

Jersey City Times

Op-Ed: We Must Stop a Jan. 15 Vote to Put a Massive Warehouse in Liberty State Park

by Jeff Tittel December 17, 2025

Liberty State Park belongs to all of us! It is the “People’s Park.”

Now, at the park’s very entrance, the operator of Liberty Landing Marina, Suntex, wants to build a 75-foot-high industrial warehouse with 500 dry racks for storing luxury yachts on precious parkland.

This latest scheme is one of the worst in the park’s history.

What makes this proposal even more shameful is that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection is backing it, and Commissioner Shawn LaTourette is trying to push it through. The NJDEP is supposed to be the steward of our public land, not a broker for private corporations. Their job is to protect Liberty State Park — not sell it out.

On January 15, five days before Governor-elect Mikie Sherrill is to be sworn in, the NJDEP, led by LaTourette, is trying to ram this deal through the State House Commission. We must stop this from happening.

A National Treasure — Not an Industrial Zone

Liberty State Park is a symbol of our freedom and our democracy. Named for the Statue of Liberty, it serves as a gateway to the United States. It welcomes over five million visitors every year from every community, background, and corner of the world. It is one of the most diverse and beloved parks in America.

It is a park, not an industrial park. If it were, the 13 acres of parkland Suntex wants to take would be worth some \$165 million. But instead, the state is preparing to hand over priceless public land for pennies — and allow it to be desecrated by a private warehouse that the public will never use.

New Jersey’s Public Trust Doctrine is clear: public land is held in trust by the government for the people. Commissioner LaTourette and NJDEP must uphold that duty — not violate it.

A 40-Year Battle to Protect the People’s Park

For more than four decades, New Jersey residents have fought again and again to keep Liberty State Park public, open, and free. We have defeated proposals for water parks, golf courses, amphitheater, hotel, Formula 1 race track and many other inappropriate developments.

This warehouse would destroy the park's character, violate its history, and permanently alter its openness. It would also violate the 1990 National Park Service ruling, which limited development on this land to a half-acre because it was purchased with federal LWCF funds designated for public outdoor recreation.

This deal is illegal, immoral, and indefensible.

Blood Money and Blackmail

Suntex is trying to buy public approval with a \$30 million offer for the marina bulkhead — something they already benefit from and should pay for without any quid pro quo.

They are also holding ten acres of public lawn hostage — land that was wrongly included in their 1987 lease and should have been returned to the people years ago.

If Suntex refuses to give back this land unless they get their warehouse, then NJDEP should use eminent domain and take it back. The public should not be blackmailed into surrendering parkland for a private corporation's profit.

We Must Stop This Deal Now

The people of New Jersey can stop this warehouse. Governor Murphy and Commissioner LaTourette must remove it from the agenda and leave a decision of this importance to the next administration. Here's what you can do.

- Call Governor Murphy. Tell him to block this dirty deal.
- Demand NJDEP reject the warehouse and return all 10 acres to the public.
- Show up and speak out on January 15 before the State House Commission.
- Tell Suntex: no more blackmail, no more giveaways, no more privatization and industrialization.

May the People's Park forever remain the People's Park.