



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 6, 2012

No. 459

www.nyc.gov

**MAYOR BLOOMBERG DELIVERS ADDRESS ON SHAPING NEW YORK CITY'S
FUTURE AFTER HURRICANE SANDY**

The following are Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's remarks as delivered this morning at the New York Marriott Downtown:

"Well good morning, everyone. Mr. Vice President, thank you. Your leadership and vision has helped inspire action on climate change, not just here in the United States, but by cities and countries and consumers around the world.

"No one, I think, has done more to raise the public consciousness of this issue or to press for change on an international stage. And I want to thank you for coming here and lending your voice to our efforts to prepare New York City for the new realities that we face.

"I do remember when we were up on a roof. For those of you that don't realize what we're talking about, if you paint your roofs white it reflects the sun, and in a five-story building it reduces the total energy needs of that building – because in the summer it costs a lot to air condition – by something like a quarter.

"It is an amazing thing, and the next time you take off from LaGuardia or from Kennedy, if you get lucky and the plane banks over New York City you'll be shocked at the percentage of roofs that today are white. It's got to be something north of 80 percent. And if you look in a block, everybody's got their roofs painted white, and there's one that's not and you wonder what on earth is that person thinking? A few cans of paint and they can have a dramatically lower bill. Kevin Burke from Con Ed won't be happy about that, but you really can make a difference.

"I also want to thank Mike Brune from the Sierra Club for joining us today. I think clearly the response to the storm is of national importance – both environmentally and economically. And the Sierra Club has made a difference, and Bloomberg Philanthropies is pleased – mainly at the instigation of Rit Aggarwala, who along with Dan Doctoroff is responsible for *PlaNYC*, and Patti Harris, our First Deputy Mayor, for helping give the Sierra Club the resources to really make a difference. If we could get rid of coal as a basic energy source in America, you would make more of a difference in the amount of greenhouse gases that we spew into the air than any other ten things put together. And so far, the Sierra Club has a phenomenal record. They've stopped virtually all new plants, and now along with our help, but also with the aid of low cost natural gas, have forced an awful lot of power plants to convert to natural gas.

(more)

“Last week I was down in Washington to lobby for money for New York City’s recovery efforts, and as you fly into National Airport you fly over this enormous power plant just upwind from Washington, DC that used to be coal fired. And the whole field where they stored all their coal, all the coal is gone. You wonder what Congress was thinking given they were downwind and breathing the air, but that might explain some of their behavior lately. I’m not sure of that.

“I also want to thank Marcia Bystryn and the League of Conservation Voters and Bob Yaro and the Regional Plan Association for sponsoring this breakfast – although I will say I didn’t get any food, I don’t know about anybody else – and seriously for being strong partners with our Administration on environmental issues.

“I also want to thank all the employees of this hotel, and the Marriott family, and everyone here in the downtown community. The recovery that they did downstairs, I walked through some of the back rooms and you can see the waterline. It’s amazing the way people can recover.

“We are a city of survivors, we are a city that believes. The people here are just the kind of people that say let’s go do it. I think it was Mike that talked about the trash outside of houses down on the Jersey Shore. You should go out to the Rockaways, for example – Breezy Point, Coney Island, the southern shore of Staten Island – there are no piles of debris. And the reason there are no piles of debris is that our Sanitation Department has removed something like – I think the numbers are north of 350,000 tons of debris that were removed. And you go down block after block and you say ‘oh there was no damage here.’ If you look carefully, you’ll notice there’s no electricity yet, and people had enormous damage from floods inside, but outside the Sanitation Department has done a wonderful job.

“And the evolution of who were the heroes in our city – it started out with the Fire Department and Police Department saving lives, and then a few days later it was the Police Department that was making sure that everybody was safe at night, and then it became the Sanitation Department and all the work that they have done, and then it became the volunteers. And it’s just a natural progression, but in the end the real heroes were the people of New York City.

“We were the ones that invested in the future, we have the greatest Police Department in the world, the greatest Fire Department in the world, the greatest Sanitation Department in the world. They’re well-equipped, they’re well-trained, they know how to go into danger when the rest of us are walking away, and they’ve really made a very big difference. And other cities you can see don’t have the same thing.

“I visited a sewage treatment plant in the Rockaways last week, and this is a plant that’s very low, had to be shut down. We shut it down for two days, two days later it came right back up and it worked. And you read stories about sewage treatment plants in other places that have been out since the storm and are still spewing all of the sewage into our rivers and into the water.

“It’s fair to say that in the city’s long history, we’ve never had a storm like Sandy. We’ve had storms with higher winds, but we’ve never had a storm that was like this one. Water levels at the Battery reached 14 feet; FEMA had estimated there was a less than a one percent chance of that happening. Just for the record books, back in 1960, highest before the 14 feet was 11 feet.

“This was a perfect storm – a hurricane that coincided with a full moon and a high tide, and it collided with a second weather front that made it take a hard left turn, and at the worst possible place. When the storm turned left into the center of New Jersey, that put us on the northeastern side of the winds. All of you from your physics classes in high school and college remember winds in the northern hemisphere go counterclockwise around a low pressure area, and that drove the water right towards New York City. We would have been better off if it had gone any other place, but that wasn’t to be and we did have devastation, and sadly 43 people died in this storm.

“We may or may not see another storm like Sandy in our lifetimes, but I don’t think it’s fair to say that we should leave it to our children to prepare for the possibility. We are a coastal city, a harbor city, surprise, surprise. And sea levels are expected to rise by another two and a half feet by the time a child born today reaches 40 years old, and that’s going to make surges even more powerful and dangerous. And intense storms are likely to increase as the ocean’s temperatures continue to rise.

“As I described in real detail of what’s going to happen there. The droughts in the center of the country are caused by changes in the weather. You can argue about what caused the weather to change, but there is no question – you can measure the temperatures of the ocean, you can measure the amount of moisture in the air, and that just leads to the kind of aberrations that we’re seeing: snowstorms where we didn’t have them before, droughts where we didn’t have them before, hurricanes that take different paths, go in different directions and have different strengths.

“We cannot solve the problems associated with climate change on our own here in New York City, but I think it’s fair to say we can lead the way. We have been, both locally and globally. New York City has always been a leader. As Ed Koch once said: ‘New York City is where the future comes to audition,’ and we have a responsibility I’ve always thought to help the rest of the world.

“You can go right back to life expectancy here in New York City is now three years greater than the average across America. One of the reasons for that is smoking cessation. California banned smoking in public places and nobody paid attention. New York City did it and a very big part of the rest of the world followed in doing exactly the same thing. We are a leader, we have a responsibility, and I think we’re living up to that.

“Over the past five years – in partnership with Speaker Christine Quinn and the City Council – we’ve reduced the City’s carbon footprint by 16 percent, and we’re well on our way of meeting our goal of a 30 percent reduction by 2030. I did the calculation of just how old I’m going to be in 2030, but I do plan to be around to watch that. And through the C40 Climate Group – which is a coalition of many of the world’s largest cities – we’ve worked with mayors around the world to share strategies and innovative ideas.

“Cities are not waiting for national governments to act on climate change. Whether or not one storm is related to climate change or is not, we have to manage for risks, and we have to be able to better defend ourselves against extreme weather and natural disasters. We don’t know whether the next emergency will be a storm, a drought, a tornado or a blizzard, but we do know that we have to be better prepared for all of them.

“And we also know that every one of those events is not going to come exactly the way that we had prepared for. We need to make sure that we have people who are well-trained, well-

equipped, and able to react in an emergency and to deal with whatever nature throws at us, even if we hadn't predicted it.

“In fact, the city that we know today exists, I think it's fair to say, only because the New Yorkers who came before us responded to tragedy and adversity with inspired vision and impressive resolve.

“For example: the Great Fire of 1835 burned much of Lower Manhattan to the ground, partly because the Fire Department did not have access to an adequate water supply. In response to that, New York City and New York State dammed the Croton River in Westchester County and built an extensive aqueduct system to deliver water to the city. It was one of the great engineering achievements of its time, but it left the city able to deal with a big fire later on.

“When the Great Blizzard of 1888 paralyzed the city's elevated trains, it proved to be a catalyst for creating the largest underground subway network in the country.

“The Triangle Shirtwaist Fire of 1911 that killed 146 garment workers was one of the deadliest industrial accidents in American history. In response, New York City leaders led the effort to adopt new health and fire safety codes, new restrictions on child labor, and other workplace protections that became models for the Progressive Era.

“And after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, we built the largest counterterrorism operation of any city in the world, and this city is protected by the NYPD and we brought Lower Manhattan back faster and stronger than anyone thought possible. Between the NYPD and the Port Authority Police Department, we are safe and that's something that a lot of other places can't say.

“After each one of those calamities, New Yorkers recognized that the city had to survive and thrive, and we are only going to do that if we adapt. And in each case, New Yorkers put politics-as-usual aside and set a new course that would redefine the future of our city.

“Today, we come together in the same spirit, because like those earlier generations, we believe in the promise of our city. We believe that tomorrow can be better than today. And we know that it's up to us to make it so. And rather than talk about it and have plans that never get fulfilled, we're actually doing something.

“Even as our recovery operations remain a top priority, we now have enough perspective to begin taking stock of what we did well, and what we can and must do better the next time.

“Over the past five and half weeks, we've mobilized the most comprehensive disaster relief efforts any locality has ever put together. And I can't say enough about all the City employees, volunteers, and incidentally members of the New York State National Guard who have been working around the clock to help communities clean-up and recover.

“I've always said that the City's nearly 300,000 employees form the most talented, dedicated work force in the world. They've certainly shown that over the past six weeks, but we can always learn from experience. And make no mistake about it, the Federal government through Homeland Security and FEMA was there when we needed them. The Navy showed up, the Army showed up, the Marines showed up, the Coast Guard showed up. We had help from

every part of the Federal government. Everything we ever asked for they delivered right away. Now we've got to get some money out of them, but that's another issue.

"I think we've certainly proven that we can do better. After Hurricane Irene, we expanded Zone A to include all of the Rockaways, City Island, and Hamilton Beach – and thank God we did, because it meant they were ordered to evacuate, which probably saved lives. But Sandy surged beyond Zone A – into Gerritsen Beach, into Howard Beach, and into East Williamsburg. So now, we've got to reexamine the evacuation zones and update them to reflect the new reality that we face.

"We also have to examine how we can deliver social services even more quickly and effectively, and what steps hospitals and critical care facilities need to take to better prepare for the loss of power. NYU Hospital and our Health and Hospitals Corporation, led by Al Aviles, conducted one of the largest critical care evacuations ever undertaken – without the loss of a single life at NYU, Bellevue, or Coney Island Hospital, which I think really is a testament to the dedication of everyone on the hospitals' staff. We searched the records and we couldn't really find any other hospitals that size that had evacuated without real collateral damage, without people really getting hurt and worse.

"To look at these issues and many others, this morning I directed Deputy Mayor Cas Holloway and Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs to conduct a comprehensive after-action review of our preparedness measures and recovery operations. They'll focus on how we can improve the way we mobilize and deploy resources and essential services before, during, and after a major disaster. They'll consult widely with outside experts and with local community stakeholders impacted by the storm. And they'll present me with a full report and recommendations by the end of February, which we will then make public.

"As we look back on the past five weeks, we'll also start looking ahead at the longer-term recovery challenges we face across the city, and especially in hard-hit areas.

"When the storm finally died down on Tuesday, October 30th, I went to Breezy Point. It really was hard to believe the level of destruction there – and it was heartbreaking to see. When I was there, I ran into Congressman Bob Turner and his wife, Peggy, at the site where their home stood less than 24 hours before. And I stood with Fire Commissioner Sal Cassano, whose firefighters were still then performing search and rescue missions. I committed to them and many others who had gathered that day that we would take special care of those who lost their homes.

"Since then, we have been working with communities to make sure that everyone who needs temporary housing gets it, and everyone who needs help fixing their house gets it. As we speak, there are teams that we call Rapid Repair teams – composed of more than 1,600 skilled trades workers – fixing wiring and other systems so that families can get into their homes as quickly as possible.

"If you go out and you try to do it on your own, there just aren't enough plumbers, electricians and carpenters around, and you're not sure how to contract with them and what's a fair price to pay. We are taking that responsibility on. We've got over 10,000 people that have signed up for this program. We will send the carpenter out, we will send the plumber out, we will send the electrician out. We'll fix your wiring, get you back on the power grid, we'll get you hot water again, we'll get you heat in your house, and the good news is FEMA has agreed to pay for the whole thing.

“There were 200 homes that were destroyed or are beyond repair, in addition to more than 500 other homes that really have major structural damage and need real repairs. The rebuilding process will be an enormous undertaking, and not just for homeowners, but for entire communities.

“Over the past five weeks, we’ve taken some important steps to help communities cope with major disruptions. For instance, we created new ferry service from the Rockaways and the South Shore of Staten Island to Manhattan. And with generous help from the private sector and donors to the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City, we’ve raised more than \$42 million, but we’ve put together a \$70 million assistance package for small businesses and nonprofits to help them begin the work of recovery.

“Through these and other efforts with our State and Federal partners, we’ve helped more than 1,000 small businesses and hundreds of nonprofits with grants, loans, and other assistance. And I will say that Governor Cuomo has been with us every single step of the way, and we couldn’t ask for more help from the State.

“But we do know that the hardest-hit communities are going to need more individualized and targeted resources – both in the short-term and in the long-term. At the same time, adapting to climate change is a citywide challenge, not just a coastal challenge. We have to reexamine all of our major infrastructure in light of Sandy – and how we can adapt and modernize it in order to protect it.

“So today, I have directed someone with extensive experience in both infrastructure development and community revitalization, Seth Pinsky, the President of the Economic Development Corporation, to develop concrete recovery plans for the communities Sandy hit hardest as well as a specific and comprehensive action plan to prepare our city for the climate risks we face. Deputy Mayors Cas Holloway and Bob Steel will directly oversee this work – and our entire City Hall team, especially our Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability – will be deeply involved.

“I’m glad to say that to join us in this work, we’ve recruited Marc Ricks, who was a former member of our Administration who now works for Goldman Sachs on infrastructure issues. Goldman has agreed to let Marc take a leave of absence in order to serve the city once again – and I wanted to thank both of them for stepping up to this challenge.

“This is not work that can be done overnight, but it is work that must begin immediately where the need is greatest. So in each of the hardest-hit areas, Seth and our team will work with local leaders to develop and implement comprehensive Community Recovery and Rebuilding plans.

“The plans will cover everything from public and private housing, to hospitals and schools, to transportation and parks, to businesses and nonprofits, including cultural institutions like the New York Aquarium. To succeed, the plans must include the input of the people who live and work in these communities – and they will. Members of the community will assist in shaping and implementing each community plan – and that will be just the beginning of our work.

“The biggest challenge that we face is adapting our city to risks associated with climate change. And meeting that challenge will require us to take a leap into the future. But I think, as Al pointed out, the good news is, compared to any other American city, we’ve got a running head start.

“Since Dan Doctoroff and Rit Aggarwala launched PlaNYC in 2007, we’ve taken a number of important steps to prepare for rising sea levels and the possibility of increasingly intense storms. For instance, we created a \$2.4 billion green infrastructure plan that uses natural methods of capturing rainwater before it can flood our communities and overwhelm our sewage system. With support from the City Council and Christine Quinn, we adopted new zoning regulations that eliminate penalties for elevating boilers, generators and other electrical equipment above the ground. We’re in the process of restoring 127 acres of wetlands, which is perhaps the best natural barriers against storms that we have. And we’ve expanded the Staten Island Blue Belt, which is also a natural drainage system, by some 325 acres.

“For major developments in vulnerable areas, we now require a climate risk assessment. That’s why the developers of Willets Point – and those building the new recycling facility in Red Hook – are required to elevate development out of the flood plain. It’s why the park being built on Governors Island is being elevated by four feet, and I’m happy to say it sustained no major structural damage in the storm, nor did Brooklyn Bridge Park, which we designed specifically to withstand major storms – and I’m happy to say that it did.

“For the most part, the waterfront development that has taken place over the past decade withstood the storm in pretty good shape, because of the environmental standards we adopted. The new homes in Greenpoint-Williamsburg and Arverne-by-the-Sea in the Rockaways all suffered relatively little damage. And our development site at Hunters Point South in Queens, which is on the East River, also did well, even though there was major flooding just a few blocks away.

“One of the people who deserves the real credit for the resilience of our new developments is the guy who, I am very happy to say, President Obama has put in charge of the region’s recovery and rebuilding: HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan. Shaun, as many of you know, was our housing commissioner from 2004 to 2009. I wasn’t thrilled when the Administration took him to Washington, but at least he’s able to once again serve our city and he’s going to be a big help to us, and to Seth Pinsky and his team, as we continue the work of making our city more resilient.

“New York City has 520 miles of shoreline – and it is some of the most beautiful, dynamic shoreline in the world, with the most beautiful views. Robert Moses built the roads along our coastline, separating us from this natural resource and we have worked very hard to try reconnect back to the most wonderful asset that we have. It’s why people have chosen to live at the coastline for centuries. And it’s why the question I have gotten most often since the storm is not about the damage Sandy caused, but about whether people can rebuild their homes in places like Breezy Point and Midland Beach.

“Let me be clear: We are not going to abandon the waterfront.

“We are not going to leave the Rockaways or Coney Island or Staten Island’s South Shore. But we can’t just rebuild what was there and hope for the best. We have to build smarter

and stronger and more sustainably. And Seth and his team will be working with all of our City agencies, and lots of outside experts, to determine exactly what that means.

“For instance: even though the City has already revised the building code to strengthen standards for flood protection, we will now do it again. The fact is: two-thirds of all the homes damaged by Sandy are outside of FEMA’s existing 100-year flood maps. Here’s the existing 100-year FEMA and 500-year FEMA flood maps – last updated in 1983. You can see the 100-year flood zone in yellow, and the 500-year flood zone extending out of it in orange. Now, here is where Hurricane Sandy actually flooded, in red.

“As you can see, the yardstick has changed – and so must we. FEMA is currently in the process of updating their maps – and those maps will guide us in setting new construction requirements. And we’ll add new structural requirements to ensure that buildings can withstand intense winds and waves that we expect down the road.

“But we’ll also make sure that our zoning regulations don’t penalize homeowners for elevating their houses out of the flood plain. There are height restrictions in most of these areas for one-and-two family homes, so we will work with Speaker Quinn and the City Council to increase those height restrictions so people can elevate their homes and still build back what they lost. We’ll also work with the Council to allow small businesses that are in residential zones to rebuild – so long as they invest in flood mitigation measures.

“No matter how much we do to make homes and businesses more resilient, the fact of the matter is we live next to the ocean, and the ocean comes with risks that we just cannot eliminate. Over the past month, there has been a lot of discussion about sea walls. It would be nice if we could stop the tides from coming in, but King Canute couldn’t do it – and neither can we, especially if, as many scientists project, sea levels continue rising. However, there may be some coastline protections that we can build that will mitigate the impact of a storm surge – from berms and dunes, to jetties and levees.

“On October 23rd, one week before Sandy hit, you should know that our Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability initiated a formal request to the Army Corps of Engineers to evaluate additional ways that we could reduce the impact of coastal storms. A full Army Corps study will take three to five years to complete – and that does not include the required engineering analysis, which also can take years. And I’ve said we just cannot wait that long. So we will launch an expedited engineering analysis of coastal protection strategies to ensure we pursue the ones that are right for our city.

“But remember: there are no panaceas or magic bullets. No matter what we do: the tides will continue to come in – and so we have to make our city more resilient in other ways, especially when it comes to our critical infrastructure.

“During Hurricane Sandy, all of our major infrastructure networks failed and they have all taken just too long to come back on line. Our Long Term Planning and Sustainability Team have been working with many of these network operators to assess their vulnerabilities.

“We know, for example, that a substantial proportion of the City’s critical electrical infrastructure is in the 100 year flood plain, so I have directed Seth to work with Sergej Mahnovski and our sustainability team to assess what it takes to make every essential network that supports our city capable of withstanding a Category 2 hurricane, or a record-breaking heat

wave, or other natural disaster. That includes our transportation network, our power network, our gas network, our telecommunications network and our hospital network.

“What will it take to ensure that even in a Category 2 hurricane, or if a record heat wave comes, what will each of these networks be required to remain operational? How much will it cost? And what standards should be set for bringing networks back quickly so that residents and businesses can have reasonable expectations about how long they may be out of service? In addition, how can we ensure continuity of operations, not just of our critical infrastructure, but of critical industries?”

“Many businesses – including the New York Stock Exchange – remained closed for days because not enough people could get to work. In all fairness, the New York Stock Exchange did have generators, they were perfectly capable of opening, but they can’t open without their employees. In a wireless world, we have to do a better job, not only keeping our networks up, but keeping our markets and businesses open, come hell or high water.

“Many of our key infrastructure networks are run by private companies as you know, but they have contracts, franchises, and licenses to provide public services – and the public does have a right to establish clear benchmarks for their performance in a disaster. That’s why we’ve reached out to the CEOs of Con Ed, National Grid, Verizon, AT&T, Time Warner, Hess and others and asked them to work with us on this effort. All have pledged their unqualified support.

“In fact, since 2008, all of them have been working with the Climate Adaptation Task Force we formed to find ways to harden our critical infrastructure. But let’s remember, we will have to decide how to allocate scarce dollars.

“With unlimited funds, you really can build an airplane that is impossible to crash – unfortunately it’d be too heavy to get off the ground, and it would be too expensive to take. We have to live in the real world – and make tough decisions based on the costs and benefits of risk-avoidance investments. Saying we’re going to spend whatever it takes just is not realistic.

“As this planning work begins, we’ll also have to look to identify steps we can take immediately. For instance: Con Ed recognizes that, in order to withstand a Category 2 hurricane, it needs to significantly harden its electric, gas and steam systems. And to do that, today I am glad to announce that Con Ed has committed to moving forward in the coming months with an initial investment of \$250 million. I did want to thank Con Ed CEO Kevin Burke for joining us in this effort and his leadership over the past six weeks, and also for all the work that Con Ed has done over the last couple of years. Two or three years ago, or three or four years ago, we had big blackouts and brownouts in this city when it became hot in the summer. We just had a record hot summer and we had almost no blackouts, so a lot of their work, a lot of their investment is really paying off, and it’s exactly the kind of thing that we need all utilities to do.

“We’ll also work to modernize our energy infrastructure by incentivizing large buildings and hospitals to invest in co-generation systems – which allow them to generate their own heat and power. That has worked to a great extent. We will work with Governor Cuomo to explore how we can accelerate investments in distributed energy, micro-grids, energy storage, and smart grid technologies. And to strengthen our communications infrastructure, we’re just going to have to explore how we can tap into mobile telecommunications trucks.

“In an age of fiber optics, we can’t be so dependent on traditional copper wiring. Verizon I think learnt that lesson during Sandy, which took out an astonishing 95 percent of its copper network in downtown Manhattan. They are now rebuilding better and smarter with fiber, but full restoration will take months.

“I had a long conversation last night with Lowell McAdam, who is the CEO of Verizon. Their schedule right now says that Lower Manhattan’s night going to be back up until May, and I pointed out that is just not acceptable. And together we’ve worked out a plan where the City can help them get access into buildings and other things that you wouldn’t think about so that Verizon can accelerate that. Those buildings in downtown that lost electricity and heat should be back up by the end of this month, but they can’t be occupied unless we have telephone service, and that’s going to be our number one priority for downtown.

“Even today, five weeks after the storm, there are just too many people who cannot come back to work here. We don’t want them moving any place else, and they need to earn a living and we need their service. And a growing number of New Yorkers, as we all know, today are relying on wireless networks and abandoning land-line telephones. We cannot, in the future, have cell towers that have only eight hours of back-up battery power. That is just not acceptable in the world that we live today. The telephone is our lifeline, the telephone is a lifeline not just to business, but to our own physical security. It has to keep working.

“We’ll take on all of these efforts, but we also have to be mindful not to fight the last war and miss the new one ahead.

“Record rainfalls in our watershed over the last three summers may sound good to you who are worried about our reservoirs being full, but because the rains were so strong, large portions of our water supply were out of commission for months at a time. You didn’t notice it because this city has invested an enormous amount of money over many administrations in buying land around the reservoirs and new reservoirs, and money into the conduits, the aqueducts that bring the water to us. We were able to keep the service going seamlessly, but there’s a limit to how much we can do.

“Record heat in 2011 led to the highest energy-use ever recorded in our city. As I said before, the electric grid held up, but massive voltage reductions were required throughout our power network to keep the lights on. We could also just as easily see drier conditions that lead to a drought.

“So the work that we’ll do will prepare our city for all types of extreme weather is just beginning – and it’s not just storms.

“You don’t have to be a believer in climate change to understand the dangers from extreme weather are already here. And the risk that climate change is driving these extreme weather patterns must compel us to act – both to prevent climate change and prepare for it.

“Here’s an example of those cool roofs that Al and I created. Al, you look great there. I don’t think I got any paint on my shoes. I was pretty worried about that. We had volunteers painting roofs, and then other people read about it and they go and they do it on their own because it is in their interest.

“New Yorkers have never been shy about taking on big challenges – and taking our destiny into our own hands. I have every confidence that by confronting this challenge head on we will succeed – just as we have so many times before. There is no storm, no fire, no terrorist act that can destroy the spirit of our city, and keep us from looking forward envisioning a better tomorrow and then bringing it to life. The future is in our hands and I’m 100 percent confident they’re in good hands and we will deliver.

“Thank you all very much, and Al, thank you.”

-30-

Contact: Marc La Vorgna/Lauren Passalacqua (212) 788-2958

Stay Connected:

 [Twitter](#)

 [Flickr](#)

 [YouTube](#)