Hello, my name is John Doyle, I’m a lifelong Bronx resident and a thirty year resident of City Island. I also sit on the board of City Island Rising, Inc, which submitted testimony to this body in the past. Our neighborhood is a small and remote island that is a half-mile wide and a mile and a half long, located between the mainland Bronx and Westchester County line. Our community and its 4,500 residents are physically divided from the rest of the Bronx by Pelham Bay Park, the largest park in New York City at 2,772 acres. The utility lines run through this Park and onto the Island itself. City Island is also vulnerable to adverse weather conditions. We are categorized as a “Zone 1” evacuation area by the New York City Office of Emergency Management, meaning we are the first required to leave our homes in the event of a major storm. There are many reports that document how minor storms lead to pondage and flooding on our local roads, causing potential problems for our above ground utilities.

I’m deeply appreciative that this panel has rightfully included our community and most of the East Bronx as it shows recognition towards our community and the real challenges climate change poses to our area, including a high risk of costal flooding and storm risk. During Irene, Sandy, and Ida- City Island did sustain flood damage to a good number of homes. We need resiliency improvements throughout out community to protect from impending storms. We have been documenting high levels of flooding throughout the community, even after relatively moderate storms. We need better drainage throughout the area.

As mentioned earlier, we are connected to Pelham Bay Park, the largest park in the City of New York. We need resiliency improvements throughout the park as the Park hosts’ essential roadways for our evacuation. We need the utility lines that go throughout the park to placed underground and for capital projects like the Shore Road reconstruction project to be fully funded. Because the park is in the Bronx and on the outskirts of the City, it suffers from inequities in funding that would be inconceivable if the park were located in a more affluent borough like Manhattan.

Our waterways within the Long Island Sound are deeply polluted, earning a “F” for quality by the well-regarded environmental group “Save the Sound”, we need the State to step in and minimalize but the combined sewer outflows that flow into our waterway. Additionally, the municipality of Mount Vernon needs real funding help repairing their sewer lines that literally dump tons of raw sewerage into the Hutchinson River each year. These matters are serious and require serious revenues be dedicated to solving them.

Speaking broadly, I recognize this Council is tasked with reducing carbon emissions by 40 percent by 2030 and 85 by 2050. It’s worth noting that our East Bronx region has some of the highest rates of automobile ownership in the City, in some neighborhoods almost 75%-85% of residents own a car. I myself drove here today, if we want people to forgo driving, we need to offer City residents credible/tangible transit options. It should come as no surprise that our area is also a transit desert. To combat this, we need 24/7 bus lines that run frequently and we must expand the NYC Ferry Service to touch on more east Bronx neighborhoods. By doing so, we can reduce our carbon footprint while at the same time significantly cut the commute times for thousands of residents of our Borough.

This panel has been set up to achieve big picture solutions to problems that have plagued our borough for generations. I hope the testimony I have given today touches on some of these problems and I’m sure that many residents, myself included, stand ready to help implement solutions to these problems. Let’s seize this moment and not let another generation pass without taking the steps we all recognize we need to take.