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Southwest Waterfront Plan

District of Columbia Council Hearing

**Testimony Presented by Lynne Breaux
Executive Director
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Good Afternoon and thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today. My name is Lynne Breaux and I am Executive Director of the Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington and a resident of Capital Hill. RAMW is a trade association representing restaurants and the food service industry in the District of Columbia and Northern Virginia.

I am here today as an advocate of the plan to enhance, update and expand the city's Southwest waterfront environment. I am a native of New Orleans and as such grew up surrounded by water in a city with a rich tradition of waterfront living, dining, shopping and relaxing. As with the Moonwalk along the Mississippi River, which provides a vibrant view of that mighty river, DC needs its own Moonwalk, providing a closer link of water to a walking environment.

I well remember my first trips to DC and my shock at the insulated and isolated riverfront vistas of Southwest, with limited dining and no retail. RAMW supports moving forward on the Southwest Waterfront Development Plan and the Anacostia Waterfront Vision. Opening up the area for mixed use with increased water views and public access to the water would be a major step forward for DC as our Nation's Capital.

We would like however to express our concern that the manner of development be pursued only with full disclosure to and input from existing, affected businesses, ensuring the minimum of displacement and economic hardship during the construction period, with the potential for compensation.

We realize that this project has been discussed at length and recommend that it move forward. It would be an unfortunate loss to the city if this proposed beautification and expansion of the Southwest Riverfront was prevented by a few residents with their own agenda". To paraphrase a memorable Thomas Jefferson quote, "A man might as well wear the coat of a youth as for institutions and buildings not adapt to the changing times."

It is time to embrace a new, exciting and energized waterfront. And in the spirit of really improving our waterfront and water usage, why not have frequent and plentiful car and passenger ferry boat rides across the Potomac, lessening traffic and pollution? This is successfully done in New York City, the Seattle area, and across the Mississippi throughout its downward drift and into New Orleans, a fun and practical treat for residents and tourists alike.