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To: Boston City Council
From: Boston Harbor Now
Date: March 26, 2018

Re: [Boston City Council Hearing on Coastal Flooding](#)

Good afternoon, my name is Jill Valdes Horwood, I am the Director of Policy for Boston Harbor Now a non-profit focused on maximizing the benefits of Boston Harbor for everyone through quality programming, policy, planning and design.

I want to thank City Council President Campbell and fellow members of the Council for the opportunity to speak to you today about the effects of coastal and inland flooding in the City of Boston.

Four nor'easters in three months affirm what local scientists, planners, and advocates have been cautioning: when it comes to decisions about flood-resilient infrastructure in our Harbor, we need to act now. Climate data tells us we're going to get hit harder, more often, and if we fail to plan, fund, and implement solutions now it will take us longer and cost more to recover after every storm. It is not an exaggeration to say that the future of Boston depends on us planning for these issues.

Today Boston Harbor Now would like to:

- First, acknowledge and commend Mayor Walsh and the City of Boston for their continued leadership on climate action and the planning work completed through programs like Climate Ready Boston,
- Second, advocate for district-wide solutions to protect from the effects of climate change, not just Boston's coast but also vulnerable inland areas and populations, the Harbor Islands, the working port, and neighboring coastal cities,
- Third, highlight the importance of creating multiple-benefit climate solutions. Projects like the Moakley Park Vision Plan, the East Boston Greenway, and Piers Park III present opportunities to design recreational spaces that increase open space and promote public access while also protecting our neighborhoods from major floods, extreme heat, and increased precipitation,

- Finally, we offer our strong support for a funding mechanism that addresses near-term resiliency solutions as well as long-term and large-scale adaptation projects—we cannot continue to focus solely on individual buildings and parcel-by-parcel strategies. Our infrastructure is as important as our buildings and we've learned from recent storms that streets like Atlantic and Seaport Boulevard and the Aquarium T stop prevented access to buildings that were otherwise prepared to withstand flooding.

The development of Climate Ready Boston neighborhood specific solutions propose a number of multiple benefit projects and are examples of the kind of neighborhood level solutions our City needs. But these projects need proper funding. Advocacy groups, foundations, and the private sector will need to work together but cannot solve this problem on their own. We need civic leaders, like you, to consider options that will create the funding sources our City needs to prepare for future sea level rise and climate change.

From creating resilience incentives and regulations (zoning, building codes, insurance premiums, other market signals) that stick to buildings, not to property owners. To large-scale funding bills, we should look to other coastal cities that have grappled with similar funding concerns, for example:

- In September of 2016, Washington, D.C.'s Water and Sewer authority and investors Goldman Sachs and Calvert Foundation issued a \$25 million Environmental Impact Bond to finance the construction of green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff. The first of its kind, the bill was structured to limit financial risk to DC Water if the performance of the green infrastructure was less than anticipated and financially reward investors if the performance exceeded expectations.
- Last October, the City of Miami approved the \$400M Miami Forever Bond Bill. The bond funds a series of construction projects focused on preparing and protecting the city's waterfront and community by investing a total of \$192 million on flood prevention and sea level rise mitigation.

One of Mayor Walsh's commitments, laid out in the Climate Ready Boston report, is to ensure that climate change solutions are built with input from affected communities and respond to their needs in order to address the regional impacts we face against increased storms and frequent flooding. Programs like DC Water and Miami Forever are necessary for local government to address the climate change issues that cities and communities are facing.

We would like to thank the Council, the panel of experts, and our fellow attendees for their engagement in the conversation and commitment to the resiliency of our coastal city and surrounding communities.

Boston is widely recognized as a leader on climate action. And now is the time to continue to advance our leadership even further. Boston Harbor Now, along with those in this room, and many who could not be here to testify welcome the opportunity to work together toward our mutual goal of protecting and preparing our city for a future that will continue to thrive and adapt to the effects of climate change.

Thank you for your time.