

## **Friends of Liberty State Park, activists, & electeds protest proposed marina in Hudson County View by Daniel Ulloa November 15, 2025**

*caption of photo* - The Friends of Liberty State Park (FOLSP) were joined by activists and electeds as they protested against a proposed three-acre, seven-story marina development that has already been panned by critics.

The proposal is part of a 60-year lease with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), which has been endorsed by Commissioner Shawn LaTourette.

FOLSP President Sam Pesin welcomed everyone to the park before introducing Ward E Councilman James Solomon, who is running for mayor.

“Do not sign the lease! ... The proposal is simply out of character if what Liberty State Park is ... It is massive, it is privatized, and it is for the wealthy. It is not for the people,” the downtown councilman said, praising progress in the park and rejecting similar concepts in the past.

“Here we are again! Last year, it was Caven Point. This year it’s the marina. This is the people’s park!” exclaimed U.S. Rep. Rob Menendez (D-8), who noted he has frequented the park since he was a kid and he now brings his own children there.

The congressman also noted a concept by Liberty National Golf CEO Paul Fireman in 2020 that includes a private stadium was similarly met with great opposition.

“We will continue to stand on the right side of this!” he exclaimed.

Afterward, they marched across the green by the marina to the area they said would be ruined.

“Freeze the lease!” the crowd chanted as they marched.

“If they get their way, we’d be in the shadow of a building!” FOLSP Vice President Rafael Torres exclaimed, also declaring that it would interfere with the 9/11 Empty Sky memorial.

“As the planet warms, the billionaires multiply ... Once the shoreline is commercialized, we cannot go back. Will the park belong to boat owners?” Torres asked the crowd.

“No!” the crowd exclaimed.

“Let us choose people over profit!” Torres shouted.

FOLSP board member Alison Cucco said it would be the equivalent of building a seven-story Home Depot.

“We can say goodbye to views ... We can say goodbye to the open space,” she argued.

Cucco recalled that LaTourette said the marina is necessary to fund the park revitalization plan. She praised him for the progress made on the comprehensive Master Plan, free of privatization proposals, but said this one is just not a good fit.

“We urge him to be a continued hero for the park and say bo to the deal,” she concluded.

Community activist and historian Jerome Choice said he lives nearby and often visited as a child.

“We cannot let this happen to the park! It’s massive!” he exclaimed.

“DEP Commissioner LaTourette is ignoring 49 years of overwhelming opposition to privatization and commercialization,” Pesin declared.

He called for Gov.-elect Mikie Sherrill (D) to have her administration review the plan, which should be frozen until she takes office next year.

Pesin said he believed the DEP has the rights and should create informal playing fields on the leased Marina lawn.

“We must never stop protecting this park from the greed of wealthy developers. DEP Commissioner La Tourette is ramrodding a major privatization expansion,” he added.

“I urge everyone on Instagram and Facebook to tag Mikie Sherrill and to urge her to tell the DEP Commissioner to Freeze the Lease Process so that her administration can review the lease, listen to the people and squash the warehouse.

Pesin added that there will be a meeting in Trenton on the marina proposal in December and urged people to attend to oppose it.

“This is sacred and hallowed ground ... We always need to be vigilant,” stated Hudson County Commissioner Bill O’Dea (D-2), claiming that “there are many vultures circling” since they’re interested in getting a piece of the parks’ land.

“This park needs a law to protect it!” Pesin exclaimed to applause.

He praised state Senator Raj Mukherji (D-32) for championing the Liberty State Park Protection Act in Trenton, also speaking highly of Assembly members-elect Katie Brennan and Ravi Bhalla (both D-32).

“For over 49 years, Liberty State Park has stood for the idea that public land is a trust,” Mukherji said. He criticized the many past private development proposals in the history of the park, noting the need to protect “the urban oasis” to cheers.

“These are terrible ideas ... It’s a monstrosity and we won’t stand for it,” Mukherji said, praising Pesin’s continued efforts to applause.