



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 29, 2015

CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO JOINS STATE, FEDERAL AND LOCAL OFFICIALS TO ANNOUNCE MAJOR MILESTONES TO ACTIVATE NEW MARITIME SHIPPING HUB IN SOUTHWEST BROOKLYN

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Alright, good morning, everyone. Hope you're enjoying this beautiful backdrop for this very good event.

We're here to announce vital steps to strengthen our city, to drive economic growth, and to ensure environmental justice – two advancements in maritime transport that are the culmination of intense and collaborative work with both the city and our partners in the state and federal government, all working together in common cause.

I'm proud that where we are today – the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal – will be the borough's second working cargo port – yes, after the Red Hook Container Terminal a few miles north. And both ports have recently received good news that will bolster business. The federal government has designated the Brooklyn Waterfront part of the American Marine Highway. This is a national network of shipping routes, and this designation affirms the importance of South Brooklyn to both national and international commerce.

There will be a presentation of a plaque a little bit later on to designate this federal decision. And the announcements we're making today align to a larger vision that we put forward to our One New York plan – our blueprint for sustainable growth in this city. And that blueprint, you'll remember, focused on everything from our economic growth to the fairness and inclusion of our economy, to our environmental sustainability and our resiliency. And this announcement today fits across the board with that vision.

Economically, this will pave the way for hundreds of good paying jobs that people in communities in Brooklyn and beyond need. Environmentally, this action removes thousands of trucks from our streets. Cargo ships that would dock in New Jersey instead will come to the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal.

So many people played a role in getting us to today. And again, there's been extraordinary collaboration. I'd like to acknowledge a number of people who have been part of this process and thank them – from my administration, Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen and our Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Emma Wolfe. I'd like to thank David Meade, of the Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation, who's been an advocate for Sunset Park's industrial businesses, and will be co-chairing the Sunset Park Taskforce with our Economic Development Corporation. I'd like to thank George Miranda, the president of the Teamsters. I would like to thank Lou Pernice, President of Longshoremen's Association Local 1814. I want to thank the elected officials who are with us today. You'll hear from several of them, but I also want to thank Senator Dan Squadron; Assembly Member Joanne Simon; Council Member Dan Garodnick, who is chair of the Economic Development Committee in the Council; and Council Member Brad Lander, from a council district near and dear to my heart.

So, so many people have worked hard for this opportunity to develop our economy, and open up jobs for people that need them, and make this waterfront strong. Now, again, there's a lot of history here. For centuries, the waterfront has been a part of who we are as New Yorkers, and it's also been one of the great pathways to the middle class. Certainly, Brooklyn in particular grew in large measure because of the waterfront to be the dynamic and diverse place it became – a place where people who grew up here, and people from all over the world, could come to find opportunity.

And this waterfront helped to build our city's larger economy. Today, 400 million tons of goods – \$1.2 trillion dollars in value – moves in and out of New York City every year. That forecast will increase by 48 percent by 2040. So, we can continue to be an example to the country of how to create good jobs while building our economy in a diverse manner, and making sure we are protecting our planet and our community at the same time. That's what's so powerful about this opportunity – it brings all those pieces together.

Here at the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal, the City Council last month approved a long-term master lease. And we want to thank the Council for that action. It allows the Economic Development Corporation to actively manage this port, and guarantees a stable future for this facility. Again, special thanks to Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and Council Members Garodnick and Menchaca for their support and their hard work in this process.

The Council process also enhanced the community's role in the planning for the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal and for the larger waterfront. And I want to also take a moment to congratulate Congress Members Nadler and Velázquez, who have been working on this issue for many years tirelessly, and are seeing real progress towards a larger vision they have been working on – congratulations to both of you.

South Brooklyn Marine Terminal already is open for business. The Economic Development Cooperation is seeking maritime cargo firms to do business here going forward. And that will allow us to employ hundreds of New Yorkers of all backgrounds and skill levels, again, many in good paying middle class jobs. And it also opens up the opportunity for many more jobs in the future.

A typical waterfront job has a starting pay of about \$40,000 dollars a year with benefits, rising to an average of \$80,000 dollars a year. So these are solid jobs and, obviously, generally are unionized, guaranteeing the benefits and the continuity.

This will also be a game-changer for Sunset Park. And if you know Sunset Park – a wonderful neighborhood here in Brooklyn – but it's a neighborhood that's been challenged by poverty for many years. One in three families lives in poverty in Sunset Park. So opportunity here is crucial to that community, and for people beyond. This is part of a larger strategy we have to reinvigorate job growth, and industrial job growth in particular, for the people of Sunset Park.

South Brooklyn Marine Terminal complements the city's investments recently that we've made in the Brooklyn Army Terminal, and the Bush Terminal, and private development at Industry City. So, a lot is happening in this part of Brooklyn. And it's important, again, to recognize the environmental impact and the impact this will have on the quality of life in our city. Our ports, going forward over the next five years, will eliminate 275,000 truck trips, many through low-income neighborhoods in this city – 10,000 fewer tons of CO2 emissions. And it'll reduce our need for road maintenance by about \$2 million dollars. So, a lot of good comes from this announcement in many ways.

The announcement also reflects the city's interest in the long-term phase development of a deep-water container port. And today, we can see a renewed future for the South Brooklyn Waterfront. Jobs, growth, environmental fairness – all in one package.

A few words in Spanish before we hear from our colleagues –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

Help me out, Nydia.

[Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez speaks in Spanish]

Mayor: That's what she said.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

Thank you. I've got a relief pitcher in.

[Laughter]

It's even as good in Spanish as it is in English – all good things. And now, someone who's worked so hard on this idea, this vision, helping to bring it to a reality over many years – a day he should be very, very proud of – Congressman Jerry Nadler.

[...]

Mayor: Thank you so much, Paul. And I want to comment on one thing you said and I also want to thank, again, Senator Velmanette Montgomery. Thank you for your support. Thank you very much for being here with us today. Paul, you mentioned the crucial actions that the president has taken and the secretary has taken to support a robust new transportation bill. I want to thank you and I want you to know that mayors all over the country are working hard to get a long-term, more robust transportation bill. And by the way, it's been a beautiful example of bipartisan activism by mayors – of supporting that kind of vision, of investing in our infrastructure. I just want to thank you – the president and the secretary, for your leadership.

We are now going to take questions on this topic, followed by questions on other topics. Steve?

Question: Yes, Mr. Mayor and Congressman Nadler [inaudible] for the cross-harbor freight tunnel [inaudible]?

Mayor: No, no, this is a step along the way. And the tunnel is an idea that brings a lot to us in the future. Because again, the goal is to get trucks off our streets, to do more to move goods by rail. So the tunnel's very much good and important idea. But this is something we can do right now.

Congressman Jerrold Nadler: Thank you. No, the tunnel is complimentary to this. It will greatly aid the port. It is complimentary but it is separate. And right now, as you may know, the Port Authority and the Federal Highway Administration are co-lead agencies in a Tier One environmental impact statement on the tunnel. The preliminary draft came out in January. There were public hearings in March. We expect the final EIS on that to come – Tier One EIS – to come out sometime over the summer. So, that is proceeding.

Mayor: On topic. On topic.

Question: [Inaudible] a parking lot. So I know Industry City is asking to use a portion of the terminal for a parking lot. I'm curious [inaudible]?

Mayor: Well again, the goal here – I'll start and then if – Alicia, if you want to step in and play a guest relief pitcher role too, you're more than welcome. The goal here is to do the kind of job creation that provides better jobs for people for the long haul, but also compliments the long-term vision of port facilities here. So, I think it's safe to say that in general, that does not describe a parking lot. Obviously, sometimes, there's transitional uses, but what we're looking for is good-paying jobs and uses that are complimentary to the bigger vision. You

want to add? Okay. I did not need the relief pitcher this time. I was going to call you in, but we didn't need you. Okay, on topic. Yes?

Question: A question for Council Member Menchaca. There was a reference during the event to your prior opposition to the project. [Inaudible] under considerable pressure from the administration. What changed and [inaudible] play into your [inaudible]?

Council Member Carlos Menchaca: So, this is in relationship to the evolution of conversation. We were never not aligned. We were always aligned on the shared principles of the activation of this site. And what we wanted to do was ensure, over time – not the quick 45-day turnaround – but over time, where we had discussions with community. So what changes that we took are paused and we talked about it. What you see today is a different plan from what was originally proposed. We have and seen and shared a sense of victory for our community access and decision-making process. But we also had the opportunity to talk to a lot of different businesses, local resident stakeholders, and really make sure that we move forward and understood that our shared goals were actually our shared goals. You also see some very particular pieces like the second entrance to the Bush Terminal Park. That was not something in conversation before and now we will have that funded and planned. So this is a very different framework, and one that I think we can trust that we're going to move forward. And there's a lot of accountability measures embedded in this. So, I'm very, very excited about – about this movement forward.

Mayor: Okay, on topic. Yes, Sally?

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Alright, now I may need my relief pitcher, because I certainly have not heard of any specific job losses – but Alicia, would you like to join in? You have to come up here to do it. You can't do it sitting there with them.

[Laughter]

Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen, Housing and Economic Development: [inaudible] So, the specifics of the job loss and creation numbers are going to be a result of what we get back in response to the RFP that we're going to be putting out, that is really part of this collaborative process. So, our net projection is that we'll have an increase in jobs. To the extent that it may shift a little bit, from trucking to more maritime uses, is entirely possible. But as we review the responses, obviously job creation and quality job creation will be one of the most significant criteria as we evaluate the strength of the proposals. But again, I think for those who have really focused on this, it's generally the consensus that we want to see a reduction in trucking, because of the environmental impacts of that. So, again, balancing job creation, environmental uses, and activating this as a maritime use is really our fundamental priority.

Mayor: On topic. Going once. On topic. Yes?

Question: Mr. Mayor, does your administration formally support the [inaudible] tunnel?

Mayor: Yeah, absolutely. On topic. On topic. Yes?

Question: Could you go over again how many trucks this will take off the road, and what it will do for the environment?

Mayor: Why, yes I can. But not having memorized it, I'll go back here. Over the next five years, 275,000 truck trips less, and 10,000 fewer tons of CO2 emissions. So it's a very substantial environmental impact. And, as the deputy mayor said, you know, we think there's going to be a net growth in jobs, good paying jobs – and

everyone knows, this administration knows, we care about both the number of the jobs and the quality of the jobs, in terms of pay levels. Very positive environmental impact, and opening up a world of possibilities in terms of our port facilities for the future. Alright, last call on topic. Going once, going twice. Let's do some off topic.

Question: Can you talk a little bit about the city's wars against smoking [inaudible]?

Mayor: Well, this is a new initiative – I'm not going to tell you I know all the details of it – but I think the basic concept is quite valid – that we want to discourage smoking in every way we can. Obviously, people have a right to make a decision in their own home. But there are ways we can educate people and create the possibility of more homes being smoke-free – that's in everyone's long-term health interest. Sally?

Question: [Inaudible] You know, the Rent Guidelines Board is voting tonight. I was wondering if you have any preference to see a rent freeze on one-year leases. And also, if you could talk a little bit more about, sort of, how you feel you did in Albany last week on rent and 421-a.

Mayor: Well, again, first on the Rent Guidelines Board – you know, over the last year, when we went through the process, I was very impressed by the work of the board in doing something I think should have been done a long time ago – which is really getting a handle on the true numbers, the real expenses that were part of the work of landlords in this city, and recognizing what that meant in terms of rent increases in a much more objective way. I think, in the past, those numbers were not looked at as carefully as they should have been. And the result last year was based on a very objective analysis, and that analysis shows that there really has been very little in the way of increase in landlord's costs. In fact, in some areas like fuels, the costs of running their buildings have gone down. So, my view is now the Rent Guidelines Board is doing things the right way. It's doing it in a fact-based, evidence-based way. And, I'm very much convinced they're doing their work well and I look forward to their decision tonight. On the broader situation, I'll have more to say about the Albany session in the days ahead, but I think the broad answer is, obviously, some real progress was made on 421-a. We're very proud of that fact. You know, we had often heard it would not be possible to be handled in this session. We believed it was doable in this session. Lo and behold, it got done. It was done, minus the mansion tax. I think that was a mistake. I think that was a lost opportunity, but I think in the end, we are going to have a lot more affordable housing than we would have otherwise and taxpayers are going to get a much better deal, because anytime we subsidize a building, now there will be affordable housing as part of that. So, I figured that's a good result. On rent, we made progress. We look forward to making more progress in the future.

Question: Mr. Mayor, just following up on the Rent Guidelines Board – I know you, you are not advocating publicly for a rent freeze or a small increase, but privately, have you had conversations with members of the rent board of what you'd like to see happen?

Mayor: Again, I have met with the chair, but the point is they now have what I think is a truly effective and objective process and I honor that process.

Question: Mayor, [inaudible] from HRA testified about the [inaudible] limitation of the rent cap that you supported last year and some problems with how the state is implementing that. Can you comment on that specifically and can you also talk about – are you having any other problems with the state as it relates to implementing the plan [inaudible], but also health matters in general?

Mayor: Well, I can't speak to health matters in general. I can say that we would like renewed cooperation on the rent cap. I think that was a very, very important new policy – something I believe in strongly and we think it's important that the state play its full role and pay its full share in that. In terms of other areas, we're waiting for more definitions from the state, particularly on how funding would be used in the fight against HIV and AIDS. So again, we want to – we want to see more clarity. We're ready to work in partnership. We're very committed to the mission, but we want to see more clarity.

Question: To follow up then, would it be fair to say that you describe the state's role to date as uncooperative? Would you say that's how –

Mayor: I wouldn't say uncooperative, I'd say we need more clarity from the state.

Question: Back to the smoking, if we can for a second. [Inaudible] your administration is planning to select four health advocacy groups and pay them to pressure landlords and developers to prohibit smoking in their apartment complexes, and so neighboring tenants don't inhale second-hand smoke. So, is this sort of a new move on your part or a continuum of what you've been doing or –

Mayor: I have not seen the exact description of the program. It's a pretty small program. Again, I believe in the core principle of it, but it's a pretty small program. I'm not sure the word pressuring was used in the description of the program – that may be your word. But, I think the notion that we have to, in every appropriate way, inhibit people from smoking and help make sure particularly our children are safe and not attracted to smoking – I think that's pretty foundational. It's one of the areas where I agree fundamentally with the previous administration on. So I think there's an attempt at some innovation. But again I'm not familiar with all the nuances of it.

Question: The City Council is holding a hearing this morning about the police reform bill [inaudible] the proposed ban on chokeholds and the Right to Know law. Your police commissioner [inaudible] I just wanted to check in with you about your position on this.

Mayor: My position is the same on each of them. You know, as written, I have concerns with all three pieces of legislation and I think there's a better way forward.

Question: Mr. Mayor, over the last two weeks, much of the [inaudible] prisoners in New York. The NYPD has [inaudible] and also how [inaudible].

Mayor: NYPD can provide you a detailed update and I'm absolutely convinced he will be found. That's my statement. I have been briefed on this several times and I'm absolutely convinced that he'll be found. They have a lot of information about this individual and I don't think it will be much longer.

Question: [Inaudible] Mayor [inaudible] Congresswoman Velasquez [inaudible].

Unknown: [Inaudible] her back.

Question: I was hoping to hear from both of you about Puerto Rico's financial situation and your response to what's happening there. Tonight we're expecting the governor [inaudible].

Mayor: Look the – I'll start. I imagine the congresswoman has some strong views. This is a situation where the federal government has to take responsibility and has to step in. You know, the history of Puerto Rico includes the results of a number of federal policies, some that were helpful to the island, some that weren't. But a change in the policy – particularly in recent years – helped to create this dynamic. And I think there has been a noticeable lack of responsibility in Washington across the board for addressing the challenge that Puerto Rico faces now. I think it deserves the help of our federal government. You want to add?

Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez: Since 1999, when Congress repealed – and the administration repealed Section 936, there has been a disinvestment for investors to open up operations in Puerto Rico. So, pharma – that was a big, big industry in Puerto Rico – basically left. That model was not replaced by anything by the federal government. So coupled with the collapse of the national markets in 2008, it was felt dramatically in Puerto Rico and the fact that Puerto Rico – Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico pay the same amount of taxes when it

comes to Social Security and Medicare, and yet they do not get the same type of funding from the federal government. All of this has contributed to the fiscal crisis that we are witnessing in Puerto Rico and of course some decisions made by the previous governor. When this governor assumed his governorship – was sworn into office, he inherited \$72 billion dollars. It was not his making, and he has done everything that the federal government has asked him to do, including Secretary Lew, but at this point, it is the wrong – we need to get the administration to step in. And the pressure is going to continue to mount because Puerto Ricans in the mainland will continue to exert the kind of political influence. If anyone wants to, to win the – presidency, they have to go to Florida. If they want to go – if they want to win Florida, they need to win central Florida and that means Puerto Rican voters.

Mayor: Thanks, everyone.

###