

**CLEAN AIR CAMPAIGN  
FRIENDS OF THE EARTH  
NYPIRG STRAPHANGERS CAMPAIGN**

**NEWS RELEASE**

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**TRANSIT & ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES HAIL 25th  
ANNIVERSARY OF WESTWAY TRADE-IN VICTORY**

Three of the leaders in the fight to get more than a billion dollars in federal grants reallocated from the Westway highway and Hudson River development project to mass transit in 1985 today hailed what they called "one of the biggest citizens' victories ever for sensible public spending priorities--and much more."

September 30th is the 25th anniversary of federal approval of the Westway "trade-in"--the decision to transfer the \$1.725 billion in federal grants set aside for Westway to substitute transit and roadway projects. Westway was a plan to use Interstate highway funds to build a development site in the Hudson River off Manhattan (using landfill and pile-supported platforms to create the site), and to tunnel some of Westway's 12-16 highway lanes through part of the fill. The river development site and the highway each accounted for roughly half of Westway's cost.

"Trading in Westway funds for transit was a huge victory for New York City subway and bus riders. It meant \$1.4 billion to fix the city's crumbling mass transit, from buying new subway cars to replacing aging signals and track," said Gene Russianoff, staff attorney for the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign.

"Along with Congressional action and litigation, the Westway trade-in helped save an irreplaceable habitat in the Hudson River as well. If Westway had destroyed that habitat, more valuable coastal fisheries would be crashing," said Margaret Gabel, New York Representative of Friends of the Earth (FoE). The U.S. House of Representatives voted 287 to 132 to cut off funding for Westway's Hudson River landfill on Sept. 11, 1985 (Congressional Record-House pages H 7347-H 7360). Federal lawsuits also overturned illegal Army Corps permits for Westway, with Mitchell Bernard the lead attorney in 1985. (Sierra Club et al. v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers et al., 614 F.Supp. 1475.)

"With climate change and more severe storms hitting the Westway area of the Hudson River, the decision not to build a development site at that damage-prone location now looks wiser than ever," said Marcy Benstock, Executive Director of Clean Air Campaign Inc. (CAC). "There's so much misinformation out there now about the David against Goliath Westway fight that not everyone grasps what a difference using resources properly can make--both natural resources and limited public funds. But people can

always call me to verify facts about Westway or its successors, or to find other accurate sources of information and documents," Benstock said.

NYPIRG, FoE and CAC all now oppose "Son-of-Westway"--plans to build out into up to 490 acres of the Hudson (the Westway site, plus more), for the in-water portion of the so-called Hudson River Park (HRP) project. They support the upland park on dry land at the river's edge--green open space and a bikeway/walkway. But they want the river to be a river, without illegal new fills, piers and other structures built in nearshore waters. They think the billions of taxpayer dollars it would cost to build in the water would be better spent on mass transit and other essential public services instead.

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