 82:4 concept 49:17 concern 24:9 33:22 34:3 41:17,18 93:19	concerned 29:21 50:10 54:19,22 65:23 concerning 2:15 38:24 concerns 21:5 21:11,13 28:2 40:24 46:10 48:7 56:3 64:4 66:10 70:6 73:2,21 92:3 92:15 101:6 105:1 106:14 113:17 114:5 conclude 49:7 concluded 112:11 conclusion 14:17,21 54:4 72:1 concrete 76:24 81:14 conditions 58:8 119:15 conduct 2:14 67:22 conducted 8:11 8:14,23 43:24 conducting 49:6 conferring 86:8 conflict 53:9 58:20	conflicting 40:1 congestion 18:6 52:4 67:1 68:16 71:22 78:22 103:15 119:15 congress 24:5 conjunction 48:18 connect 71:4 79:10 83:13 101:18,21 connected 55:1 connecticut 62:25 connecting 99:4 108:10,14 connection 70:21 83:3 87:7 91:18 connections 10:25 11:1 84:15 88:13 90:10 94:4 connectivity 90:9 connector 105:18 connects 36:20 consequence 26:23 consequences 51:12 67:17
--	---	---	---

conservation 2:8 8:5 36:5,8 119:7 121:3 conservation's 3:17 conserve 86:1 consider 10:1 49:15 67:21 94:18 consideration 34:19 106:14 considered 70:6 107:5,22 consistent 34:24 53:24 constituents 72:24 constitution 114:10 construct 10:15 constructing 76:14 construction 14:4 20:13 24:20 35:4 36:15 38:19,22 39:6,10 45:2 49:8 50:11,17 51:1,2,5,9 55:15 76:16 106:1 116:2,7 116:24 consultants 53:4 86:9	117:15 contention 79:1 context 90:6 104:24 continue 113:24 continued 9:3 continues 65:24 continuing 25:14 continuously 77:16 contractors 53:3 contributing 111:9 contributions 85:24 control 119:8 controller 117:9 convenient 70:11 converge 22:24 conversancies 115:13 cooper 5:16 6:21,25 7:11 7:16 12:14 cooperative 43:8 coordinator 25:7	corner 26:14 cornish 21:1 corporate 32:10 corporations 115:12 correct 6:11 110:2 correctly 7:4,7 corridor 67:2 67:24 99:4 120:25 cost 40:10,12 43:6,14 58:18 costs 43:17 116:3,8,15 council 72:17 72:22,24 count 111:12 country 47:8 81:12 county 3:21 10:20,22 62:24 62:25 69:23 89:10 111:20 couple 9:1 80:14 course 14:22 court 45:17 cover 43:17 covering 32:1 craig 7:9 47:13 50:3 95:4 110:13	cream 108:25 create 21:6 25:10 31:11 68:18 83:1,2 105:23 119:11 119:22 created 27:2 creates 18:11 91:19 creating 56:13 99:21 creep 42:3 crime 93:24 crimes 94:2 critical 18:4,21 66:19 crossing 64:20 64:23 65:1 120:7 crosswalk 44:15 crosswalks 79:7 crowded 89:23 crowding 78:22 85:14 105:2 crowds 30:23 crucial 71:23 crush 52:9 curiosity 84:13 current 3:24 42:1 58:4 64:8 72:18 94:17 95:21
---	---	---	---

<p>currently 35:22 58:3 63:21 65:4 67:11 74:6 96:7 99:6 99:13 cut 55:17 56:7 91:15 cybill 38:4 56:15,16,19 cycling 97:23 98:24 cyclists 39:22 119:18</p>	<p>daughter 65:23 david 38:5 56:20,22,23 davidson 59:8 74:19,19 davis 43:12,18 116:23 117:3 day 25:21 65:2 124:17 days 16:13 64:14 81:8 94:1 deal 81:3 dealing 24:1 debatable 76:10 debate 27:17 dec 8:6 9:21 12:9 117:17 decade 70:5 decades 29:13 35:9 december 3:19 3:23,24 9:16 decibel 39:9 decided 30:9 decisions 34:20 declaration 9:8 deemed 53:7 deepest 58:12 deeply 38:23 50:10 definitely 34:1 69:21</p>	<p>definition 81:17 degrade 42:13 76:11 degraded 42:4 degree 35:1 36:4 del 17:10 29:5 29:6,7,9 delmar 109:8 109:10,14,19 demonstrated 39:24 demonstrates 120:21 denied 33:15 dennis 75:1 78:5,6 department 2:7 3:16 8:4 20:19 40:5 dependent 40:7 depression 71:7 depth 101:17 118:1 described 11:6 62:12 describes 38:24 design 8:21 34:20 57:19,23 58:11,16 84:6 101:10 111:9 121:14</p>	<p>designated 79:7 103:6 119:11 designed 120:13 121:9 desperately 61:11 destination 51:16 destroy 42:6 destructions 121:1 detail 20:16 117:16 detailed 13:17 86:8 deteriorate 114:2 deterioration 94:9 detract 76:8 devastating 48:8 67:17 develop 3:11 68:1 85:24 developed 41:8 107:25 development 10:3 40:25 41:8,11,12 42:11 53:19,21 78:20 92:16 111:21 121:3</p>
d			
<p>d'amato 59:6 62:3,4 109:21 109:22 110:1,7 daily 62:16 65:7 102:14 damage 28:20 damaged 28:25 dan 72:25 dangerous 99:14 dangerously 120:5 dangers 67:3 daniel 2:10 data 8:20 20:18 71:18 102:10 date 4:18 13:13 16:10</p>			

dgeis 20:16 21:13 32:19 34:9,22 41:2,5 41:14 42:23 44:11 48:10,10 50:21 51:19 57:15,22 58:4 58:22 62:11 64:3 66:13,17 67:20 70:2 71:10 76:8 102:11 105:4 dictionary 81:11 diego 17:6,12 17:14,14,16,20 17:22 difference 71:9 different 22:21 22:22,23 83:13 87:23 111:22 difficult 104:17 117:11 difficulty 114:22 diligence 43:25 73:12 direct 35:11 41:3 58:20 direction 29:23 93:3 directions 77:19	directly 16:6 28:1 80:23 director 5:17 6:22 7:17 85:2 89:4 dis 38:24 disabilities 31:21 39:21 91:24 disability 101:1 disconnect 88:14 discounted 28:13 discovered 75:18 discuss 117:11 discussed 41:2 41:4 dismiss 74:14 dispersed 32:5 disrupt 50:20 distance 77:14 district 111:7 111:15 districts 115:14 disturbance 48:13,16 division 11:16 33:16 dockside 13:20 16:2,7 19:6 20:15 21:6 26:15 28:1,3,6	30:11 39:3 46:3 50:18,24 51:10 56:10 57:6 58:15 60:22 63:8 75:22,25 76:1 76:6,12,14 105:18 112:22 121:18 dockside's 75:23 document 9:12 9:13 33:12 34:9 57:14 58:22,25 documents 12:5 dog 103:17 doing 73:9,19 74:9 dollar 118:5 dommele 112:14,15,18 donor 40:13 door 60:21 dot 32:6 double 19:6,7 19:15 dozens 71:18 draft 2:15 3:1 7:14 8:15 9:3 9:12,17 11:7 11:25 85:7 86:5	dramatically 62:10 draw 76:3 drawbacks 50:16 drawn 113:4 draws 52:7 dream 81:5 dreamed 29:13 drilling 39:1 drive 60:15,17 63:8 102:12 driven 50:23 57:19 drivers 51:24 54:21 103:5 119:18 driveway 44:17 driving 51:4 61:13 119:23 drop 63:9 drought 67:18 droughts 67:8 68:1 93:10 dry 67:7 duarte 59:5 61:20,20 due 4:18 13:13 41:5 43:25 78:20 dutchess 3:22 10:20 89:9 dykstra 115:5,7 115:8
---	--	--	--

dynamic 42:24	efforts 8:10	encourage	85:9 87:21
e	32:23	14:12 16:22,23	enjoyable
earlier 11:22	eight 8:19 34:4	56:6	96:24
86:20 94:19	76:21	encouraged	enjoyed 15:20
109:23	either 18:13	4:22 105:3	enjoyment
early 44:23	77:23 81:14,16	encouraging	68:20
earned 81:4	elderly 104:15	37:9 71:3	enormous
ease 18:5 32:8	elected 5:24	endangered	54:23 107:18
35:10	12:17 15:14	41:15 48:22	108:22 109:3
easily 79:15	16:22,23 21:8	endeavor 92:8	ensure 43:25
eastern 10:18	22:13 72:21	endeavors	64:24 65:3
62:24	115:22	80:18	ensures 84:7
ecological 42:9	elevated 39:16	ended 24:12	87:18
121:1	50:25 53:14	endow 116:16	ensuring 70:5
ecologically	68:16 76:18,24	endowment	92:6 119:17
53:24 55:21	elevation 34:16	14:5 116:21	121:15
ecology 8:25	eliminate 83:16	enforced	enthusiasm
79:18	email 4:12	111:10	54:23
economics 43:3	122:18,20	engage 71:5	enthusiastic
ecosystem 55:2	emailed 11:14	engaged 8:18	118:24
education	11:19	85:22	entire 58:6
37:15 64:1	embrace	engagement	67:24 107:20
educational	114:16	8:10	107:24
100:13	emergency	engineering	entirely 89:21
edwin 59:8	14:13,19 21:9	57:17	entitled 79:24
effect 14:10	52:5 66:1 68:3	engines 67:10	entrance 19:5
108:9,20,23	emissions 56:8	enhance 72:5	entry 46:7
effectively	emotion 82:6	119:2	66:17 79:6
93:16	emphasize	enhanced 79:7	environment
effort 36:18	97:18 98:6	enhancing	28:21,23,24
55:9 85:13,22	emphasizes	50:14	55:3,11 66:15
101:8	121:14	enjoy 15:21	68:7 73:3
	emt 65:23	16:17,19 33:10	82:24 84:15
		54:1 70:13	94:10 96:4

<p>114:13 119:22 environmental 2:7,16,19 3:2 3:13,17,18 4:6 5:22 7:14,22 7:24 8:5 9:8,10 9:17 10:4,9,11 11:15,16 12:1 47:5 68:20 82:22 85:7 86:6 114:4 117:12 119:6 120:19 environment... 15:18 55:20 environments 114:8 envision 87:22 equal 4:2 equipped 105:24 equitable 98:23 121:11 equity 79:12 eri 17:10 32:25 33:2,4,5 erickson 38:3 49:22,22,25 50:4,5,7,8 53:18 erin 66:3,5,7 erosions 94:11 ers 77:21</p>	<p>erwin 59:5 61:21 especially 27:13,20 66:24 71:22 87:19 93:23 99:12 essential 70:3 87:17 99:20 119:19 essentially 14:6 95:23 est 1:12 established 8:24 esther 17:8 22:5,7,10,11 estimate 43:14 estimated 40:11 116:2 evening 2:1,3 5:4 35:19 38:13,16 54:9 56:22 59:17 61:17 62:4 80:11 82:15 84:25 110:6 122:6,8 123:5 evening's 5:15 events 31:10 eventually 114:1 everybody 80:11</p>	<p>evidence 58:5 evident 94:10 evolution 107:15 exacerbate 46:13 53:15 exactly 44:8 77:1 89:18 example 28:6 58:12 90:23 exasperated 93:13 exceeded 93:2 excellent 84:25 excessive 68:15 excited 73:5 77:7 87:13 90:22 excuse 8:8 121:22 122:18 executive 52:25 85:2 89:4 exist 49:5 64:10 115:14 116:23 existing 14:18 34:15,18,24 46:23 51:18 53:19 55:9 79:19 88:1 94:12 exists 40:8 exit 44:14 100:22</p>	<p>expand 79:22 89:6 98:22 expansion 67:5 expansive 68:5 68:14 expectations 93:2 expected 40:10 66:25 expecting 62:15 expenditure 44:5 experience 66:15 76:4 83:9 92:10 120:15 121:12 experiences 65:4 experiment 77:13 experts 117:13 explain 108:19 explaining 73:21,22 exploring 35:10 exposed 67:12 express 15:16 66:9 74:8 118:24 expressed 33:23</p>
---	--	---	---

expresses 28:12 expressway 77:2 extended 9:25 51:5 extending 100:23 extension 4:15 extensive 73:15 extensively 70:25 extent 58:7 extreme 73:18 eye 112:24	fairness 83:25 fairs 28:13 fall 64:13 65:8 67:8 families 39:20 64:17 70:10 77:22 82:20 91:17,25 93:19 family 20:11 30:11 33:6 35:14,25 53:6 63:9 77:7 104:22 117:20 fantastic 72:14 far 35:7 50:16 farmer's 102:18,24 farrell 59:4,10 59:10,14,16,18 fast 120:9 fatefully 49:3 father 59:23 91:25 favor 54:11 56:9 82:2 feasibility 57:17 58:17 feasible 39:23 federgreen 95:3,7,10,13 fedex 44:14 feedback 88:15 109:16	feel 13:20 50:10 55:1 81:19,20 92:7 113:25 feeling 81:18 feet 34:18 39:8 39:17 40:4 58:13 76:19,23 fell 30:6 fellow 31:8 33:22 62:18 felt 120:9 fence 34:5,11 76:21 fences 39:17 79:8 fencing 28:18 81:15 105:21 fewer 28:11 fgeis 58:22 field 37:13 65:20 fields 49:9 figure 34:9 final 3:12 9:13 10:3,5,11 56:2 57:14 58:21,24 finally 25:18 40:9 53:21 90:23 104:22 financial 43:24 find 12:3 30:15 83:22 96:3 114:11	finding 10:7 fine 89:21 90:1 110:7 finish 121:23 fire 44:16 68:16 fires 67:9,13 93:6,12 first 7:1 12:25 28:8 31:5 47:17 71:16 fiscal 64:6 fish 48:23 80:15,24 fishkill 22:12 22:14 94:5 97:25 fishman 38:4 56:15,16,19 fitting 28:16 five 39:1 44:12 51:6 76:13 111:5 fix 25:23 fjord 1:6 2:17 7:13,25 8:3,12 8:16,24 11:8 11:24 12:7 14:2,10,16 18:3,20 19:5 19:14 20:14 22:16,18 23:19 25:20 27:18 30:17 31:16,18 31:22 32:13
f			
faced 36:25 44:6 facilitating 8:6 9:21 facilitation 12:10 facilities 37:2 facility 11:4 fact 62:6 63:3 faded 88:4 fahnestock 20:7 fair 18:14 19:13 44:14 51:10 61:2 76:13 100:23 105:16 106:3 106:18 113:14			

33:17 34:17 36:15,23 37:5 39:12 43:4,9 43:10,15,19 45:1,5 46:2,4 46:12,14 48:11 48:11,17 50:11 51:13,22 52:12 53:1 55:8,25 59:22 60:13,23 60:24 61:5,7 61:16 62:14 68:18 69:20 72:1,23 73:9 73:25 77:6 78:16 79:4 80:17 82:25 84:7 85:6,8,11 85:18 86:5 87:14 89:13,19 90:5 91:5 93:1 95:21 96:21 97:3 98:7 99:3 99:20 100:14 100:21 101:13 103:1 104:21 105:19,19 106:20 107:6 107:15 112:20 112:21 113:3 113:16 114:14 115:23 116:14 117:6 118:25 119:10 120:18	121:6 flag 52:23 flock 54:18 flooding 18:14 93:15 floor 4:9 11:18 122:25 flourish 86:3 flow 16:5 55:5 flows 13:23 focus 13:17,17 focuses 13:19 66:17 113:17 foil 117:15 foil'd 117:21 folks 89:24 follow 42:15 47:8 followed 9:12 38:20 115:23 followers 27:7 following 5:5 9:23 64:3 77:12 folly 118:6 food 18:10 foot 34:4 40:15 67:10 76:21 77:13,18 81:21 121:16 footings 57:19 footprint 45:8 68:8 98:5	forces 14:15 forcing 120:4 forest 36:7 53:25 forested 67:11 forever 80:24 forget 28:24 form 78:19 former 72:17 86:25 87:10 forth 124:8 forums 100:14 forward 13:11 16:1 71:13 103:19 fosters 84:14 foundation 43:18 116:23 117:1 foundations 43:18 57:23 58:11,16 117:21 four 20:17 34:18 38:15 39:8 62:11 73:1 76:19 92:1 fraction 116:25 fragmentation 48:9 49:1 framework 14:2	freddy 17:10 29:25 30:1,2,5 free 3:21 31:10 99:22,22 frenchtown 27:3 frenchtowna... 27:6 friday 44:23 45:1 friend 31:2 friendly 83:15 friends 20:12 31:5,8 fulfilled 77:11 full 25:17 63:13 95:20 fully 35:5 84:10 functioning 96:9 fund 14:24 fundamental 14:9 funding 14:3 25:20 44:5 fundraising 31:11 44:7 funds 40:13 44:1 116:23 further 42:6,13 42:17 52:1 67:12 86:13 106:5 124:11
--	---	---	--

<p>furthermore 121:13 future 10:10 46:8 48:23 49:16 55:10 94:23 114:17</p>	<p>gift 46:4 61:8 give 12:20 55:14 106:21 given 4:2,25 124:9 giving 44:5 107:21 go 13:1 16:6 17:13,18 18:10 18:15,25 19:1 19:3,13,20 22:6 23:9 26:8 29:7,14 30:1 33:1,3 35:18 35:18 38:12 40:19 42:21 45:14,20 54:8 56:21 59:11,11 62:3 63:10,19 66:4 68:25 69:10 72:9 75:13 78:10 80:5 82:13 84:20 87:4 89:1 91:8,8 92:19,22 94:2 94:15 96:12 97:15 98:17 100:3 102:1,15 104:8 105:10 109:9 110:19 114:25 115:6 118:21</p>	<p>goal 42:14,18 56:5 85:9 gobsmacked 75:22 goggin 15:3,3,7 going 17:4 18:23 29:17,18 31:25 43:21 44:8 59:3 62:22,23 63:4 63:5,11,12,14 72:8 74:23 88:22 89:11 91:7 103:2,9 103:11,21 108:19 110:4 112:1,3,4 117:5 good 2:1 28:22 35:19 38:13 54:9 56:22 59:16 62:4 80:11,19 82:15 84:25 108:17 112:6 gordon 80:13 governor's 117:17 grade 57:11 graduates 111:12 grandchildren 91:20</p>	<p>grant 25:4 grantees 53:4 grants 31:11,18 grassroots 27:2 grassy 49:9 grave 48:7 great 22:10,15 25:21 26:5,12 27:19 37:5 48:3 61:17 69:13 74:9 80:10 87:10 92:12,16 95:13 97:10 102:5 103:8 107:16 114:18 greater 14:12 19:9 73:14 91:2 106:20 greatly 14:22 63:24 119:21 greenway 89:7 89:17,25 90:7 90:18 greeted 87:25 gretchen 115:5 115:7,8 ground 24:25 76:23 grounds 44:3 group 6:13 8:25 24:4,15 27:2 37:21,24 59:3 74:23</p>
<p>g</p>			
<p>games 65:21 gap 44:6 garrison 62:19 69:19 garry 1:16 124:4,21 gated 101:20 gathering 8:21 geis 9:11 10:12 generally 8:2 27:9 55:3 generated 51:3 generation 27:13 94:23 generations 86:4 generic 2:16 3:1,13 7:14 9:10,17 10:3,5 10:11 11:25 85:7 86:6 genuine 101:8 getting 19:11 88:14 103:5 giant 29:22</p>			

<p>100:13 groups 12:20 31:5 growing 93:18 112:22 113:5 120:14 guarantees 71:11 guardrail 99:14 guards 64:24 65:1 guess 108:12 guidelines 111:10 guillorn 17:7 19:20,21,24 20:1 27:1</p>	<p>hammering 39:2,7 hand 6:8,18 21:25 38:10 59:13 62:1 97:7 110:10 118:15 124:17 handle 66:23 68:8 120:14 handpicked 80:24 hands 95:24 96:17 happen 120:10 happens 26:22 65:6 happy 59:17 80:12 83:19 92:11 hard 30:19 81:4 harm 36:16 harmoniously 108:1 harry 59:6 haskell 17:7,12 17:14,15,16,20 17:23 hate 41:8 hawkins 38:4 50:2 52:17,18 52:20 hayley 75:2 80:2,3</p>	<p>hazardous 119:15 120:1 hazards 71:25 health 60:7,8 70:20 healthy 80:11 hear 13:4 17:17 19:21 22:8 23:11 26:10 30:3 40:20 48:1 59:14 66:5 69:11 72:11 75:15 80:7 84:22 87:1,3 88:8,18 91:11 95:9,11 100:5 102:3 104:11 105:12 107:11 110:18 112:16 118:20 heard 69:19 92:7 113:3 hearing 1:6 2:15,24 3:3,15 7:12 8:7 11:13 12:10 23:3 100:10 104:25 hearings 2:5 9:19,22 heart 59:19 heavy 51:3 heidi 38:1 40:18,20,22</p>	<p>height 35:3 76:22 heightened 67:4 held 8:13 117:10 hello 17:16 33:4 89:2 95:10 98:19 100:4 105:11 112:15 help 18:5 25:9 73:11 106:18 helpful 85:23 helping 83:12 85:9 henderson 38:1 38:12,13 hereunto 124:16 hhft 11:21 14:3 16:25 28:22 40:12 66:13 81:12 106:9 120:20 hhft's 51:25 68:5 80:21 81:5 106:7 hhft.plan 11:20 122:17,19 hhft.plan 4:13 hi 22:7 23:10 23:14 26:9 33:2 40:22</p>
h			
<p>habitat 37:3,14 41:1,4,20,22,23 42:5 48:9,14 48:15,18 54:1 habitats 49:2 79:20 120:24 haldane 65:3 65:21 78:15 half 57:6 60:15 60:17 hall 38:1 42:20 42:21,22 halo 108:20,23</p>			

<p>59:16 72:16 75:14 78:12 95:14 100:7 102:2,6 107:13 110:17 112:18 118:19 high 28:18 39:19 67:10,18 78:15 highland 1:6 2:17 3:24 7:13 7:25 8:3,12,24 11:8,24 20:6 23:19 25:20 53:1 59:22 60:2,4,13,24 61:3,7,15 62:19 78:16 85:3,5,21 97:3 100:14 119:10 120:18,23 highlands 30:9 30:24 31:24 54:24,25 76:5 86:2 93:1,13 94:21 96:21 99:5 118:25 121:4,6 hike 27:24 73:7 75:20 103:4 hiker 120:7 hikers 19:11 41:10 65:5,9 77:19 96:12</p>	<p>106:23 121:10 hiking 20:10 61:14 112:23 hill 20:21 95:15 hired 25:6 65:1 historic 2:12,21 3:8 4:8 5:19 6:24 7:19 24:17 93:13 94:4 111:7,15 history 78:18 hold 36:4 112:3 holding 9:19 home 26:19 27:4 36:17 52:21 80:25 81:5,25 94:24 113:9 homeowners 33:7 homes 82:3 honest 38:18 hop 60:22 61:5 hope 33:11 92:5 116:20 hoping 104:20 hospital 111:5 host 25:14 72:23 hosting 31:9 hosts 114:7 hour 99:8 hours 31:7 39:8</p>	<p>house 44:13 60:18 hub 108:13 hudson 1:6 2:17 7:13,25 8:3,11,23 10:19 11:8,23 15:19 20:6 23:19 25:20 30:24 31:24 35:10 36:21 37:4,7 47:1 53:1,2 54:3,24 58:13 59:21 60:1,4,13,24 61:3,7,15 76:9 78:16 79:9,23 83:10 84:11 85:3,5,19,21 86:2 89:17 91:17 92:25 94:21 96:20 97:1,3 99:5 100:14 101:13 104:19 116:10 118:25 119:4 119:10 120:23 121:4,5 huge 44:5 human 67:12 81:21 hundred 89:8 hundreds 53:22 94:6</p>	<p>husband 55:24 62:8 80:13 hydrant 44:16 i ice 108:25 iconic 54:2 idea 36:19 ideas 80:17 identification 65:6 identified 118:12 identifies 51:19 identify 6:14 118:18 identifying 120:23 ignore 63:11 ignored 44:11 ignores 66:19 ignoring 63:3 illustration 112:7 image 94:3 imagine 44:24 70:13 immediate 24:22 60:7 78:19 immediately 54:13 75:19 impact 2:16 3:2 3:13 7:15 9:11</p>
---	---	--	---

<p>9:17 10:4,6,12 12:1 14:18 16:9 35:1,4 38:18 39:14 41:12 48:21 70:23 85:7 86:6 106:1,6 121:15 impacting 52:4 53:16 impacts 13:19 13:22,23 38:22 42:25 44:10 45:7 50:12 58:17 66:11 114:4 impartial 53:7 implementati... 14:10 71:13 importance 107:23 important 42:9 49:1 83:18 85:17 101:18 101:22 103:21 impossible 104:18 impressed 101:16 improve 28:23 31:19 46:16 85:14 119:12 121:6</p>	<p>improved 61:11 71:20 improvement 115:14 improvements 24:22 32:6 113:14 120:17 inception 36:23 include 10:23 32:18 39:4 58:23 included 34:8 57:21 includes 41:16 57:15 83:20 116:11 including 5:23 11:2 15:25 20:14 24:2 31:17 51:9 67:3 73:5 93:4 115:21 117:24 inclusive 42:24 83:11 inclusivity 79:12 91:22 incomplete 66:10 incorporated 3:12 increase 30:13 51:17 52:3 54:16 65:10 93:24</p>	<p>increased 16:10 51:12 56:4 67:1 98:25 119:16 121:16 increases 74:1 increasing 46:17 63:5 incredible 22:19,25 37:7 73:17 83:23 96:22 independent 117:13 indirect 41:3 individual 6:13 individually 37:23 individuals 43:17 83:22 91:24 93:21,25 influx 51:23 66:23 78:21 93:14 96:14 105:24 information 64:5 108:8 informed 85:23 infrastructure 18:5 30:22,25 47:2 51:18 55:12 71:21 99:21 106:8 113:7,11 114:6</p>	<p>114:7 119:12 120:12 infringes 79:2 inhabitants 62:13 initial 4:16 13:10 initiative 87:18 119:1 input 47:21 118:12 inputs 109:12 inside 99:13 insider 12:4 inspires 82:22 84:13 installing 16:12 94:12 105:20 106:17 instantly 113:4 insurance 116:7 insure 65:13 integrity 120:22 intense 38:25 intention 50:14 interest 54:23 113:21 interested 33:13 106:23 124:14 interests 53:9</p>
---	--	---	---

<p>interference 94:7 internet 4:21 intersection 64:11 introduce 6:21 intrusive 34:11 invaluable 91:18 invasive 41:25 42:2 73:9 119:9 121:19 122:1 investigations 8:20 invited 111:17 111:17 involved 36:18 57:12 irene 100:2,4,7 107:9,11,13 irreversibly 52:8 issue 5:4,7,9 10:7,11 25:24 65:11 69:5 85:16 122:1 issued 9:7,16 issues 23:25 24:1 30:16 46:14 64:9 65:17 66:13 78:23 87:8 93:4 101:12</p>	<p>104:16 105:6 117:12 119:5 119:14 it'll 19:6 items 116:6 iterations 94:19</p> <p style="text-align: center;">j</p> <p>j 1:16 15:11,12 124:4,21 jackson 17:8 22:6,7,10,11 james 65:15 january 1:11 9:20 44:24 124:17 jersey 62:24 joe 17:9 29:5,6 29:7,9 jogger 103:18 john 59:7 69:9 69:11,13,14 join 62:23 joined 2:8 4:20 6:5 15:4,7 21:23 22:2 23:6 24:3 38:8 49:23 55:24 56:16 59:11 61:23 74:20 75:4,8 78:3,7 82:9 85:13 86:19,20 98:12</p>	<p>122:8,10 joining 2:2 24:13 jon 38:3 49:21 49:22,25 50:3 50:5,7,8 53:18 joseph 98:16 98:18,19 judge 2:5,9,13 judith 38:4 54:7,9,10 julia 25:12 59:6 63:18,20 june 115:10 justice 59:7 68:24,25 69:2 72:8,11,14,16 82:22 justify 44:4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">k</p> <p>karen 75:1 78:2 78:3 karlen 107:10 107:11,13 109:9,10,14,19 katherine 38:2 47:11,14,17,18 47:25 48:3,5 kathleen 17:9 23:5,6,10,13,14 23:15 26:4,25 katrina 84:19 84:20,21,24</p>	<p>85:1 kayak 76:2 keep 28:17 83:17 96:18 101:12 115:24 keeping 85:25 keith 97:14,16 kept 25:24 key 16:3 119:5 kids 27:14,22 27:23 102:15 kind 81:1 108:1 kiosks 94:13 know 6:8 15:6 22:1 23:8 25:22 27:8 35:2 47:17 49:10,24 56:18 73:3,17 74:9 74:10 75:6 91:14 103:12 103:17 108:16 111:25 113:8 known 7:20,23 8:6 105:19 kraft 92:19,21 92:23 krakauer 75:1 75:13,14,17</p> <p style="text-align: center;">l</p> <p>l 25:12 labrie 38:2 45:14,21,24</p>
--	--	--	---

<p>lack 37:1 93:5 120:11</p> <p>land 37:14 65:21 85:3,5 85:21 86:12 119:8 121:7</p> <p>lands 86:1</p> <p>landscape 37:4 119:3</p> <p>landscapes 88:1</p> <p>lanes 97:6,8</p> <p>lapsed 121:23</p> <p>large 48:14 68:13</p> <p>larger 90:6</p> <p>larry 15:11,12 15:13</p> <p>late 26:17</p> <p>latisha 59:4 61:19,20</p> <p>laura 13:1,1,3,6 13:7</p> <p>law 2:4,9</p> <p>laying 24:25</p> <p>lead 2:21 3:6 5:21 7:21 9:6 68:14</p> <p>leaders 85:20</p> <p>leadership 30:18 52:25</p> <p>learn 70:14</p> <p>learned 24:5</p>	<p>learning 23:24 38:21 65:16 104:3</p> <p>leave 18:24,25 27:15</p> <p>lee 75:2 78:9,10 78:12,13</p> <p>left 40:15 41:19 84:9 97:7</p> <p>legacy 36:1 47:5</p> <p>legally 117:2</p> <p>legislators 117:18</p> <p>length 57:3,7</p> <p>lengthy 4:22</p> <p>letters 11:23</p> <p>letting 109:6</p> <p>level 39:9,19 76:20,23 121:10</p> <p>leveler 37:6</p> <p>levels 22:22</p> <p>liability 116:7</p> <p>librarian 74:4</p> <p>libraries 25:12</p> <p>library 25:13</p> <p>life 22:23 33:9 46:17 61:12 72:6 113:1</p> <p>lifelong 35:21 45:24 111:3</p> <p>lifesaving 71:8</p>	<p>lifetime 43:7</p> <p>lighten 98:5</p> <p>lights 49:8</p> <p>limit 5:1 6:3</p> <p>limited 52:2 67:3 83:7 96:6 99:9 120:8</p> <p>limiting 68:9</p> <p>limits 33:20 98:1</p> <p>lind 18:19</p> <p>linda 5:16 6:21 7:16</p> <p>line 6:1,9 15:6 15:9 22:1 23:9 49:25 56:19 59:12 74:22 75:6 96:8 98:14 118:16</p> <p>linear 10:18 46:8 53:14 117:8</p> <p>lingering 70:3</p> <p>link 34:12</p> <p>list 17:4</p> <p>listed 65:19</p> <p>listen 73:19 111:25 122:10</p> <p>listening 29:3 73:13 105:15</p> <p>lists 34:2</p> <p>literally 55:17</p> <p>little 12:21 14:7 14:18 20:15,21</p>	<p>20:25 23:17,21 24:5,13,19,21 25:4 27:16 31:3 36:11,12 41:19 50:19,24 57:4,5 76:6 98:3 104:1 106:16 107:3 113:10</p> <p>live 20:2 22:12 23:16 26:13 27:14 28:7 33:24 38:14 48:6 52:20 54:12 59:19 63:21 64:21 75:23 95:15 100:11 103:25 110:24</p> <p>lived 17:23 35:25 54:15 107:14 115:8</p> <p>lives 70:18 84:13</p> <p>living 51:8 64:17 69:16</p> <p>local 14:11 24:3 25:12 27:22,23 53:16 68:7 69:21 78:24 79:1,3 79:10,17,23 85:13 93:8 111:13 113:1</p>
---	--	---	--

<p>117:18 120:25 locally 8:5 located 42:11 58:1,14 locations 65:2 lodge 62:8 logged 109:16 lone 40:13 long 27:23 29:14 30:14 36:1,24 39:8 49:17 51:12 78:25 116:2,8 longer 24:8 25:7 49:5 60:14 61:1 longstanding 119:14 look 13:11 41:25 71:12 75:24,25 77:1 77:3,4 looked 16:1 44:25 looking 30:15 93:3 103:19 looks 107:18 los 67:15 losing 41:23 loss 41:1,21 48:8,18 49:1 losses 41:3 lost 49:14</p>	<p>lot 25:23 42:1 51:22 74:10 100:18 103:14 108:3 lots 41:6,7,25 52:1 66:21 103:7,9 loud 49:8 love 26:19 30:7 36:16 62:5,5 111:18,20 loved 113:6 loves 41:21 low 28:17 lower 48:6 50:9 96:25 98:1 lowest 43:14 lsp 76:14 lspca 31:14 32:11 lukacher 38:3 47:12,18,25 48:3,5 lunch 64:25 65:3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">m</p> <p>maasik 59:7 69:9,11,13,14 machinery 51:4 made 3:9 52:24 53:10 81:14 90:11 104:17 111:16 120:12</p>	<p>122:9 magnificent 29:12 46:7 mailing 4:8 112:10 122:13 122:18,21,23 main 10:24 13:19 17:25 18:13 19:4,13 24:9 26:14 44:17,18,21 59:19 60:21 64:11 78:24 109:1 maintain 94:3 109:4 maintenance 11:4 14:1 116:3,8,12 majesty 30:23 major 33:15 40:13 64:12 65:17 76:3 make 5:20 27:12 36:18 38:15 45:18 56:2 85:23 94:18 97:9,24 making 45:16 71:8 91:21 malachy 38:2 45:13,20,21,23 manage 93:16 96:14 105:24</p>	<p>106:10 117:7 managed 55:6 67:20 71:14 121:17 management 13:25 46:15 61:9,10 119:20 manager 102:17 managing 14:3 24:8 102:24 manhattan 89:16,18 manmade 81:15 manner 55:22 march 4:15,18 9:25 11:11 122:12 123:6 margaret 59:8 74:18,19 market 102:18 102:24 marriage 124:13 married 30:10 marsh 114:10 marshall 82:8,9 martin 17:10 30:1,1,2,5 martino 37:25 38:7,7,10 mass 53:22 63:1</p>
---	--	---	---

master 8:15 9:3 11:7 materials 51:1 matt 114:20,21 matter 124:15 matthew 61:22 74:25 75:7 matures 35:5 mayor 86:25 87:10 mayor's 65:18 mayors 96:16 mcbride 2:1,4 7:8 12:13 13:5 15:1 17:3,18 19:18,23 21:20 22:9 23:4,12 26:1,6,11 29:4 29:24 30:4 32:24 33:3 35:16 37:20 40:17,21 42:19 45:12 47:10,15 48:2 49:20 50:5 52:15 54:6 56:14 59:1,15 61:18 63:17 66:2,6 68:23 69:12 72:7,13 74:17 75:16 78:1 80:1,9 82:7 84:18,23 86:16 87:4 88:3,9,12	88:20,22 91:6 91:12 92:17,22 95:1,6,11 97:13 98:9 100:1,6 101:24 102:4 104:6,12 105:8,13 107:8 107:12 109:7 109:11,15,20 109:24 110:3,9 110:15,19 112:8,17 114:19 118:8 118:21 121:21 122:4 mccray 59:7 68:25,25 69:2 72:9,11,14,16 mcguire 80:5,7 80:10,13 mclane 17:9 23:6,10,13,14 23:15 26:2,4 26:25 meacon 75:1 meacons 78:6,6 mean 74:2 meanders 10:24 meaning 10:16 53:8 57:8 meaningful 83:3	measure 14:6 77:13 measures 119:21 mediation 2:6 meeting 112:2 meetings 9:4 92:25 100:15 101:15 meg 74:25 75:11 member 21:9 31:3 72:25 members 2:24 12:18 53:1,6 59:25 60:9 63:9 89:9 93:22 memorial 25:13 mencher 102:1 102:2,5 mental 60:8 mention 13:14 14:5 34:4 103:17 mentioned 11:22 mermell 82:9 mesh 28:18 message 63:12 met 8:25 metal 34:4	meters 16:12 metro 28:10 34:13 40:2 51:21 87:24 114:9 michael 17:7 19:19,21,24 20:1 27:1 microphone 88:5 mid 46:25 middle 78:23 midst 24:6 mighty 117:19 migratory 49:2 mile 57:7,11 58:6,14 60:15 60:17 64:21 99:8 miles 57:2 62:14 million 40:12 43:7 44:1 116:11,22 millions 89:20 106:10 mind 49:7 81:7 81:17,18 91:22 minded 46:8 minimal 35:2 minimize 16:8 33:21 minimizing 120:25
--	---	---	--

minimum 43:16 62:15 minute 36:14 44:12 69:6 88:23,24 91:14 109:18 minutes 5:3 6:4 misinformation 74:11 mispronounced 6:10 mission 32:15 85:25 86:11 98:22 mitigate 36:24 45:6 101:10,11 106:19 mitigated 71:20 mitigation 14:6 34:21 mix 45:2 mixed 11:23 mobility 22:22 104:16 mode 90:20 97:19 model 47:7 models 116:13 modes 83:14 modest 113:18 moed 104:8,10 104:13,14	mogul 38:4 54:8,9,10 molly 2:3 moment 5:16 money 24:11 43:12 82:1 117:25 monitor 93:23 mood 71:6 morning 12:25 mother 70:17 111:4 mount 20:22 mountain 93:10 mountains 53:25 move 41:25 63:13 moved 20:3 23:20 26:16 88:4 moving 115:10 120:9 mta 117:17,19 multimillion 118:5 multimodal 83:12 multiple 8:13 20:9 65:2,4,6 66:20 100:13 100:18 101:3	multiuse 46:24 municipal 51:20 mute 109:12 muted 69:3 myriad 80:19 n name 2:3 5:13 5:23 6:1,6,10 6:17,19 7:15 13:7 17:22 20:1 22:11 23:15 35:20 45:23 47:17 52:19 54:10 56:23 59:18 61:24 69:14 78:13 80:12 82:17 85:1 87:9 89:3 98:19 104:10 104:13 112:18 115:7 name's 50:8 nancy 4:5 11:14 59:5 122:23 narrow 45:8 66:22 nation 47:4 native 79:18,19 natural 22:25 28:20 32:16	33:18 36:5 46:19 67:19 79:22 87:21 94:9 112:24 120:22 121:13 nature 33:10 71:4 83:4 84:1 84:12 85:9 86:3 91:21 104:4 114:11 navigate 54:21 navigating 120:2 near 48:23 51:8 51:10 67:7 78:23 120:4 nearest 40:4 nearly 102:14 105:24 necessary 6:18 34:14 58:10 106:6 113:13 need 14:19 23:22 47:1 61:11 97:2,5 99:10 113:18 114:4,6 120:16 needed 19:17 46:15 103:24 116:25 118:1 needs 13:21 30:21 42:25 49:12
---	---	--	--

neighbor 23:17 53:17 neighborhoods 13:24 neighbors 28:3 101:6 105:2 neither 53:23 nelsonville 40:23 62:20 65:14 nerve 119:25 network 46:23 89:8 90:7 never 36:17 77:10 new 1:17 2:6,11 4:6,10 5:14 7:18 11:15,18 13:12 16:16 22:20 24:16 31:2,6 35:6 36:6 38:23 41:5,6 42:14 53:2 59:17 62:24 80:12 85:19 87:11,11 87:12,18,21,24 89:5 92:9,13 111:14,18,20 115:9,14 117:6 122:23 123:1 124:5 newburgh 82:19 83:5	90:11 97:17 news 3:21,22 nexus 108:14 nice 27:11 89:22 night 114:18 nights 81:9 nine 80:22 81:6 noise 38:25 39:9,10,14 51:3 82:5 106:2 non 40:7 nonmotorized 10:15 nonprofit 82:19 north 10:20 28:10 34:13 48:11,17 51:21 62:19 87:24 103:9 114:9 north's 40:2 notary 1:17 124:4 note 4:1,17 32:11 65:22 noted 7:15 123:9 notes 48:10 nothing's 81:7 notice 3:15,18 3:20 4:17 12:21	noticed 23:21 noting 121:25 number 4:25 5:5,6,8 48:19 60:2 63:6 80:21 81:5 90:8 103:2 120:14 numbers 93:14 93:17 119:17 <hr/> o <hr/> o'brien 98:17 98:18,19 o'connell 2:10 2:13 oakes 74:25 75:11 obligation 45:6 obtaining 31:10 obvious 41:24 obviously 91:18 occur 48:16 occurring 94:11 offer 37:16 84:12 offered 106:8 offering 20:23 99:17 offerings 107:1	offers 70:9 office 2:5,11,20 3:7 4:7 5:18 6:23 7:18 24:16 111:15 117:18 122:24 123:3 offices 24:18 official 15:14 21:8 22:13 officially 93:1 officials 5:24 12:17 16:22,23 72:21 115:22 oh 47:23 48:3 72:14 92:21 95:13 107:13 okay 15:10 19:24 22:8,10 26:4,12,13 45:21 47:15 72:15 75:17 80:10 95:6 100:7 102:5 110:9,15,21 115:2,4 old 16:18 39:3 omission 58:19 once 70:22 76:18 86:14 97:20 ongoing 8:20 9:15 86:12 94:14
--	--	--	---

<p>online 20:19 onlook 79:9 open 7:3 42:16 64:25 122:12 opens 55:18 70:22 operation 14:4 116:3 opinion 18:20 35:7 87:17 opportunities 84:9 91:19 121:11 opportunity 2:25 13:9 15:21 17:1 32:22 45:22 47:7 66:8 73:11 82:16 83:1,2 84:1 96:22 100:8 104:2 114:15 119:2 opposed 80:16 80:20 opposition 113:16 118:2 option 99:6 options 21:14 99:1 oral 4:2 orchard 20:3 order 76:17</p>	<p>organization 89:6 organizations 37:13 100:19 organizing 31:8 origin 22:24 original 36:10 osborne 97:15 97:16,16 outcome 124:14 outdoor 65:12 65:15 69:17 71:2 82:18 83:6 87:20 91:19 outdoors 33:9 82:21 outline 115:18 outlined 20:16 outreach 25:7 outside 44:12 86:9 104:4 outweigh 50:16 outweighed 35:8 overall 56:5 79:21 overcrowded 99:16 overcrowding 37:1 46:9</p>	<p>overflow 101:11 overheated 67:9 oversized 66:12 overstated 90:14 overused 37:3 overwhelm 51:17 overwhelming 48:19 own 33:25 43:11 65:24 113:5 owned 65:20</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">p</p> <hr/> <p>p.m. 1:12 5:12 123:9 paid 51:25 paltry 116:18 pamela 110:11 110:15,17,21 panasci 17:10 32:25 33:2,4,5 panels 117:11 parents 104:15 park 7:21 10:18 16:16 19:6 20:7,7,15 21:6 23:21,25 24:1,23 25:15 26:15 31:12,19</p>	<p>31:25 44:15,18 46:3,9 53:14 60:2,5,22 61:3 65:18 97:4,11 107:21,24 109:3 115:13 116:10 117:8 park's 12:8 68:5 122:15 parked 120:3 parking 11:2 16:12 21:7 28:6 32:5 37:2 41:6,7,24 42:1 51:20,21,22,25 51:25 52:2 53:20 63:10 65:17 66:21 67:5 79:3 99:17 103:7,8 119:5,11,19,22 120:11 parks 2:11,20 3:7 4:7 5:18 6:23 7:17,19 9:7,16,25 10:6 10:10 11:16 12:4 20:9,18 24:17,24 31:1 31:3,6 43:8,23 45:4 53:3 85:20 87:16 88:2 89:4,7 101:4 113:12</p>
---	---	---	---

<p>117:6,17 122:24 123:3 parks's 67:22 parks.ny.gov 4:13 11:20 parks.ny.gov. 11:25 122:17 122:19 parsonage 63:22 part 10:8 11:6 20:5 41:5 46:22 57:16 73:12 74:3 89:24 100:25 116:12 partake 107:1 participant 100:17 participate 84:10 participated 100:12 111:14 participating 12:12 83:18 participation 85:11 particular 34:10 121:17 particularly 33:13,19 49:18 51:8 parties 124:12</p>	<p>partner 44:6 partnered 31:18 partnership 115:25 118:3 partnerships 115:16 parts 11:5 90:12 108:4 pass 19:1 33:11 passage 19:9 passed 32:12 passion 33:10 past 8:19 49:16 57:1 69:15 70:5 93:9 95:17 96:15 path 15:22 18:18 19:11 60:18 81:11 83:2 96:5 106:25 paths 19:15 83:15 96:11 pathway 73:6 patricia 59:6 62:2,4 109:21 109:22 110:1,7 patrons 106:24 patty 59:5 61:21 paul 17:9 26:7 26:9,12 88:25 89:1,2,3</p>	<p>pause 7:3 paving 41:6 49:9 pay 116:4 117:5 paying 44:8 pays 64:23 115:20 peace 50:20 81:6,17,18 peaceful 39:4 70:19 peak 16:12 62:17 71:23 peddling 61:13 pedestrian 10:16 13:23 18:17 29:15,20 54:16 83:14 101:11 120:11 pedestrians 45:3 99:1,12 103:4 119:18 120:4 peekskill 26:18 87:11 pennsylvania 115:11 people 12:24 18:7 22:21 26:20 28:4,22 29:2,17 36:20 37:11 39:21 53:8 54:17,24</p>	<p>55:5,14,16 62:16,23 63:8 64:15 71:4 73:4,6 77:5 82:2 83:3,8,20 85:9 86:3 87:22 93:15 94:14 96:8,15 96:23 107:7 108:25 110:5 116:14 121:12 people's 29:22 34:2 percent 42:16 43:13,22 66:24 80:20 period 8:22 9:24 11:11 35:5 39:6 44:12 51:6 122:11 123:6 periodically 8:18 permanent 105:20 persist 114:11 person 5:23 72:17 personally 71:1 101:16 103:19 persons 31:20 32:2 perspective 102:20</p>
--	---	--	--

<p>peter 37:25 38:11,13 59:4 59:9,10,14,16 59:18 petition 106:7 pettinger 7:9 47:13 50:3 95:4 110:13 philipstown 15:15 16:1 24:4 35:22 36:10 52:21 69:25 70:10 73:15 74:5,6 75:24 95:15,23 97:2 101:9 phone 5:5,6 6:6 6:7,9 15:4,5,7,8 21:23,24 22:3 22:4 23:7,8 38:8,9 49:23 49:24 56:17,18 59:11 61:24,25 74:20,21 75:4 75:5,9,10 78:3 78:4,7,8 82:10 82:11 86:19,21 86:22 98:12,13 physical 37:9 71:5 pickup 116:5 pictures 112:2 112:6</p>	<p>piece 18:4,22 99:21 pieces 14:9 pieza 100:2,4,7 pile 39:8 51:4 57:19 58:16 piles 39:2,7 57:9 pilings 50:22 53:23 76:25 116:9,13 place 16:16 25:2 26:19 27:24 33:25 35:14 36:16 44:22 70:13 94:22 103:25 places 49:4 84:4 87:23 98:3 99:9 plan 8:16 9:3 11:7,25 32:17 53:12 62:6 63:4 64:8 68:17 69:25 81:6 83:19 94:17 95:25 96:22 119:11 122:2 planned 66:21 76:7 planning 8:10 9:14 11:17 22:14 62:20</p>	<p>70:5 plans 68:3 85:24 86:8,12 117:23 plant 119:9 planting 79:18 platform 28:16 players 23:25 please 4:1,5,17 5:5 6:6,10,13 15:4 21:24 22:3 23:7 38:8 45:17 49:23 56:17 61:25 63:14 74:20 75:4,9 78:4,7 82:10 86:21 88:5 94:17 118:2,17 121:24 pleased 34:7 pledge 117:2 point 10:10 18:22 20:15,21 20:22 21:1 23:18,22 24:6 24:9,13,19,21 25:5 31:4 36:11,12 39:3 46:7 49:11 50:19,24 56:3 57:4,6 76:7 78:18,25 98:3 106:16 107:3</p>	<p>118:11 120:6 pointed 53:17 points 22:23 38:15 66:18 71:12 79:6 99:18 112:7 policy 28:6 pond 65:15 popular 20:22 51:15 populations 48:25 portion 13:18 16:2 48:14 105:18 portions 34:5 posed 30:17 poses 121:19 position 25:8 45:4 positive 9:7 69:22 70:23 94:3 possible 98:2 potential 48:13 48:15 50:12 97:18 98:6 potentially 52:4 65:11 71:8 99:16 powerful 67:16 practical 39:15 precious 25:1</p>
--	---	---	--

<p>predicted 58:9 predominantly 13:18 prefer 97:24 preferred 33:16 46:2 56:9 preliminary 8:15 preparation 9:10 prepared 89:11 preregistered 5:25 presence 55:7 93:20 present 6:2 49:18 111:18 presentation 5:20 57:13 presentations 9:4 presented 21:15 presents 31:22 preservation 2:12,21 3:8 4:8 5:19 6:24 7:20 24:18 32:16 37:15 52:13 68:11,21 preserve 31:12 94:23</p>	<p>preserving 55:2 79:20 120:22 press 3:21 6:7 15:4,8 21:24 22:3 23:7 38:8 49:23 56:17 61:25 74:20 75:5,9 78:4,7 82:10 86:21 98:12 pressure 55:10 presumably 116:24 pretend 27:8 pretty 108:22 108:22 prevent 71:24 71:24 79:20 94:13 prevention 68:2 previous 24:7 57:24 primarily 103:12 principle 113:5 principles 115:24 printed 112:2 prioritizes 71:15 prioritizing 52:12 84:5</p>	<p>priority 21:3 privacy 81:16 private 44:6 87:20 115:15 118:3 privilege 69:16 probing 117:14 problem 18:6 18:12 55:7 64:12,16 90:25 problems 28:5 36:25 53:20 78:22 process 4:3 7:25 10:8 37:17 70:2 117:20 120:20 profound 70:23 profoundly 87:15 program 71:14 programming 25:10,14,15 programs 69:18 71:1 progress 114:17 progressed 85:19 prohibition 40:5 project 15:17 21:4,18 30:17 32:14 38:20</p>	<p>41:23 43:23 49:19 52:12,24 53:11 54:5,12 55:24 57:20 58:2 59:22 60:3 61:16 62:6 64:2 73:18,25 83:11 83:25 84:16 85:12,18,20 87:14 91:3 92:4 97:11 98:7 107:6,18 108:20 112:20 116:14 118:5 119:1 120:18 121:1 project's 50:16 projected 34:16 66:23 106:11 projects 52:10 90:18 108:21 111:22 113:25 promise 77:7 77:10 82:18 promised 116:16 promote 24:25 79:12 promotes 70:20 82:21 promoting 53:14 121:7</p>
--	--	---	--

prone 67:18	provide 2:24	published 3:16	quote 39:11,12
proof 24:11	4:23 13:9	3:20 8:17 9:2	57:18
25:19	18:21 30:20	20:19	r
proper 106:17	32:23 47:7	pull 117:3	radius 64:22
120:11	90:10 99:3,11	pulling 61:14	railroad 34:14
property 80:23	108:11	purchased 81:1	55:16 76:20
81:2	provides 15:17	purpose 2:23	114:9
proponents	15:22 16:5,8	pursuing	railway 18:19
90:3	18:4 47:2	113:20,21	rain 75:2 78:9
proposal 3:6	providing	pushing 111:21	78:10,12,13
16:2 68:19	13:10,12 37:6	put 19:4 25:22	rainey 86:18,18
113:3	37:10 60:3	26:20 56:12	86:23 87:1,2,6
proposed 2:17	70:11 79:5,13	76:25 96:21	87:9 88:7,10
7:13 8:16	121:11	108:21	88:17,21 91:8
10:14 35:24	public 1:17	putnam 3:20	91:9,10,13
45:9 46:24	2:14,23,25	10:22 69:23	raise 6:8,18
50:11 53:12	7:12 8:7,10,13	89:9	21:25 24:11
54:5,11 67:5	8:14,22 9:18	puts 28:7 65:25	30:11 38:9
68:12 71:20	9:19,24 10:8	putting 21:5	62:1
81:5 89:19	10:13 11:9,10	q	raised 43:12
119:19 120:17	11:13 12:5,10	q&a 72:23	59:13 110:10
proposing	12:19 46:18	qualified 37:13	116:18 118:15
81:13	56:7 68:10,19	quality 2:19	raises 67:13
protect 42:12	79:3,13 83:13	7:22 46:16	raising 83:8
94:20	85:4 100:9,15	61:12 72:5	ramirez 17:7
protected	108:3 115:12	queens 77:2	17:12,14,15,16
81:19,20 114:8	115:15 117:10	questionable	17:20,23
protecting 37:3	118:3 119:2,8	93:21	ran 115:16
120:24	121:7 124:4	questions 3:5	randy 95:2,10
protective	publically	64:4 70:4	95:13
55:20	10:17	117:14	range 93:10
proud 46:6	publication	quiet 44:23	rare 41:14
84:16	10:5		

rate 43:15 rather 19:12 42:7,17 70:16 reaching 101:3 read 17:4 37:21 59:3 105:5 122:15 reading 21:12 64:2 ready 7:2 97:21 real 46:10 realistic 107:4 reality 36:19 realize 16:20 really 14:8 24:10 25:2 26:21 43:21 73:5 87:20 90:13 92:4 96:10 101:16 111:1,2 reap 35:9 114:15 reason 42:6,7 56:9 58:9 reasonable 106:12 reasons 33:25 43:2 80:19 107:25 reassess 68:4 recall 72:8 91:7 109:20 110:4	received 10:2 25:4,19 recent 93:6,11 recently 53:18 recognize 55:5 reconnect 29:1 reconsider 63:14 reconsideration 52:11 record 44:7 45:18 123:8 124:9 records 71:18 recreation 2:12 2:20 3:7 4:7 5:19 6:23 7:19 24:17 35:15 98:25 99:23 108:11 recreational 49:12 50:15 69:18 70:8 72:4 reduce 71:7 103:11 119:21 reducing 68:8 refer 8:2 referred 90:16 referring 64:18 reflect 67:25 reflects 92:9 regarding 73:2	region 5:18 6:22 7:18 47:6 68:14 83:24 90:12 93:8 region's 121:12 regional 5:17 6:21 7:16 11:1 registered 5:1 5:14 12:17 56:24 regular 102:14 regularly 75:20 102:12 regulations 7:23 rejecting 113:24 relate 64:6 related 49:18 85:16 124:12 relationship 25:11 release 85:6 released 86:7 relevant 57:18 58:2 reliance 35:12 relief 18:22 32:4 78:19 relieve 29:19 relieving 29:15 rely 14:24 remain 21:3 65:15 113:15	remained 85:22 remaining 57:10 remember 118:2 remind 6:15 16:14 112:9 reminder 67:16 122:11 removing 88:1 renderings 34:8 reneged 116:17 repairing 79:19 replace 97:19 97:22 replacing 90:17 report 56:13 57:21,22 reporter 45:18 reports 43:11 represent 27:8 representative 31:15 102:8 represented 72:20 representing 6:14 82:18 98:20 represents 46:22 83:7 119:1 request 2:10
--	---	---	--

<p>required 2:18 58:24</p> <p>requirement 40:3</p> <p>requirements 40:2 58:21</p> <p>requires 57:15 116:20</p> <p>requiring 9:9</p> <p>requisite 43:24</p> <p>research 101:17 106:6</p> <p>resemble 28:15</p> <p>reside 35:22 80:14</p> <p>resided 56:24</p> <p>resident 15:15 21:12 35:21 40:23 45:25 50:9 60:12 72:19 78:14 87:12 90:16 95:14 97:17 102:6 104:14 105:16 110:23 111:3</p> <p>residential 13:24</p> <p>residents 14:23 27:20,21 33:6 35:12 46:20 51:7 52:7 60:25 66:16 69:21 70:12</p>	<p>72:6 73:20 79:1,14 106:4 106:15,21</p> <p>resides 106:5</p> <p>resilient 55:21</p> <p>resolution 32:13,18</p> <p>resolved 70:7 105:6</p> <p>resource 22:20 23:1 121:5</p> <p>resources 20:6 33:14 36:5 46:19 51:19 83:23</p> <p>respond 10:1</p> <p>responders 71:16</p> <p>response 52:5 68:3</p> <p>responsibilities 115:19</p> <p>responsibility 64:7 94:20</p> <p>responsible 121:8</p> <p>responsiveness 3:11</p> <p>rest 47:8</p> <p>resting 79:8</p> <p>restoration 37:14</p> <p>restore 42:8</p>	<p>restoring 37:2</p> <p>restricted 116:22</p> <p>restroom 11:3</p> <p>restrooms 96:6 96:9</p> <p>result 39:13 48:12 64:19</p> <p>results 57:16</p> <p>retired 80:14</p> <p>retirement 80:25</p> <p>retreat 42:17</p> <p>return 49:4,13 116:21</p> <p>returning 113:9</p> <p>revenue 117:8</p> <p>review 2:18,19 3:8 4:3 5:22 7:22,25 10:9 58:3 71:11 86:11,14 93:5 102:10 111:7 111:15 117:23 120:20</p> <p>reviewing 33:12</p> <p>revised 4:18 43:1 58:23</p> <p>revisit 68:17</p> <p>richard 17:11 35:17,19,20</p>	<p>richardson 75:2 80:3,3</p> <p>ride 70:14 77:16</p> <p>rides 77:8</p> <p>ridge 85:15 99:18</p> <p>right 30:9 33:3 54:12 74:7 87:4 88:7,10 88:17 89:16 91:10,13 103:13 110:20 114:12 117:7 118:22</p> <p>rising 90:24</p> <p>risk 67:13,25 93:12</p> <p>risks 66:12 67:4,6,19,21 68:16</p> <p>river 10:19 29:1,11,18,20 30:8 35:11 36:21 39:2 53:23,25 54:3 55:14,17 57:10 58:13 70:20 75:21,25 76:2 76:12 79:23 89:17 100:22 104:19,23 116:10 119:4</p>
---	--	--	--

<p>riverfront 15:19 16:20 18:16 70:11 riverside 18:11 18:24 19:2,8 road 29:20 44:22 66:22 97:7 99:9 119:6 120:2,5 120:13 roads 41:7 66:14 70:17 roadside 119:21 robinson 114:21,21 robust 68:1 rock 39:1 rockland 62:24 role 9:6 roles 115:19 romanticize 43:4,5 ronald 82:12 82:15,17 roots 26:20 rosie 80:4,7,10 80:12 rough 81:12 roughly 43:20 round 20:9 35:14 route 20:24 23:16 33:16</p>	<p>35:23,24 54:12 60:20 61:4 63:2,2 66:20 67:6,24 68:6 71:22 79:6 85:15 97:24 106:17 119:16 119:23 121:18 routing 21:2 rubbish 28:21 ruined 81:6 run 27:25 80:22 116:4 runners 77:20 running 20:10</p>	<p>120:15 safer 31:11 35:14 91:2 119:22 safety 24:2 29:22 30:16 34:4 46:18 54:20,20 61:11 64:6 65:11,24 66:14 68:10,20 71:15 84:5 85:14 93:19 99:1 103:3 119:6,17 sanity 82:4 santo 17:10 29:6,6,7,9 sarah 101:25 102:2,5 saturday 89:22 96:7 saturdays 102:19 savings 81:4 saw 24:22 44:13 67:8 107:15 saying 74:12,12 115:24 116:4 says 81:11 scale 53:22 68:5 94:18 scales 107:6</p>	<p>scared 43:9 scenery 34:15 scenic 27:24 33:14 53:2 85:19 107:22 school 64:14,17 64:22 65:4 78:15 102:16 111:11,13 science 86:10 scope 66:12 67:22 68:5,14 68:18 scoped 43:1 scoping 9:12,13 57:14 58:22,24 screen 4:11 122:21 search 63:10 season 65:8 sec 8:8 second 4:9 11:18 13:25 122:25 secretary 32:10 section 12:5 20:14,17 21:15 21:16 34:22 58:12 64:18 sections 39:16 57:3,10 58:18 see 14:1,20 30:23 34:8 40:14 49:16</p>
	<p>s</p>		
	<p>sadly 16:10 49:4,13 104:17 safe 15:18,22 20:23 27:24 31:19 32:1,15 37:10 60:4,18 64:25 70:15 73:6 77:24 81:19,20 83:5 96:11 97:23 98:23 99:23 104:24 106:21 106:25 safely 19:16 30:22,25 60:15 60:23 61:5 98:4 101:22</p>		

55:7 63:25 81:22,22 83:19 86:22 90:18 92:12 108:23 112:3 118:9 seek 18:9,10 64:4 seeking 51:24 seem 88:3 seemingly 25:24 seems 69:24 115:2 seen 30:13 54:15 70:1 73:8 95:18,18 95:19 102:19 113:13 116:15 segment 57:25 segmentation 117:24 send 4:5 seniors 70:17 83:9,21 91:23 sensible 106:12 sentence 45:9 seqr 7:24 serious 66:9 93:9 113:21 seriously 107:5 serve 26:23 37:5 51:22 99:15 106:19 114:12 115:21	served 36:2,8 111:6,10 serves 67:16 82:20 service 21:9 36:2,8 48:24 services 2:6 14:13,19,25 66:1 68:7 session 3:3 5:12 5:15 set 24:18 72:20 90:23 124:8,17 setting 70:20 several 17:24 72:2 89:8 102:17 shannon 17:8 21:21,22 22:2 shaped 33:9 share 7:5 28:2 56:3 87:13 92:15 shared 10:16 34:3 66:15 shares 85:8 sharp 111:2 shea 17:11 35:18,18,19,20 shield 117:22 shields 98:11 98:11,15 shingledecker 84:20,21,24	85:1 shocked 113:9 shop 18:1 shore 10:18 76:9 shoreline 28:14 34:7 35:11 39:25 40:10 50:18,23 57:2 57:9,11 58:1,7 58:20 61:6 76:1,16 77:14 short 90:17 91:15 shoulder 99:10 120:3 shoulders 103:6 shown 116:1 shows 20:20 shrubs 79:19 shuttle 63:7 shuttles 32:4 siblings 111:6 sic 4:13 38:24 79:9 side 39:18 44:15,16,19,22 81:16 89:17 sidewalk 44:18 100:24 sidewalks 21:3 100:23 106:17 113:23	sign 75:1 78:2,3 signature 124:20 signed 117:1 significance 9:9 significant 39:13 51:7,16 68:15 93:4 94:11 119:13 121:20 significantly 48:20 72:5 76:11 signs 63:12 94:12 similar 108:21 simply 93:22 sine 66:3,5,7 single 43:23 sir 88:3 sit 108:2 site 8:20 24:9 58:10 sites 51:2 situate 90:5 situation 21:7 93:23 100:24 six 33:6 39:6 65:19 71:12 106:1 size 68:17 skate 27:25 skateboarders 77:21
--	---	--	---

skaters 77:20 skill 121:10 skiptunis 105:10,11,14 sleepless 81:8 slide 4:20 12:3 slides 7:2 slowly 45:17 small 25:24 51:14 63:15 64:10 sniffen 59:6 63:19,20 softball 65:20 sole 73:24 74:8 solution 16:3 46:16 53:13 61:10 72:2 103:7 119:20 solutions 30:15 30:21 32:1,23 solve 17:1 53:19 solves 16:3 somebody 74:3 son 33:11 sons 20:5 soon 97:23 98:2 112:10 sorely 46:15 sorry 7:11 87:7 88:11,21 92:21 109:11	sort 28:5 sorts 87:23 sound 80:19 source 33:15 south 10:22 33:18 34:17 39:12 48:12 50:12 52:12 54:13 58:14 99:7 103:10 105:20 112:21 southern 3:22 13:18 space 37:10 42:16 70:12 96:24 spaces 51:20,21 63:10 79:3 83:6 87:20 spark 67:9 speak 5:25 21:10 22:15 23:18 32:22 40:24 45:17,23 66:8 82:17 89:12 105:17 109:6 110:8 speaker 12:25 15:2,11 17:12 19:19 21:21 22:5 23:5 26:7 29:5,25 32:25 35:17 38:6,11 40:18 42:20	45:13 47:11 49:21 50:1 52:16 54:7 56:15,20 59:9 61:19,21,22 62:2 63:18 66:3 68:24 69:7,9 74:18 75:3,7,11,12 78:2,5,9 80:2,4 82:8,12 84:19 86:17 88:24 92:18 95:2 97:14 98:10,16 100:2 101:25 104:7 105:9 107:9 109:8 110:11 112:13 114:20,24 122:5 speakers 4:21 4:25 5:2,15 6:3 6:16 12:15,19 12:23 17:5 37:22,24,25 45:15 59:4 74:24 90:8 110:4 112:12 124:10 speaking 6:11 6:12 special 41:16 species 41:16 41:25 42:2	49:10 73:10 119:9 121:19 122:1 specific 32:3 58:10 120:24 specifically 21:16 51:24 55:2 67:22 72:24 112:20 spectacle 105:23 speed 77:17 98:1 99:9 spellbound 30:8 spend 104:23 spending 26:17 94:1 spent 23:23 33:8 81:4 splits 73:10 spoil 33:18 spoke 5:11 spoken 27:2 90:8 109:22 spot 30:10 spots 39:5 108:10 spouses 53:5 spread 103:9 spring 10:21 13:8,16 14:15 14:24 15:23 16:4,10 17:24
---	--	--	--

18:13 20:2,4 20:24 23:17,20 26:16,18 28:13 33:7 35:23,25 37:1 38:14,20 44:13 46:1,6 48:7 50:10,21 52:3,22 56:25 59:20,23 60:12 60:19 62:12 63:13,23 64:13 65:8 66:18 69:18 70:12,18 73:7,14 75:18 77:9 78:14 79:11,16 80:15 90:16 93:6 94:5 95:16,22 96:13,24 97:8 98:4 99:5,24 100:11,16 101:19,21 102:13,16,19 102:22 103:11 103:14 110:23 112:22 114:15 115:9 119:24 spring's 51:15 52:13 springs 52:7 square 62:14 115:17 staff 3:4,6 52:25 93:22	staging 76:15 stagnate 114:1 stand 27:21 star 6:7 15:5,8 21:24 22:3 23:7 38:9 49:23 56:17 61:25 74:21 75:5,9 78:4,7 82:10 86:21 98:13 start 107:17 started 62:7 85:12 starting 46:3 106:15 107:2 112:21 state 1:17 2:7 2:11,19 4:7 7:17,18,20,22 9:7,16,25 10:6 10:10 11:15 12:4 16:16 20:7,7 22:21 24:16,24 31:3 31:6 36:6 41:17,19 42:7 42:12 53:3 60:2,4 61:3 85:20 87:16 90:19 101:4 111:14 115:15 116:20 117:18 122:24 124:5	state's 40:5 92:10 stated 48:10 statement 2:16 3:2,14 6:2 7:15 9:11,18 10:4,6 10:7,12 12:1 42:25 85:8 86:6 statements 4:23 52:23 53:10 124:7 states 31:1 36:7 48:24 50:21 76:8 89:25 statewide 89:5 90:7 107:23 station 20:25 28:11,15 32:4 stay 85:22 staying 47:4 steady 54:16 steel 76:24 steering 8:17 31:15 stein 59:7,8 stenographer 1:16 step 29:23 105:22 119:13 stephanie 38:3 50:1 52:16,18 52:19 105:9,11 105:14	stepped 74:7 steve 74:24 75:3 stewards 82:23 stewardship 11:17 25:1 stitching 46:24 stoner 4:5 11:14 122:23 stony 20:15,21 20:25 23:17,22 24:6,13,19,21 25:5 31:4 36:11,12 39:3 50:19,24 57:4 57:5 76:6 98:3 106:16 107:3 stop 28:12 strain 52:1 stream 117:8 street 13:19 17:25 18:14,14 19:4,13,14 20:3 26:14 33:7 44:14,19 44:21 45:4 51:10 59:19 60:22 61:2 63:22 64:11 76:13 78:24 80:15 100:23 105:16 106:3 106:18 109:1 110:24,25
--	--	--	--

<p>111:2 113:14 streets 64:20 113:2 strengthens 84:14 stress 71:7 stretch 29:12 54:22 66:19 99:15 102:21 120:13 stretches 54:2 strikes 121:2 strollers 39:21 77:22 91:25 strong 29:10 62:9 69:20 120:21 strongly 41:21 46:1 54:11 55:23 56:9 59:21 61:15 structural 117:12 structure 35:6 57:8 58:18 76:19 105:21 structures 40:6 57:20 student 70:15 students 64:21 65:3,12 studied 62:10 studies 49:6 67:23</p>	<p>stunning 87:25 style 34:11 subgrade 58:8 subject 38:25 93:8 submission 122:13 submit 4:4,12 4:22 86:13 submitted 3:10 94:17 102:11 submitting 112:5 subsequent 78:21 substantially 32:14 substantive 10:2 117:16 success 37:18 successful 63:4 94:6 suddenly 120:6 sufficient 106:9 sufficiently 21:14 42:23 suggest 77:12 suggested 111:17 summary 3:11 4:24 8:9 summer 25:18 45:1 120:1</p>	<p>sunsets 75:21 superstructure 76:5,25 supervisor 36:4 supply 52:2 support 15:17 18:2 20:13 22:16 23:18 32:13 37:17 46:1 52:24 53:10 54:4 59:21 61:15 69:20 73:24 74:8,15 77:5 78:16 84:16 91:5 92:12,16 95:20 112:19 118:24 supported 36:22 57:8 supporter 29:10 103:1,1 supporters 53:6 62:9 supportive 27:18 supposed 107:19 sure 110:25 surge 93:17 surrounded 42:2 103:25 surrounding 46:5 54:18</p>	<p>60:10 64:2 92:4 surrounds 32:17 surveys 8:14 sustainable 68:13 121:14 sweat 81:3 switching 90:21 system 89:7 121:9</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">t</p> <hr/> <p>tackling 71:21 taconic 5:17 6:22 7:17 take 43:15 61:1 63:1 70:19 92:1 104:22 taken 34:19 58:6 109:25 takes 106:13 talk 43:9 92:15 96:1 talking 108:5,5 taxpayer 40:15 44:1 taxpayers 118:4 taylorson 17:11 33:1,2,4 team 96:17</p>
--	--	---	---

tear 94:14	47:15 48:4	29:3 42:22	three 6:7 15:5,8
tears 81:3	49:19,20 50:7	98:8	18:9 21:15,24
technical 5:4,7	52:14,15,18,19	theresa 92:18	22:3 23:7 25:9
5:9	54:5,6 56:11	92:21,23	38:9 39:23
tell 81:2 95:20	56:11,14 58:25	thing 22:17	49:24 56:17
temporary	59:1 61:16,18	things 18:9	59:24 61:25
39:11	63:16,17 66:1	73:22 83:15	71:17 74:21
ten 12:20,23	66:2,7 68:22	90:3	75:5,9 78:4,8
17:5 30:20	68:23 72:6,7	think 18:3	82:10 86:21
39:17 77:13,18	72:15 74:16,17	22:16 27:12,19	98:13
95:17,25 96:15	77:25 78:1,12	28:4,21 49:14	threw 96:16
113:22	79:25 80:1	63:3,6,7 79:21	thrown 95:24
tenable 77:23	82:6,7,16	84:7 89:12,14	ticket 116:6
term 36:24	84:17,18,25	90:1,15 91:22	tides 28:18
49:17 51:12	85:3 86:14,16	102:25 103:2,8	tied 66:12
116:2,8	87:6 89:2 91:5	103:20 117:10	till 104:16
termed 57:7	91:6 92:14,17	thompson 17:9	time 6:20 9:15
terrace 18:19	92:23 94:25	26:8,9,12	12:23 15:21
terrific 110:22	95:1 97:12,13	thorough 52:11	21:18 23:3
testimony	98:9 99:25	thoroughfare	25:23 26:2
124:7,9	100:1,7,9	106:3	72:22 74:16
thank 2:2 6:25	101:23,24	thought 24:23	84:3 91:15
9:20 12:9,13	104:5,6 105:7	36:14 107:16	99:25 104:23
13:3,6,8 15:1	105:8,14 107:7	thoughtful 84:6	121:22 123:9
15:12 17:2,3	107:8 109:5,7	121:2	times 9:1 20:9
19:17,18,24	109:19 110:9	thoughtfully	52:5 65:7
21:17,20 23:2	110:10,22	91:4 92:6	89:22 115:17
23:4 26:1,2,6	112:8,8,12	122:2	today 3:9 4:25
29:4,23,24	114:18,19	thousands 31:7	5:13 6:5,12,15
30:5 32:21,24	118:7,8 122:3	threaten 66:14	9:19 12:8 15:4
35:15,16 37:19	122:4,7 123:4	threatened	21:23 33:10
37:20 40:16,17	123:7	41:14 48:22	38:8 60:5,12
42:18,19 45:12	thanks 8:4	threats 48:25	60:16 85:4,17
45:22 47:9,10	12:11 14:25		

<p>today's 2:23 3:3,15 5:11 68:1 toddlers 77:22 together 16:24 16:25 46:25 86:4 96:21 97:3 108:2 tonight 66:8 took 44:22 91:14 top 34:2 48:24 76:21 topics 13:15 64:1 torres 1:16 124:4,21 total 43:13 tourism 16:9 46:10 53:13,15 78:21 113:17 114:16 tourists 52:8 79:24 94:4 towards 119:13 town 18:8 19:7 19:9 26:25 35:21 36:3,9 52:20 95:22 96:3,19 97:2 town's 55:11 78:18 113:10 towns 94:1</p>	<p>townspeople 33:23 track 40:4 44:7 tracks 28:16 34:14,19 105:22 traditional 34:12 traditionally 83:17 traffic 21:7 29:16,19,20 32:4,6 51:13 52:3 54:17 56:4,8 64:9,19 66:11,17 67:10 67:18,23 71:21 81:21 93:5 95:18 96:1,2 97:6 101:10 119:20 120:9 121:16 trafficking 45:3 trail 1:6 2:18 7:14 8:1,3,12 8:16,24 10:23 10:24,24,24,25 11:1,8,24 12:7 14:3,11,16 18:3,20 19:5 19:14 20:8,10 20:14 22:16,18 23:19 25:21</p>	<p>27:10,19 28:11 28:14,17,20,25 29:11 30:17 31:9,16,18,22 32:3,14 33:18 34:5,17,23 35:24 36:15,19 36:23 37:5 39:12,16,25 40:3,10 41:8,9 41:10 43:4,9 43:16,19 45:1 45:5,9 46:4,12 46:14 48:11,11 48:17 50:12 51:13,23 52:12 53:2 55:8,13 55:18 56:1,6 57:2,3,11 58:1 58:7,20 59:22 59:24 60:13,17 60:20,23,24 61:5,7,16 62:15,21 65:14 68:4,12,18 69:20,24 70:22 72:1,23 73:9 73:25 76:17 77:4,6,15 78:17 79:4 81:9,10,13 82:3,25 83:7 83:11 84:7 85:6,11,18</p>	<p>86:5 87:14 89:7,13,19 90:6,7,10 91:5 91:23 93:1 94:4,15 95:21 96:2,21 97:4 97:19 98:7 99:3,20 100:15 100:21 101:13 102:25 103:1 104:21 105:19 105:19 106:11 106:16,20 107:3,16 112:20,21 113:3,16 114:14 115:23 116:14,16 117:6 118:25 119:7,10 120:18 121:6,8 121:8,18 trail's 43:11 46:2 80:17 85:8 121:14 trailhead 21:5 60:5,19 61:3 trailheads 21:1 60:16 97:20,22 99:19 trails 18:10 19:16 27:4 46:24 54:19 65:9 70:1</p>
--	--	---	--

78:24 85:10,16 89:4 93:15,20 94:12 96:5,12 100:20 103:20 104:1 106:22 112:23 train 16:6 18:7 18:25 19:12 20:25 29:17 32:3 70:16 105:21 tranquility 50:20 transcript 124:8 transform 87:15 transformation 24:7 transformative 71:2 transformed 112:25 transforming 107:19 108:6 transient 39:11 transit 63:1 79:13 transportation 47:3 56:7 71:17 84:3 90:20 98:24 108:13,13	trapped 18:16 trash 24:3,10 24:11 25:19 116:5 trauma 95:19 trees 79:18 tremendous 70:9 90:20 trips 90:17 97:20,22,23,25 trouble 47:22 truck 44:14 trucked 51:2 true 47:5 124:9 trust 34:22 85:3,5,21 86:12 trustee 13:7 try 7:3 25:23 42:7 49:3,16 86:24 88:18 115:4 118:10 trying 54:21 114:23 tunnel 54:14 turn 97:7 111:2 twice 109:17 two 5:3 6:4 9:19 20:5 25:9 26:24 39:5,15 40:1 43:2 57:2 58:6 64:21 65:17 72:20,25 74:2 88:13	96:9,10,16 97:6 104:15 109:12 111:12 116:19 u u.s. 48:23 ultimate 37:18 ultimately 92:8 umbro 74:25 75:8 unable 47:13 47:19 95:4,7 unanimously 32:12 under 7:21 18:15,18 19:1 58:3 underpass 18:15 underscores 120:16 underserved 37:8 understand 21:4 101:5 105:1 114:3 understandably 77:6 undertaken 120:20 undertaking 37:19	underwent 24:20 underwrite 118:4 undoubtedly 50:19 unequivocally 20:12 unexpectedly 120:8 unfair 46:11 unfortunately 74:11 unfriendly 18:18 unique 21:10 37:19 52:14 115:25 116:1 119:2 united 36:7 89:25 university 36:6 113:2 unknown 93:14 unmute 6:9 12:24 15:6,9 17:6 22:1 23:8 29:6 37:23 47:14,19 49:25 56:18 74:22 75:6 86:24 95:5,7 98:14 110:14 114:23 115:5 118:11
--	---	--	---

<p>118:13,16 unmuted 6:1 13:2 17:13,15 29:8 47:24 50:6 59:12 69:1,2,3 72:10 78:11 80:6 82:14 86:25 92:20 95:8 104:9 115:1,3 unmuting 114:22 unnecessary 46:12 105:22 unprecedented 15:17 unqualified 37:17 unreported 94:2 unsafe 61:2 102:21 unstoppable 42:4 untenable 21:6 106:4 untouched 113:15 untrue 39:14 unwelcome 96:4 update 67:24 updated 34:8 68:2</p>	<p>upgrades 113:13 upland 40:8 upriver 76:18 ups 31:9 upset 81:8 upwards 43:6 urban 82:20 urge 42:12 52:10 94:16 urgent 99:10 114:5 120:16 use 10:16 27:21 41:10 68:10 70:16 103:24 116:14 119:7 121:8,15 used 57:22 user 118:14,17 uses 40:7 using 103:20 usually 18:8</p>	<p>van 112:13,15 112:18 vanity 118:5 variable 63:11 various 69:17 79:5 vegetation 35:5 67:7 vehicle 67:1 vehicles 45:2 51:5,23 66:24 67:7 76:16 106:2 vehicular 51:13 54:17 56:4 102:20 verbal 11:11 viable 14:21 63:15 view 34:6 69:22 76:9 views 33:20 34:1 viewship 76:11 village 10:21 13:8 16:4,8 20:2 21:2 22:12,14 26:15 29:16 33:8,20 35:12 36:25 38:19,23 44:10 45:7,8,25 46:5 46:17 48:6 50:9 51:14</p>	<p>52:22 56:25 59:20 60:12,19 60:25 62:12,13 63:16,22 64:18 70:18 95:22 96:13,18 97:1 100:12,16 101:9 103:13 106:21,25 107:2 111:23 virtually 42:3 visibility 120:8 visionary 46:8 visit 20:8 31:2 54:25 96:25 99:24 visitation 16:3 16:11 20:20 24:2 30:14 32:9 46:15 61:9 68:15 71:14 90:24 102:10 103:12 visitations 66:25 visiting 18:8 75:20 103:3 visitor 18:1 119:17 visitors 16:5 18:12,23 20:23 28:8 46:20 48:20 51:17 55:10 60:1,9</p>
	v		
	<p>valid 92:3 valley 37:4,7 47:1 83:10 84:11 91:17 97:1 119:4 valuable 72:3 value 41:4 63:25 valued 92:8</p>		

<p>61:1 62:17 66:16 68:6 71:16 76:3 89:20 91:1 96:3 105:25 106:10 120:14 visual 34:24 35:1,3 visually 34:11 53:24 vital 99:4 vocalize 74:15 voice 27:16 voices 92:7 voloto 74:24 75:3 volunteer 24:21 26:24 65:25 73:11 100:18 102:8 volunteered 31:7 70:25 volunteering 69:17</p>	<p>120:5 walkable 113:6 walker 103:18 103:24 104:3 walkers 39:19 77:20 walking 18:13 37:10 61:13 64:22 65:5 96:12 97:21 99:13 101:22 walks 22:23 70:19 walkway 96:11 wall 110:24,24 111:2 want 14:12 20:12 21:11 22:15 23:18 29:9 33:21 43:5 47:20 74:8,15 88:13 90:5 91:16 94:22 96:18 110:8 116:9 wanted 13:14 15:16 24:10 97:17 98:6 103:16 wappinger 29:2 ward 72:20,25 73:1</p>	<p>washburn 21:1 42:1 75:20 99:19 113:12 wasted 44:3 watch 75:21 water 10:25 40:6,7 waterfront 89:16 waters 86:2 way 19:2 29:15 36:16 58:16 60:23 61:6 76:4 93:16 96:19 117:4 124:14 wayfinding 32:7 94:13 ways 18:17 19:6,7 97:9 we've 15:20 33:23 47:23 59:12 61:24 90:18 95:18,18 95:19 109:24 117:15 wear 94:14 webinars 8:22 website 12:2,4 12:7,8 27:5 122:15 123:3 week 20:10 44:12 65:7</p>	<p>weekdays 102:22 weekend 16:13 64:14 120:2 weekends 62:17 65:22 71:23 102:23 weekly 102:18 weeks 32:20 weight 4:2 weiss 80:13 welcome 7:12 27:9 55:4,9 welcomes 85:6 91:23 welcoming 83:6 wellbeing 68:21 84:14 wellness 60:7 wendel 40:19 40:20,22 wendell 38:1 west 89:17 westchester 62:25 wheelchair 77:21 79:14 wheelchairs 16:19 wheeler 44:20 whereof 124:16 white 88:25 89:1,2,3</p>
w			
<p>wagman 59:5 wait 6:16 waiting 120:10 wake 93:7 walk 15:22 19:3,13 60:21 60:21 61:1,4 104:3 106:11</p>			

wide 39:17,18 41:7 89:18 90:2	wooded 48:16	writing 4:23 13:12 112:5 115:18 117:20	102:7,13,17 106:1 107:14 111:5,8 113:22 115:9 116:19
wideman 61:23	woods 42:3	written 3:10 4:1,4,13 11:13 32:19 86:13 122:14 123:5	yield 99:25
widen 97:7	work 8:21 16:25 21:18 24:25 28:7 56:12 63:24 70:1 73:8,23 74:10 97:2,9 115:16	wrong 44:15,16 44:19,21 93:2	york 1:18 2:6 2:11 4:6,10 7:18 11:15,19 16:16 22:20 24:16 31:2,6 36:6 42:15 53:2 85:19 87:11,12,21,24 89:5 92:13 111:14,18,20 115:9,15 122:24 123:1 124:5
wider 46:23	worked 17:25 25:8 36:7 102:9,16 111:4	x	yorkers 87:19 92:10
width 77:14,18	working 8:25 24:15 28:22 30:19 32:5 37:12 63:16 96:20	x 1:3,9	young 16:18 33:5 39:20 71:4 83:8 103:23 104:2
wiesler 15:11 15:12,13	works 89:6 117:16	y	youth 33:9 64:6 70:24,25
wife 20:4 26:13 26:16 30:6	workshops 8:13 9:4	yeah 109:10	youths 82:20
wildfire 66:11 67:4,25 68:2	world 49:3 55:18 109:3 112:25	year 20:9 32:11 33:6 35:14 39:6 59:17 62:16 80:12 89:21 102:10 116:11	z
wildfires 67:15 93:11	worries 51:11	years 8:19 9:5 17:24 23:23 25:9 26:17 30:6,12,20 31:14 36:1,3 36:22 39:1 43:16 51:6 54:14 55:15 57:1 59:21 62:7 63:21 69:15 76:13 85:12 93:9 94:7 95:17,17 95:25 96:15	zones 51:9
wildlife 41:4,13 41:15,15,20,22 41:22 42:5,16 48:9,24 54:1 106:5 120:25	worried 51:11		zoom 112:1
winding 66:22	worries 26:5		zorrilla 82:13 82:15,17
winter 25:3	worrying 81:9		
wise 44:4	wracking 119:25		
witness 93:24 124:16	wright 114:25 114:25 115:1,3 118:9,19,20,23 121:21,22,25 122:5		
witnessed 93:11 112:23			
woman 89:12			
wonder 117:9			
wonderful 32:16 46:19 76:4 90:3,25 97:4,11 103:7			