

The Jersey City Times

Letter: Gov. Sherrill and Commissioner Potosnak Must Stop the Liberty State Park Warehouse

by Sam Pesin February 2, 2026

Suntex Marina warehouse rendering is at end of op-ed

Dear Editor,

The DEP's Liberty State Park corporate giveaway, a 60-year lease allowing the marina to build a massive boat storage warehouse, is still not signed, and it must never be signed!

Former DEP Commissioner Shawn LaTourette, who pushed his new 60-year marina lease despite the opposition to the severely harmful gargantuan marina warehouse for 500 boats, thankfully didn't get to sign it in Governor Murphy's last five days. This was after the sickening State House Commission rubber-stamped it following three hours of unanimous public hearing opposition. It's clear that the "fix was in" with the DEP, Gov. Murphy, and politicians on the commission colluding with multibillion-dollar Suntex Marina and its lobbyists.

The former DEP commissioner's unpopular commercial warehouse war on LSP is now "on the watch" of Governor Mikie Sherrill and DEP Commissioner Ed Potosnak. "The Governor Sherrill Boat Storage Warehouse" would irreparably harm LSP's character, openness, meaning, and purpose as a People's Park behind Lady Liberty. The commissioner's previous organization, the reputable NJ League of Conservation Voters, along with many local and statewide groups and new and longtime park users, opposes the monstrous commercial warehouse along LSP's northern entrance and across from the path in the peaceful, open-sky viewshed in the 9/11 Grove of Remembrance.

Central Park and no other great park in the world would allow mammoth commercial buildings.

The governor and commissioner will be immediate heroes or enemies of LSP depending on whether they listen to the broad public consensus, including the recent opposition and the 49 and 1/2 during which thousands put democracy into action time and time again to oppose LSP privatization no matter what money greedy privatizers promised for this priceless public urban, New Jersey and American treasure, our state's Bicentennial gift to our nation.

The marina already has 20 years left on its lease. The new 60-year marina lease shouldn't be signed unless the boat warehouse is limited to the half-acre maximum allowed in the National Park Service 1990 Record of Decision. The leased marina land was originally purchased with federal Land and Water Conservation Fund money for "outdoor public recreation," and also with New Jersey Green Acres funds for "recreation and conservation."

Former Commissioner LaTourette, who tried to hide the warehouse's acreage, began DEP's deception last spring by calling it just an "enclosure." He also falsely linked the lease to the DEP's need to get the leased marina lawn back for the north side athletic fields. The fields have had construction planning meetings and an interested contractor meeting, and this will happen regardless of whether there is a new lease. Also, attorneys stated that no prior lease establishes the DEP's obligation to replace the bulkhead.

Central Park and no other great park in the world would allow mammoth commercial buildings. The luxury warehouse must be scuttled to respect the meaning to people's lives of this priceless public parkland whose open space and open views are deserved by future generations.

To use Bruce Springsteen's phrase, LSP is a "land of hope and dreams," where people come to enjoy the outdoors and open views, away from the crowded, concrete urban region. Governor Sherrill and the DEP must protect the true values of this park, which symbolizes our nation's freedom and independence, as a neighbor to Lady Liberty and Ellis Island.

"Texas-based Suntex has proposed building a large structure to house 500 boats"

