



**PATRICK K. RYAN**

**Congress of the United States**

**House of Representatives**

**Washington, DC 20515**

August 4, 2023

Captain Zeita Merchant  
Commander  
Sector New York  
United States Coast Guard  
212 Coast Guard Dr.  
Staten Island, NY 10305

Dear Captain Merchant,

I write regarding a proposed change to the U.S. Coast Guard's approach to regulating commercial vessel anchoring in the Hudson River. As a member of Congress representing the Hudson River, I am concerned with the impact that this change would have on my constituents, the natural resources of the region, and the importance of the Hudson River in facilitating commerce.

The Hudson River Estuary is prized for its outstanding natural resources, ability to facilitate commerce, and its meaningful contributions to quality of life and the economy of New York State. Millions of people visit the region each year to enjoy hiking, fishing, boating, and wildlife watching, supporting a multi-billion dollar regional recreation and tourism industry. In addition, water-based transportation has been a major economic engine that has helped deliver goods and services to the nation since its founding.

The Hudson River and its connected waters are home to more than 200 species of fish and provide spawning and nursery habitat for striped bass, shad, and herring that support fisheries up and down the entire Atlantic coast. In addition, the Hudson River serves as the primary water supply for seven communities in my district and it also serves as the backup drinking water supply for our nation's largest city, New York City.

Under the current guidance and regulations governing the anchorage of commercial vessels in the region is that larger commercial vessels may only anchor in designated anchorage grounds in the Hudson River between The Battery and Albany, except in emergency situations. Currently, there is one anchorage ground in the Hudson River between Albany and Tarrytown, and it is located just west of Hyde Park. Therefore, as the law stands, larger commercial vessels are permitted only to anchor in the Hyde Park anchorage ground when traveling between Albany and Tarrytown, except in cases of emergency.

Congress passed the Elijah E. Cummings Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2020, which included language suspending the establishment of new anchorage grounds between Yorkers and Kingston.

However, it is my understanding that the U.S. Coast Guard has proposed a more fundamental change that puts the future of the region, its natural resources, and commercial vessel traffic at risk of an unstructured environment for navigation, that goes against the intent of the Coast Guard Authorization Act.

I understand that the Coast Guard is planning to issue a Marine Safety Information Bulletin that redefines the boundaries of the Port of New York, limiting it to the area that is south of Tarrytown. As a result, regulations on anchoring would not apply north of Tarrytown, and commercial vessels would be permitted under Inland Navigation Rules to anchor anywhere for any length of time, so long as they do not impede traffic and display a light at night.

I ask that you specifically respond to the following concerns:

- How did the Coast Guard decide to redefine the boundaries of the Port of New York?
- What are you doing to solicit feedback from the public on this proposed change?
- How does this new definition fit into a broader responsibility to regulate anchoring in the Hudson in a way that protects navigational safety for commercial vessels, the interests of other waterway users, and the environment?
- How is the U.S. Coast Guard working in collaboration with local government and non-governmental organizations to ensure that its activities in the region support the abundant and highly-prized natural resources in the River and create a safe environment for all users of the river?
- Should the boundaries of the Port of New York be changed permanently, what changes to commercial vessel anchorages along the Hudson, including additional anchorages, does the Coast Guard anticipate?

Thank you very much for your time and attention to this matter and all of the work you do to ensure that the Hudson River remains safe, navigable, and healthy.

Sincerely,



Patrick K. Ryan  
Member of Congress