

Transcript: Mayor Eric Adams Delivers Remarks in Preparation for the 2022 Atlantic Hurricane Season

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Jasmine Blackwell, Public Affairs Specialist, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: Our speakers today are NOAA Administrator Dr. Rick Spinrad, New York City Mayor Eric Adams, New York City Emergency Management First Deputy Commissioner Christina Farrell, and FEMA Administrator Deanne Chriswell. And now we will begin with remarks from Dr. Spinrad.

Dr. Richard Spinrad, Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric

Administration: Thank you, Jasmine. And good morning everyone. First I want to make sure and thank everyone for joining us today for the announcement of NOAA's 2022 Atlantic Hurricane Season Outlook. It really is a pleasure to be with you today. Mayor Adams, First Deputy Commissioner Farrell, and FEMA Administrator Dan Chriswell, with whom we've developed an extraordinarily effective working relationship. Thank you for that. And I've got to say hello to Commissioner Bray, my old friend as well, Jackie.

Dr. Spinrad: Particular thanks to the New York City Department of Emergency Management for hosting us here at this site today.

Dr. Spinrad: Let me take just a moment and set the stage if I can. We just experienced two extremely active hurricane seasons marking the first time on record that two consecutive hurricane seasons exhausted the list of 21 storm names. If you go back two years, the 2020 hurricane season broke records across the board, and it's the most active season on record, with 30 named storms. The 2021 hurricane season, which is the third-most active year on record in terms of names of storms brought us 21 named storms, with impacts raging from the Appalachian Mountains, all the way to New England resulting in over \$78.5 billion in US damage.

Dr. Spinrad: One of those storms, Hurricane Ida of course, made a huge impact right here in New York City. Hundreds of miles north from where it made landfall, a still-powerful Hurricane Ida brought astounding record-breaking rainfall amounts up to nine or more inches in an extremely short amount of time to much of the tri-state area.

Dr. Spinrad: Despite early and dire warnings from the National Weather Service, stellar preparation by our partners, the severe flooding resulted in 27 direct drowning deaths, and many of which took place in historically underserved communities.

Dr. Spinrad: Hurricane Ida emphasized the vulnerability and consequences that tropical cyclones can bring to our coastal and inland areas. But we are encouraged by the continued coordinated efforts of federal, regional, state, city, and local partners to rescue, recover and rebuild after these events, and as equally important develop hazardous weather planning and mitigation efforts ahead of the next, which will ultimately lead to a more weather and climate-ready nation.

Dr. Spinrad: And a decade before Hurricane Ida, Hurricane Sandy brought a devastating five-to-eight foot storm surge to this region, brought tropical storm force winds, which damaged hundreds of thousands of homes, caused tree and power line damage that resulted in some residents going without power for one to two weeks, resulted in at least 65 fatalities in the tri-state area.

Dr. Spinrad: On a personal note, I'm a New York City boy myself and that storm resulted in the permanent displacement of my then-95-year-old mom from her apartment in Manhattan, and incidentally resulted in more than \$80 billion in damages.

Dr. Spinrad: And of course that storm wasn't unique. Other notable storms that have impacted the tri-state area included Gloria in 1985, Hurricane Donna in 1960, and Hurricane Carol in 1954.

Dr. Spinrad: These storms have taught us many lessons. One of the most important is that it's never too early to prepare for the devastating impacts of hurricanes. And while we're here today to preview an outlook of what trends will shape this year's hurricane season, it's crucial to remember that it only takes one storm to damage your home, neighborhood, and community. Preparedness is key to the resilience that we need, and now is the time to get ready for the upcoming hurricane season.

Dr. Spinrad: So now let's talk about the upcoming hurricane season. NOAA is predicting an above-normal 2022 Atlantic hurricane season, which would make this year the seventh consecutive above-normal season; specifically there's a 65% chance of an above-normal season, a 25% chance of a near-normal season, and just a 10% chance of a below-normal season.

Dr. Spinrad: For the range of storms expected, NOAA calls for a 70% probability of the following ranges: 14 to 21 named storms with top winds of at least 39 miles per hour, of these six to 10 will become hurricanes with top winds of at least 74 miles per hour, and of these three to six major hurricanes ranked as categories three, four, or five with top winds of at least 111 miles per hour.

Dr. Spinrad: Let me say a word about the accuracy of the forecasting and how NOAA's forecasts have improved in recent years to better predict the storms and protect life and property throughout the hurricane season.

Dr. Spinrad: Since the year 2000, we've seen a 57% improvement in the average 72-hour national hurricane center track error in the Atlantic basin. This can be attributed in part to NOAA's flagship weather model, the Global Forecast System, incorporating things like dropsondes and hurricane hunter flight data into its analysis.

Dr. Spinrad: Our improved track forecast has allowed us to more accurately pinpoint the area most at risk, which reduces the size of areas that may need to evacuate when a hurricane threatens. This improvement is illustrated in the National Hurricane Center's Track Forecast Cone, also known as the cone of uncertainty, which represents the probable track of the center of a tropical cyclone up to five days out. The cone of uncertainty has gotten significantly smaller since 2005.

Dr. Spinrad: We've also seen improvements in our intensity forecast. Forecasters can now more accurately predict changes to hurricane intensity early in a storm's life cycle. The National Hurricane Center's average intensity error is now 40% lower than it was in 2000.

Dr. Spinrad: Looking ahead, NOAA will triple our operational supercomputing capacity for weather and climate this summer. This upgrade will allow for more detailed, higher resolution Earth models that can handle larger ensembles of models, meaning more

numerous calculations, more advanced physical considerations, and improved capability to assimilate the data collected out in the storm.

Dr. Spinrad: Along with better science, will ultimately make way for better hurricane forecast model guidance for years to come, which is what the forecasters, of course, rely on.

Dr. Spinrad: So before I close, I'd like to take a moment to give a special thanks to the skilled and dedicated forecasters at the National Hurricane Center in Miami who work around the clock to deliver timely and accurate forecasts each and every hurricane season, better systems, better sensors, better satellites, better aircraft, of course are critical; it really boils down to the people who make the forecasts; as well as the hurricane hunters, both ours and those of the U.S. Air Force Reserve out of Keesler Air Force Base, who fly hundreds of hours each hurricane season to support critical hurricane forecasting and research, and the numerous members of the emergency management community who are so critical to protecting lives and property, and last but not least the forecasters at the National Weather Service forecast offices around the country who work year round to provide weather forecasts, watches, and warnings that the entire nation can depend on.

Dr. Spinrad: I also want to call out the experts at the Climate Prediction Center who develop the seasonal outlooks, run the models, assimilate the data, including the hurricane seasonal outlook, which are used as a tool by decision makers, and planners, and emergency managers, and the public when planning for the season ahead. So with that, I conclude my remarks. It is my pleasure now to turn it over to Mayor Adams. Mr. Mayor?

Mayor Eric Adams: Thank you very much. Remember the good old days when you're lucky if you have one camera to hear this forecast, now we are glued to the TV, we're worried about hurricane seasons, because now the hurricane seasons, they have taken an entirely new meaning, and we are concerned about not only the damage to property, but also lives loss. We have to refocus to this new reality of dealing with the change in our environment and how it impacts us every day.

Mayor Adams: And let's be clear, this information is vital and it's crucial. It's crucial for the men and women who are assigned here, both the commission and the deputy commission and this entire team, because it allowed us to be prepared. And we cannot

thank our federal partners enough for giving this information in a timely fashion, and using technology to predict what is about to happen, and how the inclement weather could impact our daily lives in responding to emergencies.

Mayor Adams: And this is not new to New York. We know 10 years ago, Hurricane Sandy hit our city. We remember the catastrophic flooding that submerged our city and 44 New Yorkers died during that storm. As a state senator moving throughout the entire area, we saw how it impacted us.

Mayor Adams: And just last year, the remnants of Hurricane Ida caused torrential rains and flash flooding that killed 13 New Yorkers in basement apartments. I remember being out that night, moving around the borough, the city, and saw the Brooklyn Bridge flood for the first time in my entire life, and that sent a clear message.

Mayor Adams: So when it comes to coastal storms, hurricanes and floods, preparation is everything. And today this announcement is allowing all of our agencies and New Yorkers to be prepared. That's why we are here today with partners from NOAA, FEMA and the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services.

Mayor Adams: It's going to take real partnership for us to combat these unprecedented levels of storms that we are seeing in our city and in our entire country. And I want every New Yorker to be ready, because once we are giving the information, once the agencies are in place, it's going to come down to New Yorkers also participating in this partnership.

Mayor Adams: New York has six evacuation zoned areas that may have to be evacuated in case of severe flood issues. Zone One includes those communities most at risk, especially low-lying coastal areas and waterfront communities, and Zone Six is lower area, lower risk; but knowing your zone could have you prepared when the information is put out, and every New Yorker should know their zone. I know my zone, City Hall is Zone Six, and Gracie Mansion is not zoned. And we are going to do our part to make sure that every New Yorker's using a mapping system will know exactly where their zones are located.

Mayor Adams: Second thing that's important is preparation, proper planning shared with friends and families, have food, have supplies, have go bags. And particularly if your loved one may need some form of medicine, you should be prepared to have it in

the go bag, or ready to put in the bag, listen to the warnings, and make sure you let your neighbors know exactly if they are not aware of the urgency of a particular storm.

Mayor Adams: And know your neighbors; this is a moment where we should know each other, particularly those who are elders or shut in. We should make sure that we check on them and have a line of communication. We can do it block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, partnering with our community boards, our faith-based institutions. We're going to do a briefing with all of our faith-based leaders as we move into this season to ensure that they're part of the deployment plan.

Mayor Adams: In New York City we know we have the best emergency management team anywhere. In fact, they leave here and they move to other levels of FEMA. Commissioner Chriswell came straight from her role as the commissioner of New York City Emergency Management Office. We have the best, and they move to higher levels in their profession.

Mayor Adams: And our New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services Commissioner Bray came from New York City's Emergency Management background as well. We continue to move through the system and help the entire country, if not the entire state. With their leadership and their help we together can ensure that we save the lives of New Yorkers and be prepared. We must be smart, we must be safe, and we must be prepared. And no matter what happens, FEMA, Homeland Security, Office of Emergency Management. We have the backs of New Yorkers in the state and so I want to now turn it over to our deputy commissioner here, Commissioner Farrell. Commissioner.

Christina Farrell, First Deputy Commissioner, New York City Emergency Management: Good morning. I want to welcome everyone here to New York City Emergency Management and to the city's Emergency Operation Center, even though it's very full. I think we prefer it here with press than filled after a storm. I want to thank all our partners, including Dr. Spinrad from NOAA, Deanne Chriswell, FEMA administrator and our former commissioner, welcome back, Jackie Bray, the commissioner of New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, Joanne Ariola, who's the chairperson of the New York City Council Committee on Fire and Emergency Management, and of course, Mayor Adams. I also want to welcome a very special person who's with us today, Famen Ahmed. He's a ninth grader at Nest High School in Lower Manhattan. He's our commissioner for the day. He won an

essay contest from essays across the city, and he is the future of emergency management, so we were very happy he would take a day off from school and join us.

Farrell: As emergency managers, we know that preparedness will save lives. Through our work we make sure we help all communities safely and equitably to prepare for and recover from hurricanes. As has been said, we see that one storm can have a devastating impact on New Yorkers and their communities. We know hurricanes won't wait and neither should you. With the start of the 2022 Atlantic hurricane season just days away, you can be prepared and we encourage you all to take the first step. And as the mayor said, please know your zone.

Farrell: If you live in one of the six evacuation zones, you may be ordered to evacuate for your own safety by emergency management and by the mayor if a dangerous storm is approaching. If ordered to evacuate, it is vital that New Yorkers follow city officials' guidance. It's very easy to find out what zone you live in. You can visit nyc.gov/knowyourzone or you can call 311. More than 3 million New Yorkers live in the city's six hurricane evacuation zones. To encourage New Yorkers to know their zone and prepare for hurricane season, we are once again running our Know Your Zone awareness campaign. Starting next week, New Yorkers will see new Know Your Zone ads on bus shelters, bike pumps, storefronts, online in newspapers, and other places across the city.

Farrell: But even for New Yorkers who don't live in hurricane evacuation zones, extreme weather, as we have seen, can impact. Make sure that you stay informed with emergency information during hurricane season and throughout the year. The best way to do that in New York City is to sign up to receive emergency updates from Notify NYC, the city's free emergency alert program. It's available in 14 languages, including American Sign Language, so please visit nyc.gov/knowyourzone for more information, including how to sign up for Notify NYC. Thank you and it's my privilege to introduce Deanne Chriswell, FEMA administrator.

Deanne Chriswell, Administrator, Federal Emergency Management

Agency: Thanks, Christina. Good morning, everybody. First, I'd like to recognize Administrator Spinrad. Our partnership has been excellent during my time in office and the relationship that FEMA has with NOAA really helps us get the information out to the public so we can make sure that we are helping people before, during, and after disasters. And I'd like to say how great it is to be back here at New York City

Emergency Management, seeing my old colleagues. It has really been just such an honor to remember serving here and to be able to come back now in this role. I couldn't be more proud of the amazing work that New York City Emergency Management continues to do every day to help New Yorkers. And Mayor Adams, thank you for joining us today. It's great to see you and thank you for your ongoing commitment and support of New York City Emergency Management. They do so much good for New Yorkers.

Chriswell: As you heard today from Administrator Spinrad, we're looking at another similar season for hurricane preparedness, but that doesn't mean that we should take it lightly, right? As we saw from Hurricane Sandy or Superstorm Sandy, it doesn't even have to be a hurricane to cause such devastation to communities. And so for years, the predictive weather data that we've gotten from NOAA has really helped us, helped FEMA, in our ability to support critical decision making and not just at FEMA, but also at the state and local level. That predictive modeling that they put out and the accuracy that they've been able to improve over the years has made our jobs easier in helping to get information out and warn the public when they're facing these threats. So whether we face 3 storms or 30 storms, I'd like you to know that FEMA, we are ready for this hurricane season.

Chriswell: We are going to continue to maintain a very strong forward leaning presence. We want to be able to make sure that we are putting personnel, commodities, and equipment in place before the storm hits so we are ready to respond and support the communities that may have been impacted by the storm. We have our commodities pre-staged, ready for rapid response operations, spanning from the Pacific to the Caribbean to the Eastern Seaboard. And we have thousands of expert response personnel at the national, as well as our regional level, that are ready to support lifesaving and life sustaining operations.

Chriswell: So my question to the public today is, "Are you ready?" We must not forget that just last year, Hurricane Ida made a nine-state destructive trek across the United States. It affected coastal, urban, and suburban communities. This shows me that no one is immune from the effects of these tropical storms.

Chriswell: So FEMA has an urgent call to everyone, a call to action for everybody that lives in these areas. The time to get ready is now. As this year marks the 10th anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, which although, again, was not classified as a hurricane, it brought devastating impacts, so there are actions that you can take today.

The first one, know your risk. It's incredibly important that you understand what your and your family's risk is. Again, as we saw from Hurricane Ida, from the coast to the Midwest to the Eastern seaboard, people had impacts across nine states. Know what your risk is. As you heard from Christina, First Deputy Commissioner, know your zone here in New York City. But across the US, know what your risk is.

Chriswell: Once you know what your risk is, then you can make a plan to protect your family. It's really important to better understand what your unique risk is going to be and put that plan in place for, if you have to evacuate, where are you going to go? How are you going to communicate with your family and your loved ones? What do you need to take with you?

Chriswell: Sign up for emergency weather alerts. You heard how you can sign up for them here in New York City, but you can also download the FEMA app and get up-to-date wireless emergency alerts.

Chriswell: And then finally, and I think one of the most important pieces that I can share is listen to your local officials. Listen to them when they tell you to evacuate or shelter in place. It's incredibly important that you follow their advice because it's also going to protect you and your family, but it will also allow our first responders to continue to do the important work that they need to do. And so the first thing, or the most important thing that I will ask everybody is that prepared families are safe families and a prepared nation is a resilient nation. So listen to your local officials, know what your risk is, and make that plan to make sure that you can protect your families. Thank you.

Blackwell: Thank you, Administrator Chriswell. Before we move on to the Q&A portion of our media briefing, I would like to introduce Matthew Rosencrans, the lead hurricane season outlook forecaster with NOAA's Climate Prediction Center, who is available to answer questions about the science behind NOAA's hurricane outlook. For those of you who are joining us by webinar, I would like to remind you that you have the ability to ask written questions using the questions box to the right of your screen. Please be sure to include your full name and your media affiliation when asking your question and we will do our best to answer all incoming questions in the time available. Now, we will take questions from our first reporter in the room. You, sir?

Question: Hi, Steve Burns, WCBS Radio. I know there's so much talk about Sandy and Ida and so much in the way of following advice here, but the advice in advance of both

of those storms was notoriously terrible. There were no evacuation orders, that they came very late. What kind of outreach changes and public policy changes have we seen at these agencies to be more proactive in their advanced warnings and not see a repeat of what we saw with Sandy and Ida's very little warning?

Blackwell: Would you like to take?

Farrell: Hi, thank you for the question. So for Hurricane Sandy, there actually was a citywide evacuation. We had different zones at the time, but we evacuated several hundred thousand people. We have learned a lot since Hurricane Sandy. As you noted, a year ago we had Hurricane Ida. There was not an evacuation put in place. We had not seen rain like that, what happened overnight, the multiple inches per hour, but we know it'll happen again. We have done a lot of work with our federal partners, city, state, everyone. We started enhanced messaging last September, as we saw weather in September and October, and we've been doing that. It is very hard work. We need everyone in the city to come together. We know there are people at risk that live in situations that compound their risk, but we are incredibly dedicated. We've been working the whole off-season and we will message early, we will message often in all the languages that New Yorkers need. But as the administrators and others said, we need the media, we need our elected officials, we need faith-based leaders to help us when that message comes out and we need New Yorkers to pay attention and to follow the advice.

Question: And if I could briefly follow up with you or the mayor, obviously the big story with Ida was basement apartments and how at risk they are. The former mayor mentioned a census. I wanted to see what kind of effort is ongoing in terms of figuring out how many basement apartments there are, what their risk is, and how they can be protected. Thank you.

Mayor Adams: Still underway. We want to legalize basement apartments. There's legislation pending now in Albany. We hope we get the support from our state lawmakers to make it happen, but we're still underway of getting the exact total account of those basement apartments. And also, as the deputy commissioner stated, the goal is to use a universal language to all of our agencies. And what we're looking at is, how do we ensure a smart system that all of the agencies are kicking in gear at the same time? Know what's expected ahead of time, similar to what we do with the terrorist threat. Everyone knows their roles and we know how to coordinate in a better effort.

Coordination, communication, and implementation, that's the key to protect New Yorkers during a storm.

Question: So just sorry, just following up on that. So if there is a storm coming, someone lives in a basement apartment, is there any specific outreach to let them know, "Hey, danger might be on the way. You might need to evacuate?"

Mayor Adams: Yes, we're looking at a text messaging system as well as a communication system to let people know beforehand what their zones are, what areas they live in. And as the deputy commissioner indicated, we're talking mother nature. This stuff moves. None of us expected the level of rain we witnessed the last time and being able to shift the communications in a rapid manner by proactively knowing what are the areas that are prone to flooding, that is extremely helpful. I never saw a flooding like that in Crown Heights. Who would've imagined that level of water? And so we have to be able to communicate fast and shift because these storms are coming rapidly and they're coming in different ways.

Question: Okay, there, Mr. Mayor. Hi. This is for FEMA or for you. I was just looking at the emergency management map that you're sending folks to. I looked up one of the addresses where somebody died during Ida. It's not in any flood zone. So I'm curious if there has been a new plan to adjust for zones but it has to do with flooding rain flooding rather than coastal flooding. It doesn't seem like where you're sending people reflects that current thing.

Mayor Adams: Of my understanding that area, if you're talking about the one in Queens—

Question: Just on the edge of a flood zone, but where somebody died in their basement apartment [inaudible].

Mayor Adams: Right, because part of the issues that we are facing, and that's why we put \$2.5 billion into the sewer upgrades in certain areas, part of the problem we're facing is also drainage. We have to really re-examine how we're building out our sewer systems. We may be building out some of our sewer systems based on storms of the past and not storms of today. If we cannot get rid of the water of this flood zones is going to deal with those dangerous areas based on how the normal flooding areas, but if we don't do a good job in catch basin cleanup, making sure the sewer systems can

handle the water, there's so much more, we have to do inland that we are moving towards to correct.

Question: Maybe this is, maybe for FEMA, then. Would the warnings go to people who aren't in any zone, then, if they're in low-lying areas that might flood from rain? Is that [inaudible].

Chriswell: Yeah. I think what I would say is when we talk about evacuations for flooding from hurricanes, we're typically talking about storm surge inundation. And so the flood zones are based on the type of inundation that we can expect and the flooding that we can expect from storm surge because the majority of fatalities that we see from hurricanes come from storm surge. When we talk about the remnants of these tropical storms, and as Hurricane Ida went across nine states and then reached the Eastern Seaboard, it brought a variety of other hazards, heavy rain. The type of evacuation and flood zones are not designed for rain events. It also brought tornadoes that we saw in New Jersey. And so again, it's incredibly important that individuals take the time to understand what their risk is. And if they live in a place that only has one form of egress, it's incredibly important that they listen to the potential threats that might be coming to their area so they can take appropriate action.

Question: I got a question. As far as the evacuations go, what is the plan to make that run as smoothly as possible? What logistics are in place to address asking many people to move, and I'm imagining in pretty short notice when roads might be flooded, subway tunnels might be flooded. Could you kind of lay out how that will work?

Chriswell: Yeah. An important question, and I will go back to understanding and knowing your risk. And so when we're talking about evacuations from storm surge, we typically have some warning for storm surge so people can take action and put the plan that they made in place. But we are seeing these storms develop faster, they're developing more frequently, and so it's giving our state and local emergency managers less time to actually warn the public.

Chriswell: FEMA does not issue evacuation orders. That comes from the state and the local level, and they have plans that they put in place in how they're going to do that and when they make that decision. We support their operations. We can support it through mass care efforts, bringing supplies and commodities to shelters, and reimbursing for

any of the activities that they put in place. But the state and the locals, they determine when they're going to issue an evacuation order and then we can support them.

Question: Mayor Adams, on the city level, could you offer some more detail on what the plans are and how evacuations would work?

Mayor Adams: It really depends on knowing your evacuation location, your site, your route, and that's the role we must play. We have to do a good job, if not a great job, in identifying what are the routes, where your evacuation location, pair them with the zones and that is what we are putting together.

Mayor Adams: Because late information could be deadly information and our goal is to make sure that we communicate. I cannot emphasize that enough. Communication, communication, communication. And knowing what that information is early allows us to do a proper job of evacuating and the routes to take. If you're living in the Rockaways, if you live in Coney Island, if you're living in those coastal areas where there's historical problems, we want to make sure we evacuate appropriately.

Question: Will those routes be laid out for [crosstalk].

Mayor Adams: One moment, hold on one moment. Can you control this? Because you know how you guys come sometime.

Question: In the zone plan you guys have those six zones. Each zone, will residents get a sense from the city, these are the available routes you should use, or these are the ones you shouldn't use?

Mayor Adams: Yes.

Question: Okay. Thank you.

Question: What has the city done to [crosstalk].

Mayor Adams: Hold on, hold on, hold on, hold on. We going to do this through one person.

Question: Mayor, I'm Jack Morphet from the New York Post. What is your plan B if 421 dies in Albany? What is your plan?

Blackwell: If I could just jump in, for the reporters in the room, we'd like to make sure that we have time to ask questions specifically about the hurricane outlook, which is what we're here to announce today. So I'd like to take this question here from Al Roker.

Question: Mayor, administrator, just curious, we're talking about storm drains, things like that. This is all based on what's happening now, modeling now. Climate change obviously is changing that. What plans are you making in coordination with FEMA to look ahead towards what is going to be happening?

Chriswell: Such an incredibly important question. We're seeing these storms happen more frequently, they're lasting longer. I'll go back to even Hurricane Ida again. As it became a category four hurricane then it stayed a category four hurricane for four hours over Southern Louisiana. I mean, that's just remarkable, causing an incredible amount of damage.

Chriswell: But we're also seeing the increase in the rapid intensification of our wildfires. And so we're seeing such a dramatic change in the type of weather events that we're facing as a result of climate change that we really have to get ahead of that. And so one of the biggest things that we are doing that FEMA is doing is putting a lot more emphasis on the other parts of our mission, which is about preparedness and mitigation. Individual preparedness, incredibly important as we've already talked about, but reducing the impacts that we're seeing from these storms. As we work to try to change the effects that we're seeing from climate change, we have to be able in the meantime, reduce the impacts that we're seeing from the severe weather events.

Chriswell: And that's why we were given close to \$5 billion last year to put forward to communities. Such as New York City received one of the BRIC projects to help reduce the impacts that we're seeing from climate change. We have to continue to do that.

Chriswell: And we're doing a lot of outreach, especially to communities that maybe haven't thought about the types of projects that they can do and the types of mitigation efforts that they can do. Because we want to move away from this incremental approach to hazard mitigation, this house by house kind of approach. Incredibly important, and we still have to do that, but we also have to look at it from a system as a

community and what can we do to better protect an entire community so we can reduce their impacts that they're seeing from these types of weather events.

Blackwell: I'd like to now take some questions from reporters that are joining via webinar. Our first question from the webinar comes from Jared Silverman with WFAB. Jared is asking, to what do you attribute the uptick in active hurricane seasons in the Atlantic in recent years, specifically the role El Niño or lack thereof plays in the forecast and outcome.

Dr. Spinrad: Yeah. Thank you. That's actually a really nice segue to the comments you just heard from Administrator Chriswell. So we are in an active period. We've been in active periods before, the 50s and early 60s were an active period as well. There are certain ingredients, if you will, that drive the intensity and the frequency of hurricanes, whether we're in a La Niña cycle or an El Niño cycle, climatological effects is one of those. We are in a continuing La Niña cycle right now. Impacts on things like the temperature of the ocean in the Atlantic, which is higher right now, also affect that. And if we have a particularly active west Africa monsoon season as we do now, that also affects it. So those are the kinds of factors that we're looking at right now that play into the outlook that you just saw.

Blackwell: Thank you, Dr. Spinrad. Our next question from the webinar comes from Andrew with FOX 4 in Fort Myers. The question is, with the forecast of three straight years of an above normal hurricane season, how is climate change impacting our hurricanes. Dr. Spinrad or Matt?

Dr. Spinrad: So I think I just answered that, but I will add that as a note of caution, we can't simply point to a particular storm, whether it's a strong storm like Ida or any others, and say, "There that is climate change." The attribution is more in the patterns, the tendencies, the mode that we're in. And so the factors I just alluded to, which are a component of climate change, that La Nina impact, the warming, tropical ocean waters, the west African monsoon, are the climatological factors that we're looking at that affect this outlook.

Blackwell: We received a question from Joseph with the Staten Island Advance. Joseph is asking, NOAA previously released an adjusted set of climate averages to determine what is considered normal in terms of national temperatures. Is NOAA

considering making similar changes when assessing what is considered normal for Atlantic hurricane season and what is the consistent above average projections?

Dr. Spinrad: Yes, Mr. Ray, I will. So we regularly, as a matter of operations, revisit the outlook in mid hurricane season. So you can expect to see that, that's a standard procedure for us. And I would say that we will continue to monitor the long term trends in intensity and frequency of these storms as we've done for years. We're not necessarily in the business of recalibrating, if you will, what is average. That's a statistical determination from the data that we get. So we'll be looking at the trends over the decades to provide an indication of how things are changing over the years.

Blackwell: Do we have any questions from reporters in the room that are specific to the hurricane outlook forecast? I think I saw your hand first?

Question: Rebecca Greenberg, New York One. This is also for Administrator Spinrad. Is there a specific reason why New York City was chosen as the location for this year's announcement?

Blackwell: The question in the room was, was there a specific reason why New York City was chosen for the location of this announcement this year. Dr. Spinrad?

Dr. Spinrad: I think it's safe to say there are two factors. One of it is we're recognizing 10 years after Sandy, it seems appropriate to take a look back and see how things have improved, but also recognize the work that we need to do. And then of course, the impact of Ida last year is one that's fresh in many people's memories, and we felt it most appropriate to come here and talk with folks. There is another aspect. A lot of people throughout the country tend to think of hurricanes as an isolated phenomenon in the Gulf or in the Southeast. And part of our message here by being in New York is that it is very much a large phenomenon affecting a large portion of the population and the geography of the United States.

Blackwell: Yes.

Question: Mayor Adams, your predecessor after Ida said that the city can expect to see mandatory evacuations, travel bans, et cetera. Do you plan to continue that policy if things get bad?

Mayor Adams: Yes.

Blackwell: Okay. We'll take our next question from reporters that are joining us via webinar. Can you please talk about the factors that went into the forecast? La Niña, sea surface temperatures, loop current. This will be the seventh above average hurricane season, what's driving that? And that question came from Ginny with WLRN public radio.

Dr. Matthew Rosencrans, Lead Hurricane Season Outlook Forecaster, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: Sure. So the main factors that we looked at for the hurricane outlook, the above normal sea surface temperatures in the Atlantic, which are still above, the ongoing La Niña right now, the latest weekly value for that was minus one and that's forecasted to stay throughout the entire hurricane season. We've also looked at the winds over the Atlantic Ocean which are more favorable for the disturbances that come off of Africa to develop into hurricanes. So that more favorable environment just leads to a little bit tilt in the odds to having an above normal hurricane season.

Blackwell: Do we have any other questions from reporters in the room specifically about the hurricane outlook? Yes.

Question: Yeah, I'd love to know what, from the New Normal report that was released from the last administration that Mayor Adams just said he was following, has been done to protect New Yorkers since Hurricane Ida? This press conference has been a lot about personal responsibility and preparedness, but what has the city, state, and federal done to protect New Yorkers since then?

Blackwell: The question is about a report that was released last year about the New Normals. What has the city, state, and federal partners done to protect New Yorkers since then?

Farrell: Hey, so as you noted, the New Normal report was released a couple weeks after Ida and we have been working, Emergency Management, the mayor's office, Environmental Protection, all of our different partners on the different aspects of that to prepare as we get into the storm season. As I mentioned, we already started enhanced messaging and we've done a lot. We were working in the off season doing focus

groups, speaking to non-English speakers about the messaging to see if it was effective, how we can work.

Farrell: As I mentioned, Notify NYC, we now have a million subscribers. It is available in 14 languages, but most of those subscribers are in English and we know the people that need the information the most may not get it all the time. So we are continuing, we also have expanded our Strengthening Communities program, which was started during COVID, but we've increased the funding and that is working with nonprofit partners, community based partners, in the most vulnerable areas. And we've added people from the areas in Queens and Brooklyn that saw a lot of flooding. And those are giving money to community groups, to work with us, to make sure that people are prepared, they're getting the message.

Farrell: And then there are infrastructure and other pieces that are working through DEP and the other agencies, but we are incorporating the best practices that were identified there along with the priorities of the new administration. As the administrator mentioned, we have received federal funding through BRIC. There are other grants available, and we also have very strong partners in the state. So it is a large undertaking. Obviously climate change is here to stay, but we are looking at all the pieces to better prepare New Yorkers.

Question: Just to follow up, there were two updates after that report, but the new administration hasn't released any. Will you commit to doing that?

Farrell: We are doing it in a more holistic way, looking at the different priorities and how this administration wants to update New Yorkers. You know, maybe not through the updates of the report, but through other means such as this press conference.

Blackwell: Our next question comes from Maggie Astor with the New York Times. The loop current looks similar this year to the way it did in the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season, when several hurricanes underwent rapid intensification over a warm loop current in the Gulf. Is this one of the factors influencing this year's forecast and if so, what can you tell us about the anticipated impact?

Dr. Rosencrans: Yeah, so loop current does look like 2005, but it depends on if a storm actually moves over that loop current and forecasting the track of storms, specific track of the storms, it's not something we can do beyond the about a week timeframe. So

whether or not a storm moves over the loop current and it actually impacts it and helps it undergo rapid intensification, it's not something we can address at this far of a lead time.

Blackwell: Our next question comes from Seth Bornstein and he's asking, what's the forecast ACE and what factors in addition to La Nina go into this above average forecast? And additionally, what is the forecasted accumulated cyclone energy index? Matt, do you want to take that one?

Dr. Rosencrans: Yep. So the forecast ACE range, the Accumulated Cyclone Energy, that's a total measure for the entire season, which accounts for both intensity and duration of tropical storms and hurricanes, that's forecast to be 115 to 200% of normal, so could be as active as twice as normal.

Blackwell: Our next question comes from Andrea with the Houston Chronicle and she's asking will the Saharan dust affect this hurricane season? And if so, how? Matt?

Dr. Rosencrans: What's that? Oh, all right. So yeah, so the Saharan air layer, the Saharan dust, it does impact. Typically earlier in the season, as you get waves that come off of Africa, they interact with the dry air and can keep down some of the parts of the season. As you move into the earlier parts of the season, it's less of a factor, especially in years when you have an active West African monsoon, you can actually keep down some of that dust. So those outbreaks typically last six days to 10 days, so they can come and go throughout the season. It's not likely to impact the entire season as a whole.

Blackwell: And Matt, this last one will likely be for you. If you could tell us why NOAA chooses to use a range for storms expected. For example, why are there 14 to 21 name storms expected this year? That question comes from Justine with The Verge.

Dr. Rosencrans: Sure. NOAA uses a range, rather a specific number to account for some of the uncertainties in making these forecasts. They're made based off of measurements of the ocean, measurements of the atmosphere, and we don't have exact measurements of those on the entire planet all the time. There's a lot of uncertainties in that. There are uncertainties in the weather models that we run. They are calculations made with certain assumptions and they don't account for every single

possibility. So these forecasts are given with an accuracy range of about 70%, and then we've been pretty solid getting close to that every year, since about 2008. So thanks.

Blackwell: Thank you, Matt. And that appears to be our last, sorry, we have one more question in the room.

Question: Mr. Mayor, you said that you want to make changes to the landmark climate laws [inaudible], how do you square that with talking about these greater impacts that climate change is going to have on the city and also, do you still think that [inaudible].

Mayor Adams: You talking about Local Law 97?

Question: Yeah.

Mayor Adams: Okay. I didn't say that. Next.

Blackwell: All right. So we are now out of time for the day. So I'd like to thank you all for joining us, especially NOAA Administrator, Dr. Spinrad, Mayor Adams, First Deputy Commissioner Farrell, Administrator Chriswell, and our lead hurricane season forecaster, Matthew Rosencrans for joining us today. If there are any additional questions or we were unable to get to your question before the end of the session today, please do not hesitate to reach out to me again. My email is Jasmine dot Blackwell at NOAA.gov. And I can also be reached by phone at (202) 841-9184. If you don't already have it, the news release along with the accompanying graphics are already available on NOAA.gov and the live stream from this call will also be available online, linked in our press release later this afternoon. Thank you all and have a wonderful day.

[...]

Question: ...Cause he had been afraid to take the subway. So today there's a hearing at the Taxi Limousine Commission about possibility that you would either approve of raising the rates that Uber drivers have, or also change their surge procedures. The question that a lot of people are raising is why would you want to do that at a time when people are afraid to take the subway and a lot of communities, the Asian community, for example, have written letters saying that they want the prices to be held down, because

they want to be able to take Uber, Lyft and other poor ride vehicles, because they're just afraid to get out the subway. So how do you feel about the wages? How do you feel about the surges and also what would you say to New Yorkers who are really afraid to take the subway now?

Mayor Adams: Well, okay. Let's do it in pieces. The City Council, they handle what they do. I'm not in control of what they do in the city council.

Question: Just wondering how you feel about it.

Mayor Adams: I don't want to speculate on what they're doing, whatever method of transportation we have, it should be affordable. It should be safe. Our subway system is the centralized method of moving throughout the city. And there are many people who cannot afford to take Uber. They cannot afford to be in a vehicle. They cannot afford to drive. So we must make our system safe. And that is what I'm going to do. In spite of the pushback of many people who state we should not have police officers on our system. We should not put more on our system. I have been ignoring all of that noise, making sure we get police officers there. So no matter how people move around the city, because we have Uber drivers who are robbed and shot, we have people who have their cars hijacked. And so what we cannot do is view our transportation methods based on the inability of keeping people safe. That is the focus. People must be safe, no matter how they move around the city.

Question: Members of the Asian community who have been the victims of a lot of anti-Asian hate and who prefer to take a car service, be it a green car or Uber or whatever, because they're afraid to get on this subway. Don't you think you should try to keep those rates affordable for people who find that's a better means of transportation for them?

Mayor Adams: Well, hate crimes take place on the streets also. So the goal is not to have only certain parts of transportation safe. For all groups, the city must be safe. And that is what I must do as the mayor of the city and my Police Department in every agency that is connected. And that's what we're going to do.

Question: Mr. Mayor, about a block from City Hall for the past few weeks, there's been a man selling pepper spray. And it's being billed as to use if needed on the subway. Are you concerned at this point about people arming themselves? I mean, it's not a gun, but

still, about arming themselves to protect themselves on the train? And I have one follow up after that.

Mayor Adams: We don't want people arming themselves to protect themselves. We want people to have faith and trust in their law enforcement entities to keep them safe. And that is the job that I have to do. And my police commissioner and all of our agencies must do. I'm not familiar with the person who's selling mace on the corner, but we don't believe people should do that. And that's why I stated we need to be extremely concerned about the Supreme Court ruling of the right to carry. We saw what happened in Atlanta a few days ago. Atlanta just removed many of the barriers to purchasing a gun, it's unacceptable. And so we can't have open carry in a densely populated city like New York. That concerns me.

Question: The other question I had, you mentioned meeting with business leaders about the crime situation and the subways. Have you spoken to them? What feedback have you got from those guys? Could you share a little bit of that?

Mayor Adams: Well, prior to taking office, I started the process of fostering a good relationship with our business leaders in the city. That was important to me because businesses hire low wage employees, middle wage, high income. And that's the financial ecosystem that we must support. As well as speaking with small business owners, we've had meetings with small business owners because not only are the large corporation employees using our subway system, but if you work in a restaurant, you take this train to and from. When I'm on the train, I speak to restaurant employees. I speak with people who are messengers. And so the goal is we're meeting with our large companies and our small companies. We're rolling out, giving them information on what happened here, giving them information on our deployment plan in our subway system, update them on our encampment issues.

Mayor Adams: Because that was one of the number one issues we heard about on the subways, homelessness encampment. That was a real problem. So we want to give them information, keep them informed on what we are doing and really just have an open dialogue with our companies. They are saying the same things. Their employees are concerned about the safety on the subway system. And we are addressing that every day. Look in the city. Gun arrests have gone up. Homicides have gone down, shootings have gone down. You are starting to see the implementation of what we are attempting to do, of making sure the city is safe.

Question: Thanks. What is your backup plan if 421a dies in Albany, how will the city deal with housing affordability?

Mayor Adams: Well, I say this over and over again. My job is to present my case to Albany. I don't control Albany. Albany must make the decisions based on the case that I present and other cities across the country present, we're going to continue to encourage affordable housing. We're going to continue to encourage building in the city. We're hoping that 421a pass or 485 or have an extension at least a year. So we can study this more. I communicated that to the leader of the Assembly and the leader of the Senate. And hopefully they'll make a determination of that. We can continue to encourage development, particularly around housing in the city.

Question: On the subway, can I just ask one follow up question? Do you have an update on the new train shooting?

Mayor Adams: The Police Department will be releasing any information based on the apprehension. We have a suspect and based on the apprehension, they will update that information. The police commissioner will do so.

Question: Hi. I wanted to ask more about the city pitching to host the 2024 DNC. Just given that New York isn't a swing state and those conventions are typically held in battleground states. What's your pitch to national Democrats on why they should come to New York City?

Mayor Adams: You're right. Traditionally it's in the battleground state, but what we are learning is that because of the diversity of this city, we have the largest Jewish population outside of Israel. One of the largest Chinese population outside of China, largest South Asian, AAPI. New York is now being viewed as a place that speaks to America. And as you look to secure its base, by hosting it here, it's going to send the right message across the entire country. And I think it's a smart decision if they decide to have it here in New York, because they have a fantastic mayor here that will make sure it's done correctly.

Question: Mr. Mayor, on mayoral accountability, we're seeing the initial reports of an agreement starting to coalesce in Albany around three years and three additional members on the PEP wanted to see what your general feelings are about that

specifically on the PEP, I know you've said that's central to the accountability portion. Does that additional three members tilt the scale in any way?

Mayor Adams: Two things. One, that we don't know the final outcome. I know Albany. This is the week where so much gets done and we don't know the final outcome. There's a lot of rumors coming out of Albany. We have been having great conversations with both leaders, electeds, many people talked about our plan of how we communicate with Albany, but we got so many wins. One day we're going to realize that I got this and so mayoral accountability is important. We have a great chancellor and we are hoping that they come across and realize that we should be in charge of the school's system and be accountable to New Yorkers and parents. And so we're waiting for the final outcome and there's a lot of rumors coming out right now. We don't know until that bill has passed and the session is over. This is the last week. And lastly in school, when I came every day, they gave me a gold star. You usually get a gold star. You at all our press conference. You know that.

Mayor Adams: Thank you all. Thank you.