

**BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS  
COUNTY OF HUDSON**

**RESOLUTION**

No. *124-2-2019*

On Motion of Freeholder *D'Nea*

Seconded by Freeholder *Remaining Members of*

*the Board.*

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 4903/SENATE BILL NO. 3357  
KNOWN AS THE "LIBERTY STATE PARK PROTECTION ACT" THAT WOULD  
PRESERVE LIBERTY STATE PARK AS A PUBLIC URBAN GREEN OPEN  
SPACE FREE OF INAPPROPRIATE COMMERCIALIZATION,  
DEVELOPMENT OR PRIVATIZATION**

**WHEREAS**, Liberty State Park is the most visited park in New Jersey with over 5 million visitors annually. People from across the region visit this 1,200-acre (600 of land and 600 of water) free State Park for its panoramic views of the Statue of Liberty, Manhattan and New York Harbor, and its amenities for all residents such as gardens, paths for walking, bicycling and jogging, picnic and playground areas, and access to Ellis Island and Liberty Island ferries; and

**WHEREAS**, Assembly Bill No. 4903, sponsored by Assembly Members Raj Mukherji, Angela V. McKnight and Nicholas Chiaravalloti, and companion Senate Bill No. 3357, sponsored by Senators Sandra B. Cunningham and Loretta Weinberg, would bar large-scale development in Liberty State Park and limit development to "small-scale commercial activities" such as bicycle or kayak rentals, food concessions, a temporary winter skating rink, commercial boat tours and other limited uses. It would bar any concessions or leases in the 235-acre restoration area in the interior of the park which is funded and being planned as a remediated nature area with trails, and at Caven Point Peninsula; and

**WHEREAS**, while Liberty State Park has two restaurants and a marina, there have been during the park's 43-year history multiple attempts at inappropriate large scale development that would have jeopardized this State and national treasure, including the following: expansion of a neighboring golf course; a water park; hotels; conference centers; amusement park; an additional high-end marina; and a 100,000 seat Formula One car racing stadium; and

**WHEREAS**, the public interest in maintaining Liberty State Park as a free, open, public green space and waterfront area for passive recreation, picnics, bicycling, walking, jogging and fishing, while enjoying the expansive open harbor views, is paramount; and

**WHEREAS**, Assembly Bill No. 4903/Senate Bill No. 3357 would establish a Liberty State Park Advisory Committee that would be charged with assisting the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in conserving, preserving, protecting, and improving Liberty State Park. The committee's responsibilities would include: reviewing any matter relating to the improvement, protection, and restoration of Liberty State Park; assisting the DEP in developing the management plan required by the bill, and advising the DEP on the ecological restoration of the 235-acre interior portion of the park and means to increase public access and public enjoyment of the natural, historic, cultural, recreational, and scenic resources of the park; reviewing concessions, leases, or other agreements with a duration of one year or longer; studying any policies, plans, rules, and regulations adopted by the department that may impact Liberty State Park; and submitting to the DEP Commissioner any recommendations the committee deems necessary to improve, protect, and restore the park; and

**WHEREAS**, Assembly Bill No. 4903/Senate Bill No. 3357 would require the DEP, within three years after the bill is enacted into law, to develop a management plan for Liberty State Park in consultation with the Liberty State Park Advisory Committee. The bill would also require the DEP to present to the committee for review and recommendations the following: any proposed agreement for a concession, conveyance, or lease with a term of one year or longer; the extension or renewal for a term of one year or longer any concession, conveyance, or lease in effect on the date the bill is enacted into law; and any proposed special event that may have a significant impact on the ability of the public to access and enjoy Liberty State Park. The bill directs the DEP to develop and implement, in conjunction with the committee, a comprehensive public participation process to allow public citizens and civic organizations to provide public input on any proposed changes in land use at the park and to hold a public forum, at least once each year, to receive input from the public concerning plans, improvements, preservation, conservation, and management of the park; and

**WHEREAS**, Assembly Bill No. 4903/Senate Bill No. 3357 would require that, whenever the DEP proposes to enter into a concession, lease, or other agreement for a duration of one year or longer, the agency must present the proposal to the Liberty State Park Advisory Committee for review and recommendations and provide an opportunity for public comment on the proposal, including holding two public hearings at Liberty State Park, with one hearing being held on a weekday evening and one on the weekend, and providing a 30-day public comment period. In addition, the DEP would be required to take these same actions when it intends to convey lands acquired or developed by the State with Green Acres funds, or acquired or developed by the State in any other manner and administered by the department, located within or adjacent to Liberty State Park; and


**WHEREAS**, this Board strongly supports the preservation of Liberty State Park as a public urban green open space and the protections provided under Assembly Bill No. 4903/Senate Bill No. 3357 against inappropriate development, commercialization and privatization proposals.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Hudson, that:

1. The aforesaid recitals are incorporated herein as though fully set forth at length;
2. This Board strongly urges the New Jersey Legislature and Governor Phil Murphy to protect Liberty State Park from any future proposals to commercialize or privatize this priceless public resource by adopting Assembly Bill No. 4903/Senate Bill No. 3357; and
3. Copies of this Resolution be transmitted to Governor Phil Murphy, Senate President Steve Sweeney, Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin, Senate Minority Leader Tom Kean, Assembly Minority Leader Jon Bramnick, Chair of the Assembly's Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee Eric Houghtaling, Chair of the Senate's Environment and Energy Committee Bob Smith, Hudson County's delegation to the State Legislature, and the Jersey City Municipal Clerk.

Freeholder	Aye	Nay	Abst.	N.P.	Freeholder	Aye	Nay	Abst.	N.P.
Cifelli	/				Romano	/			
Kopacz	/				Torres	/			
O'Dea	/				Walker	/			
Rivas	/				Chairman Vainieri	/			
Rodriguez	/								

It is hereby certified that at a regular meeting of the Board of Freeholders of the County of Hudson held on the 28th day of February A.D. 2019, the foregoing resolution was adopted with 9 members voting in the affirmative and 0 in the negative.

 Clerk

Source: Board of Freeholders