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December 15, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality (BCEQ), we write in support of the Harlem River Community Rowing's (HRCR) grant application to replace their current 8+ boat and to expand the size of their training barge.

In order to accommodate more participants, it is important for HRCR to add a four-seat section to their training barge, which currently only holds four rowers. Their current 8+ (which is at least 25 years old) is in bad shape and dangerously heavy to carry, especially for smaller people and youth rowers. An expanded barge, and a new (though previously used) lightweight 8+ will enable HRCR to better serve the community and carry out their mission of providing "Rowing for All."

BCEQ, a non-profit 501(c)3 membership organization since 1971, is located in NYC's only mainland borough — The Bronx. BCEQ has sought to establish — as an Inherent Human Right — a sound, forward-looking environmental policy regarding an aesthetic, unpolluted, environment protecting a natural and historic heritage.

Since 2001, we focused on Harlem River issues to develop connections to and along the Harlem River and create on-water access and activities in an effort to improve water quality. We helped form the Harlem River Working Group to address some of these issues, including increasing access to and on the water. HRCR has been a partner in events that we have organized, in particular our annual Harlem River Festival, sharing dock space with us allowing community rowing and canoeing.

We believe human-powered rowing is an environmentally-friendly activity, a lifetime sport and a form of recreational that has deep roots in New York City. The sport of rowing in the United States was actually born in NYC in the early 1800s, when the rowers that shuttled people and goods in wooden rowing boats between anchored vessels in NY harbor and the shore -- they were the taxis of their day. This naturally led to competition, and the sport of rowing was born. At the turn of the century, NYC had dozens of boathouses lining its shorelines, and hundreds of thousands of spectators lined the banks of the Harlem River to cheer on competitors in rowing regattas. We look forward to the return of boathouses and rowing on the Harlem River.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration of the Harlem River Community Rowing application.

Sincerely,

Karen Argenti

Karen Argenti
Co-Chairs, Water Committee, BCEQ

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