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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 2, 2015

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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS ON THE BRIAN LEHRER
SHOW ON WNYC TO DISCUSS EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR HURRICANE
JOAQUIN**

Brian Lehrer: Mr. Mayor, welcome back to WNYC. Hi.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you, Brian.

Lehrer: So, you may not be a weather man, but you know which way the wind blows. What's –

Mayor: The quote Dylan. Very good, Brian

Lehrer: – what's the latest you're being told about the threat to the city?

Mayor: Well, we've been in touch with National Weather Service and the National Hurricane Center and the good news is there's a decreasing likelihood that Joaquin will make a direct hit in this area. Now, as Yogi would've said, it ain't over until the fat lady sings. So we – you know, we're going to wait, obviously for a while to be able to see more information, but at this moment the news is good. The chances of a direct hit are decreasing. But we will continue all of our preparedness and our readiness activities because we have to be ready for any eventuality.

Lehrer: We've got a Dylan and a Yogi quote in the first 60 seconds here.

Mayor: We're doing good.

Lehrer: Hurricane paths are unpredictable, so are there still preparations that people of the city should be making?

Mayor: Absolutely. This is something we've learned from experience; we've learned from Sandy everyone should be ready. You should know which evacuation zone you are in in case we ever get into a situation where evacuation is necessary. We have a Know Your Zone effort, you can find out by calling 3-1-1 or going online – nyc.gov. You can also sign up for Notify NYC by going online, and get regular updates on the storm situation – either texts or email to you. But the bottom-line is people should have key possessions ready, key paperwork ready, go-bags, emergency supplies ready; know how they can stay in touch with loved ones. That's always smart because you're right, a hurricane can be unpredictable.

Lehrer: How better prepared is the city's infrastructure public and private than we were before Sandy.

Mayor: It's really night and day. We have a \$20 billion dollar resiliency plan that is being implemented as we speak. We've already had a huge impact in some of our most vulnerable areas. We got 9.8 miles of dunes that have been restored and strengthened; 10,000 linear feet of bulkheads have been put in place in key areas of Staten Island, Rockaways, Coney Island and other areas; 4.2 million cubic yards of sand have been spread on beaches to reinforce them. It's a very different reality in terms of the physical – it's a very different reality in terms of people's attitudes. I think – knowing that they have to be ready, and that they have to listen for any potential evacuation order in any situation. And certainly in terms of our agencies, there's a lot more training of folks ready to deploy in a situation; a lot more ability for agencies to work together in a crisis. So, we're in a much stronger position.

Lehrer: Is this the future? Heightened alerts, worry about mass transit shutdowns, and evacuations whenever a tropical storm or a winter blizzard heads our way at a lower threshold than in the past?

Mayor: Well I got a variation of that question yesterday. I want to be careful on this one. Hurricanes per se, obviously, we don't get too many hurricanes that cause major, major disruptions. Sandy was aberrant. But what I think we can say is extreme weather is becoming more common, and that is because of global warming. I do think we're going to have to be in a higher state preparedness than we were, say, a decade ago. And I do think people are going to take these warnings more seriously than they might have in the past, and be more prepared personally and on a family level. But I think at the same time we can say that preparedness is going to avert a lot of the problems and the results because we can see already that a lot of our buildings are much more able to sustain flooding than they were in the past; a lot of mechanicals have been moved out of the basements of buildings already. And our building code requires that going forward. You know, if we do experience extreme weather it's fair to say we're in a much better position to handle it now.

Lehrer: Kind of related – the Pope timed his visit to the city to speak at the U.N. Summit about climate change and he started lots of media debates. He had politicians talking back to him, and saying he's not a climate scientist – neither are the politicians. But do you think his attention to the issue can actually change policy.

Mayor: Absolutely. I think Pope Francis is the leading moral voice on this earth, and certainly the leading voice on the need for us to address climate change. I was invited with mayors from around the world to the Vatican in July. Something extraordinary – think about it Brian, the Pope calling mayors together to act on climate change. We've never seen anything like that before. I think he's changing the debate for the better, and we believe here in New York City we have to be leaders, obviously, we're firmly committed to the 80 percent reduction in emissions by 2050. And we're very focused on what we can do here in this city to set the pace. So we're retrofitting all our public buildings by 2025. We've gotten rid of the worst offenders in terms of the heating oil that used to be used in buildings in this city. We are on a track now to have the cleanest air quality in America by 2030. And another fact, we've doubled the usage of solar in this city in just the last two years between public sector and private sector. So New York City wants to set the pace for cities in this country to show that we can contribute to addressing climate change.

Lehrer: By the way, you're getting some push back from a listener on Twitter on a very important point. He says, 'Yogi didn't say it ain't over until the fat lady sings', Yogi said 'it ain't over until it's over.'

Mayor: I'm sorry I misquoted Yogi, and I apologize. But I will now take the opportunity to say my favorite Yogi quote, which is '90 percent of this game is half mental.'

Lehrer: There you go. That's true for politics as well as baseball?

Mayor: Exactly.

Lehrer: Also, on the climate front, I see you're calling for the city's pensions funds to divest of holdings in coal companies. Is that correct?

Mayor: Correct. Correct, we had to – look, we have a massive set of pension funds in this city – funds totaling \$160 billion dollars that has a big impact on the economy and certainly on the financial industry. We have to use that to achieve important changes in our society. So, what I'm calling for in the City of New York pension fund should not be involved in the coal industry in any way. We should get our investments out, and we should get other public pension funds to do the same because we have to start moving away aggressively from fossil fuels and towards renewables. So, what I'm calling for is that the city of New York pension fund should not be involved in the coal industry in any way. We should get our investments out and we should get other public pension funds to do the same because we have to start moving away aggressively from fossil fuels and towards renewables.

Lehrer: Also on the Pope – he seems to have changed the house leadership, given Speaker Boehner's decision to step down sooner, following the Pope's visit to Congress. Do you see any other potential impact from his U.S. trip? We talked about climate change – anything else?

Mayor: I think the fact that in this country in 2015 compared to even just 2014, the discussion of income inequality has leaped forward. And you see it – there was a very powerful New York Times poll a few months ago that showed this is now one of the central concerns on the minds of the American people across region, across party designation. I don't think we would talking about income inequality so sharply, and finally addressing solutions like progressive taxation and raising minimum wage and benefits, if it weren't for the moral voice of Pope Francis. I think he has given fuel to a lot of things that are happening on the ground, like the fight for a \$15 dollar minimum wage movement, which has been extraordinary around the country. I think having again the leading moral voice on the Earth consistently calling out the problem of income inequality and the destabilizing impact it has on a society has helped fuel the progress in this debate to the point now that it's finally being talked about regularly all over the country.

Lehrer: With the storm threats seeming to recede significantly, even though we just discussed how anything could still happen – are you still canceling your plans to do some national political events on national progressive politics this weekend?

Mayor: We're – at this point, everything's on hold. We still want to see more in terms of the direction of the storm. One of the things that I originally was scheduled to go to was the United

States Conference of Mayors meeting in Baltimore. And that's a gathering that's important because mayors are working together on an urban agenda to get the federal government to once again go back to investing in things like mass transit and affordable housing that, as you know, the federal government has moved away from over the last few decades. And mayors across the country are pushing to change that and get the federal government back in the business of supporting our infrastructure. So, that meeting is happening tomorrow in Baltimore. But, at this point, my plans are on hold.

Lehrer: What do you say to the push-back that you get about making those trips at all out of town?

Mayor: I think if you look at the history of New York City mayors, starting with Fiorello LaGuardia, who was one of the founder of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. And Fiorello was one of the people who actually helped to push some of the ideas that became the New Deal, and helped to turn around the economy of the country, and certainly New York City. I think we can see for decades and decades, New York City mayors have been key leaders in the debate over what urban America needs and how to push Washington DC to respond to the needs of our cities now. In the 1930s, our cities were much less central to our country. Now, as you know, we're an ever more urbanizing country. So much of our economy depends on our cities. New York City is one of the economic hubs obviously in the entire nation. So, of course, as mayor of New York City, it's my job to push Washington to do more for New York and for all cities. And I think it is my job as well to try and get the bigger policy changes that will help address income inequality in this city. 46 percent of New Yorkers at or near the poverty line because our minimum wage is too low, because our benefits are not guaranteed, because we don't have progressive taxation on the federal level, and therefore there aren't the resources to invest in things that would employ people and make the infrastructure changes we need. So, everything I'm working on with the progressive agenda is to have an impact on New York City. Of course, I hope it'll have an impact beyond, but all of this comes home to New York City. And the absence of these changes in federal policy are hurting our people.

Lehrer: Let me get you on just a couple of other things before we go. My guest is Mayor de Blasio, if you don't recognize the voice. Governor Cuomo was on NY-1 just a short time ago, and he talked about an additional \$1 billion dollar contribution to the MTA Capital Plan. He said he spoke with the city yesterday and that he thinks the city should pay a "fair share," which he deems to be 11 percent, and I see – that is, 11 percent of the capital plan. Today's Daily News says the city is discussing an additional billion-dollar contribution to the MTA Capital Plan. I know you and the governor have had back and forth on this. What can you confirm is new?

Mayor: Well, I'm not going to confirm anything specific. What I can say is the same broad principal that I've called for for months now. First, a recognition of the history – right now, about three-quarters of all the money that goes into the MTA comes from New York City, whether it's our city government contribution, or the tolls, and the taxes, and the fares that New York City residents and businesses pay towards the MTA. And we've known for a long time there's been an imbalance of payments, the city putting a lot more into the MTA than we get back. I've also said, there's been a bad history over the last few years of the state government taking out of the MTA and putting it into the state budget. So, I'm not comfortable with paying – you know, paying out of the New York City budget, New York City taxpayer money, only to see it taken supplanted and taken out of the MTA and into the state budget. So, you know, there's

real discussions that have to be held about how to reform that situation, and a real vision for what the state's commitment will be to the MTA, going forward. We said we're always open to being a constructive part of that solution – that discussion – and we're open to being part of the solution, but we've got to see those issues resolved upfront.

Lehrer: And last thing – we just spoke – before you came on – with your department of investigation commissioner, Mark Peters, and the NYPD Inspector General Philip Eure about their report on the department's use-of-force training and procedures, and how the NYPD itself issues new guidelines the day it came out; and Inspector General Eure saying the NYPD is kind of in the dark ages on use-of-force, and Commissioner Bratton demanding an apology. Where are you on all of that?

Mayor: Well, I think we should look at the most important part of this discussion, which is the fact that we've taken a very big step forward. The NYPD now will track use-of-force in an entirely different way that's going to allow us to consistently reduce the use-of-force – this is the big story here. On top of the re-training of the entire police force, which we initiated last year with a whole purpose of ensuring that officers only use that force which is necessary and work more close to the community, now we have a very clear set of guidelines for recording each and every instance, and then analyzing what it means and how we're going to make the changes we need to constantly push down the use of force to the most appropriate level. And remember – biggest police force by far in the country, now absolutely devoted to reforming and using force less. I think that's the big story here. And look, I think the inspector general and the investigations commissioner have done something important by look at the history and coming up with a set of ideas. But it's something Commissioner Bratton and I have talked about for a long time – as he indicated, even before he came into the office and I came into the office we were talking about these ideas. And I think the plan Commissioner Bratton has put forward is very strong and is going to have very a tangible impact for the people of this city. In terms of the disagreements, it's not surprising that an inspector general – it's a role that obviously is a critical function, and a role where there's going to be analysis and debate – it's not surprising that the inspector general has an opinion. I would say Commissioner Bratton can rightfully say he has been an extraordinary innovator everywhere he's been, and he's update procedures and technologies in every police department he's lead. So, I'm sure that debate will be sorted out through the actions we're taking.

Lehrer: Alright. Well, stay safe this weekend. I don't know if Gracie Mansion has hatches, but, if you do, then batten them down.

Mayor: Well said. Thank you very much, Brian.

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