

THE FRIENDS OF LIBERTY STATE PARK

P.O. Box 3407, Jersey City, New Jersey 07303-3407
201-792-1993
pesinliberty@earthlink.net
www.folsp.org

Public Notice Number: NAN-2016-00174-EPI

Issue Date: 4/1/16 Public Comment Expiration Date- 4/25/2016

Applicant: New York State Marine Highway Transportation Company

US Army Corps of Engineers, New York District
ATTN: Regulatory Branch, 26 Federal Plaza, Room 1937 NY, N.Y 10278.

April 9, 2016

Dear USACE Regulatory Branch official,

The Friends of Liberty State Park strongly oppose this permit application, with its severely harmful consequences, for a commercial buoy for Ellis Island Flats at Jersey City, Hudson County, New Jersey in the Upper Bay of New York Harbor - right next to Liberty State Park.

We strongly urge a public hearing on this application as the public has the right to be heard in a public forum regarding the severely negative impacts on Liberty State Park, the priceless urban park behind our nation's shrines to democracy, Lady Liberty and Ellis Island.

Because your decision to issue a permit will be "based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest and your decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources", it is essential and ethically incumbent on you to provide a public hearing because this application impacts the Public Interest and the Public Good regarding LSP, a true national treasure.

This private company's application to put a commercial buoy in the harbor between the historic landmark CRRNJ Terminal building and Ellis Island, endangers LSP's use, purpose and spirit. One type of commercial barge would be garbage barge. This application stinks to High Heaven.

Liberty State Park is sacred New Jersey and American public land. This urban waterfront park is sacred because it is very scarce urban open space in one our nation's most densely populated counties, and because this beloved and treasured park is behind Lady Liberty and Ellis Island.

The Friends of Liberty State Park, founded in 1988, and with 800 members - as we carry out our stewardship mission of preserving, protecting, conserving and promoting Liberty State Park are opposing this application based on major negative and inevitable impacts on Liberty State Park.

Liberty State Park is visited by 5 million people each year, most of whom are the urban people who use the park as an urban haven, oasis, refuge, sanctuary, and escape. Urban people come to enjoy this priceless and treasured open space urban state park behind Ellis Island and Lady

Public Notice Number: NAN-2016-00174-EPI

Liberty for recreation and relaxation. The 5 million include the 800,000 who take the Statue Cruises ferry to these national shrines in the harbor from the northern side of Liberty State Park.

The notice calls for the installation of 58-inch diameter steel mooring buoy to accommodate up to three commercial barges, each measuring up to 195 ft long for a total maximum of 340 ft. The barge configuration would be three (3) abreast by two (2) astern

We realize that moorings exist through the Upper NY Harbor but none off the shore of Liberty State Park or the National Monument Islands. **Commercial barges carry shipping containers and piles of garbage** and tie up at moorings waiting to be tugged to their final destinations.

The location of mooring and the 600 ft diameter commercial **zone is just outside the LSP's jurisdiction. This is plainly a VERY DETRIMENTAL AND BAD IDEA for many reasons.**

1. LSP does not have any commercial mooring operation off its shore line, and it would harm the spirit, fresh air, breathtaking views of New York City set a bad and harmful precedent.

2. Commercial barges would BLOCK and MAR the priceless view sheds from multiple angles from Liberty State Park, of Ellis Island and of the signature view of our civilization, the world famous Manhattan skyline.

Also views would be blocked toward Castle Clinton National Monument in Battery Park; and from the historic CRRNJ Terminal building (just restored with \$10 million after Sandy), it would block views of Governors Island National Monument

The views would be blocked and marred from LSP's "Liberty Walk" along the river, and from the park's open space lawns, playgrounds and picnic areas.

The view of Ellis Island will be blocked for people in lower Manhattan along Hudson River Park. People viewing LSP from NYC buildings/skyscrapers would see garbage barges and unattractive barges in general, instead of seeing the beautiful jewel of a free and green park.

The last thing the public wants in our view shed is a giant barge filled with shipping containers or garbage hanging out for hours, days or weeks. Many people fish off the walkway bridge over LSP's North Cove and the barges would be in the view shed and down wind. What makes this part of the harbor unique to our state and nation is the close proximity of the national monuments, islands and iconic structures like the CRRNJ Terminal – views which make LSP one of our nation's most special public spaces, and NO WHERE in between them is a commercial mooring site, nor should there ever be.

Public Notice Number: NAN-2016-00174-EPI

3. The ferry service route between LSP and Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty would have to be rerouted around the zone increasing travel times for people wanted to visit the National Monuments.
4. If the barges were filled with garbage it would create smells
5. It is inevitable that debris would fall off and end up on LSP's shoreline.
6. Creates a potential security risk by having a barge parked that close to Ellis Island. The National Monuments and LSP are considered high security risks and this would add to that risk assessment.
7. The proposed area is a popular recreational sail boating area during the summer months especially in the evening, after Statue Cruises Ferries have completed their day's schedule.
8. LSP also provide recreational access for swimming events from the Statue of Liberty to LSP through this location. The Lady Liberty Sharkfest Swim is happening again this year.

In conclusion, the Friends of Liberty State Park strongly oppose this permit and strongly call upon the USACE to provide a public hearing. This permit application will be cared about by all New Jerseyans who care about Liberty State Park, one of our nation's most sacred public spaces.

Sincerely,

Sam Pesin

Sam Pesin, president