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2 to accommodate this option.

3 Thank you for this opportunity for  
4 the Orange County Chamber of Commerce to  
5 provide comments on this extraordinary  
6 project.

7 MR. PLOTCHYK: Okay. Thank you very  
8 much, Carol Smith.

9 Jonathan. Did I do okay with the  
10 last name; is it Drapkin?

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11 MR. DRAPKIN: Drapkin, actually, you  
12 did very well.

13 MR. PLOTCHYK: Okay. Thank you.

14 MR. DRAPKIN: I know I only have  
15 two minutes. Can I ask one quick  
16 question?

17 MR. PLOTCHYK: I probably don't have  
18 the answer.

19 MR. DRAPKIN: That's okay. Do you  
20 still use the system of flagging? So are  
21 the red flags for safety issues on the  
22 Bridge?

23 MR. MEHTA: Yes.

24 MR. DRAPKIN: Yes. Thank you. I  
25 just wanted to clarify that.

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MR. PLOTCHYK: I couldn't answer that question for you.

MR. DRAPKIN: Well, I first want to complement everyone for reaching the point where you have, after many years of trying to reach some consensus on how to move forward, and on behalf of the organization that I'm the head of, Pattern for Progress, we support the replacement of the Bridge, the use of bus rapid transit, and that it is at least built now for the capacity to add a rail component, whether that as commuter rail line, obviously, that sounds like that still needs to be determined based on the SEQRA process and other issues that you raised here today.

But I suspect that I can't simply add my voice to supporting that without expressing some level of frustration.

In 1998, then Governor Pitaki and his advisory group suggested that we needed a new bridge, and it should have a rail component as part of it. And it's 2008, an announcement was made a month ago

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and the opportunity to create jobs was there.

I find it a tad ironic that after all these years of discussing the possibility of a replacement bridge, reaching a conclusion, we are still years away from the engineering documents that would enable us to move forward at, in fact, the very time in which we could make at least an argument to have a project of this magnitude funded partially with funds from Washington, as they are looking at ways to create capital projects throughout the country.

I certainly wish to urge you to expedite the timetable for the SEQRA process and engineering in any way possible. Talk to the Legislature, figure out if every one of those time tables is sacri sat, or whether there is some way for which you can look at it and figure out how to move this process along at this point in time.

Thank you very much.

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2 MR. PLOTCHYK: Thank you, sir.

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3 Nancy.

4 MS. PROYECT: Thank you for the  
5 opportunity to comment.

6 On behalf of the Board of Trustees  
7 and members of the Orange County Citizens  
8 Foundation, we commend the Department of  
9 Transportation and its partners for the  
10 thorough study of transit options and  
11 bridge rehabilitation/replacement options  
12 for the Tappan Zee Bridge.

13 As a nonprofit organization that  
14 advocates for the greater public good in  
15 Orange County, we are keenly aware of the  
16 difficulties many of our residents face in  
17 commuting over the Tappan Zee Bridge each  
18 day.

19 Based on study results, it is clear  
20 that the Executive Committee has made the  
21 right decision in choosing a replacement  
22 option for the Bridge. While the Bridge  
23 continues to meet safety standards (due to  
24 the diligence of the Thruway Authority's  
25 maintenance staff) the long-term prognosis