

**City Planning Commission Chair Marisa Lago's Remarks on Zoning for Coastal Flood Resiliency  
– 3/17/2021**

Before we vote, I would like to say a few words about Zoning for Coastal Flood Resiliency (ZCFR).

It's a sweeping, citywide, forward-looking proposal, and it will be one of several essential tools that can help us protect our city's immense floodplain by ensuring that new and reconstructed buildings are resilient to climate change. It builds on community engagement workshops, both in person and for the past year, online, and it also builds on eight years of painful lessons learned from Hurricane Sandy.

Since Sandy, we've increased resiliency standards in our building code, we've upgraded public infrastructure systems, we've advanced coastal protection projects, and we continue to work with homeowners and businessowners and elected officials to increase their appreciation of the very serious risks that we face. There is still so much more work to do, and we can't do it alone.

Just last month, the Biden Administration took an important step forward toward addressing climate change by centering the climate crisis in U.S. domestic policy, foreign policy and national security considerations. I'm sure you've seen in the news that several veterans of the de Blasio Administration are heading to Washington, among them Deanne Criswell. Deanne has served as commissioner of New York City's Emergency Management Department (NYCEM) since 2019 and has worked very closely with City Planning. President Biden has nominated Deanne as the new Administrator -- or boss -- of FEMA. With Deanne as FEMA Administrator, New York City should have a knowledgeable and receptive audience for our push for necessary changes to how the federal flood insurance program works. We have to move away from post-disaster response to pre-disaster mitigation. This will open the door to funding resiliency efforts for low-income homeowners.

Updating zoning citywide is always a challenging proposition, so, when change is needed, it's important that it be well planned, but also that we set the bar high. With ZCFR, we now have a chance to provide New Yorkers with a clear and smart path toward resiliency.

I want to acknowledge the scores of Department staffers who have so creatively and determinedly worked to bring us this innovative and expansive zoning proposal. They didn't do it alone. Over a period of years before certification, the Department planners, with the help of so many of our sister agencies, held literally hundreds of public meetings, workshops and briefings. With the public input that they gathered, including lessons from the city's long recovery from Sandy, the Department meticulously crafted ZCFR. Because of this work, the vast majority of New York City's Community Boards, Borough Boards and Borough Presidents have voted favorably for the adoption of ZCFR. I want to thank these other branches of government for their hard work on this proposal as well.

With that, I vote yes.