

February 5, 2026

The Honorable Mikie Sherrill  
Office of Governor  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Sherrill:

The undersigned groups urge you to reassess the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP) proposed 60-year lease of the marina at Liberty State Park to Suntex Marina – a project we all oppose.

We do not object to the continued operation of the marina facility in accordance with Suntex's existing lease, which runs for an additional 20 years, nor are we opposed to a fair, open and public process to entertain proposals for a future lease of the site at the appropriate time. However, the current proposed renewal and extension of the existing lease is not in the best interest of the residents of our state for a variety of reasons, including the fact that it would require the State of New Jersey to commit an estimated \$30 million toward the reconstruction of a bulkhead adjacent to the marina and allow development of a 75-foot tall, multi-acre private vessel storage warehouse. The development would permanently change the nature of the park and block the view on state and federally funded parkland.

To our knowledge, the NJDEP has not performed a formal appraisal of the 60-year lease, and because the lease extension was exclusively offered to the existing lessee there was no opportunity to solicit alternate proposals from other potential marina operators. To be fair to New Jersey taxpayers, a lease of prime waterfront real estate along the Hudson River across from New York City at a minimum should be professionally appraised and assessed by the New Jersey Office of the State Comptroller to confirm that the financial terms of the lease are appropriate.

The lease and development proposal was rushed for approval, perhaps due to Suntex's claim that \$60 million in bulkhead repairs is needed immediately and the lease agreement could be the source for half of the funding. Yet the deal would still require the State to put forth \$30 million for the bulkhead and there is no indication that NJDEP performed any assessment of the condition of the bulkhead to verify the actual likely cost for the repairs.

The current lease expires in 20 years, and we believe it makes sense to explore smaller-scale repairs to the bulkhead during this incredibly uncertain time of increased storm

intensity from climate change and the pace of additional sea level rise. If and when NJDEP wants to explore a new lease, it should issue an open RFP and decide on the best future use for the marina at Liberty State Park based on public input and consideration of future real estate market values, development costs and climate projections.

Liberty State Park was acquired and developed in part with federal grant funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The 1990 Record of Decision from the National Park Service requires the indoor boat storage warehouse to be no greater than one-half acre in size. The Suntex warehouse proposal would cover more than two acres of land. The development would be a violation of that agreement and would result in the private commercial use of public Green Acres funded land. Considering this, and the lack of a formal appraisal, lack of necessary due diligence (including additional estimates for the bulkhead repair) – and importantly, the opposition expressed by Jersey City Mayor Solomon, other legislators and local residents at the January 15, 2026 State House Commission meeting – we hope you will reject the entire 60-year lease proposal.

Approving the proposal would be a grave environmental and financial injustice to the people of New Jersey, as well as a detraction for all who come to revisit the history of Liberty State Park, where many of our ancestors arrived in the shadow of Lady Liberty over 100 years ago.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding Liberty State Park. We urge you to direct the NJDEP to hold off on signing this proposal so that the matter can be resolved in a way that respects the taxpayers' investment in this extraordinary urban park. We hope you will contact Emile DeVito at New Jersey Conservation Foundation, at 908-997-0706, with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Alison Mitchell, Executive Director, New Jersey Conservation Foundation

Allison McLeod, Interim Executive Director, New Jersey League of Conservation Voters

David Epstein, Executive Director, Land Conservancy of New Jersey

Michael W. Klein, Director of Government Relations, Pinelands Alliance

Jen Coffey, Executive Director, Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions

Elliott Ruga, Policy Director, New Jersey Highlands Coalition

Mike Pisauro, Policy Director, The Watershed Institute

Amy Goldsmith, NJ State Director, Clean Water Action/Clean Water Fund

Sam Pesin, President, Friends of Liberty State Park

Greg Remaud, CEO and Baykeeper, NY/NJ Baykeeper

Wendy Mager, President, Friends of Princeton Open Space

Elise Morrison, President, Hudson River Waterfront Conservancy

Wynnie-Fred Victor Hinds, Executive Director, Weequahic Park Association

Jesse Burns, Executive Director, League of Women Voters of New Jersey

Mara Tippett, Executive Director, Raritan Headwaters

Lorraine Freeney, Founder, Jersey City Birds

Carol McNichol, Vice President, Wild Ones - New Jersey Gateway Chapter

Harriet Bailey, Jersey City Chapter, Feminist Bird Club

Anne Poole, President, New Jersey Environmental Lobby

Bill Schultz, Raritan Riverkeeper

cc: Alex Ball, Chief of Staff, New Jersey Governor Sherrill

Ed Potosnak, Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Joe Seebode, Deputy Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Henry Gajda, Chief of Staff, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Madeline Urbish, Senior Energy Advisor, New Jersey Governor Sherrill