

May 2, 2024

Honorable Governor Philip Murphy
State of New Jersey
225 West State Street
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Murphy,

On behalf of the below signatories, thank you for your strong support for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Commissioner Shawn LaTourette's proposed revitalization plan for one of the most beloved and well-utilized parks in New Jersey – Liberty State Park. As the most densely populated state in the nation, your continued support for open space and park preservation and conservation ensures recreational opportunities for all New Jerseyans for generations to come.

Thank you for supporting the DEP's thorough public participation process on the proposed consultant's plans for the Phase 1B and Phase 2 of Liberty State Park. Thoughtful consideration of park access to people of different ages, interests, physical abilities and cultural backgrounds, while protecting the environmental integrity through restoration and conservation of lands ensures a balanced approach to the park's revitalization. We agree that the DEP's plans are robust with strong incentives for park use, including proposed 60 acres of free active recreation, small-scale commercial activities and festivals in the renovated Terminal sheds, and an opportunity for passive recreation in a sprawling urban area. Residents can and will continue helping to fine-tune these elements based on their communities' needs through the robust public comment process being hosted by the DEP.

The public comment process on the DEP's proposed interior flood resiliency habitat plans has reinforced the importance of climate resiliency to Liberty State Park and to the surrounding Jersey City residents. Significant development and removal of green space exacerbates flooding and environmental degradation, and the DEP's plan limits development and emphasizes natural green spaces while enhancing critical wetland habitat. A DEP 2021 study predicts that precipitation is likely to increase by more than 20% from the 1999 baseline by 2100 with projected changes to be greater in Northern parts of the state, and a sea level rise of 5.1 feet by the end of the century. Future-proofing stormwater and coastal management for Liberty State Park is essential when the state is investing tens of millions into its revitalization.

Misinformation regarding the DEP's plans, spurred by yet-another round of development interest to privatize and monetize this invaluable green space, continues to spread rampantly throughout the community. The Governor and DEP must continue to push back against well-funded misinformation campaigns propped up by special interest groups to ensure Liberty State Park's future is protected for the public in perpetuity.

Liberty State Park has faced many development proposals throughout the decades, including the most recent. Despite the DEP's recent rejection of the exclusionary sports and entertainment plan, special interests have continued pushing for their agenda and attempting to cut the DEP's plan at its knees with deceptive lies. With the overwhelming majority of Jersey City residents, regional visitors and local and

statewide organizations in support of keeping Liberty State Park a public, accessible green space, the public clearly does not support attempts to privatize their park.

We thank you, Governor, for committing to the revitalization of Liberty State Park and proposing significant funding in this year's budget for this monumental project. The new Parks and Open Space Foundation, which will be managed by the DEP and bring in new funding for this and other parks, will complement these budgetary investments. As a treasure of the state, Liberty State Park has the potential for significant, meaningful improvements, which will leave a positive mark on this administration and your legacy.

Sincerely,

Ed Potosnak, Executive Director
New Jersey League of Conservation Voters

Sam Pesin, President
Friends of Liberty State Park

Alex Ireland, President and CEO
New Jersey Audubon

Julia Somers, Executive Director
New Jersey Highlands Coalition

Jennifer Coffey, Executive Director
Association of NJ Environmental Commissions (ANJEC)

Alison Mitchell, Co-Executive Director
New Jersey Conservation Foundation

Doug O'Malley, Director
Environment New Jersey

David J. Epstein, President
The Land Conservancy of New Jersey

Matthew Smith, NJ Director
Food & Water Watch

Nicole Rodriguez, President
New Jersey Policy Perspective

Tim Dillingham, Executive Director
American Littoral Society

Beverly Brown Ruggia, Financial Justice Program, Director
New Jersey Citizen Action

Bill Foelsch, Public Affairs Committee Co-Chair
NJ Recreation and Park Association

Jeanine Cava, Founder and Lead Facilitator
NJ Food Democracy Collaborative

Captain Hugh M. Carola, Program Director
Hackensack Riverkeeper, Inc.

Anne Poole, President
New Jersey Environmental Lobby

Ayla Schermer, President
Bike JC

Paula Mahayosnand, President
Jersey City Parks Coalition

Tobias Fox, Founder and Managing Director
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Marc Wesson, President
Friends of Van Vorst Park

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Pershing Field Garden Friends

Charlene Burke, President
West Side Community Alliance (W.S.C.A.)

Roger Heitmann, Board Trustee
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Kimi Wei, CEO
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Kimberly Guinta, President
Sgt. Anthony Park Neighborhood Association

Alika Muhammad, President
Friends of Gateway Park/Robateau's JC Community & Quality of Life

Shirin Vazir MacCormack, President
McGinley Square Community Board

Debra DeVenezia, President
Pershing Field Garden Friends

Barbara Weiland, Founder & Executive Director
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Charlene Messer, CEO
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Liliana Gomez, Faith Keeper
Hawk Mountain Earth Center

Melissa Leuthner, Chairwoman
Heart of Vailsburg (HOV) Garden Committee

Tanya Veltz, Founder & Director
Treehouse Ent & Cultural Arts, Inc.

Pamela B. Daniels, Co-Founder & CEO
The Brickerati Group, LLC

