



600 PARSIPPANY ROAD, SUITE 204  
PARSIPPANY, NEW JERSEY 07054  
T (973) 947-7111  
FAX (973) 887-2700  
www.iwwt.law

ELNARDO J. WEBSTER, II  
Direct: (973) 585-6986  
ewebster@iwwt.law

March 14, 2023

**Via Email and Overnight Mail**

Shawn M. LaTourette  
Commissioner of New Jersey Department of  
Environmental Protection  
401 East State Street  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor, East Wing  
P.O. Box 402  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0402

**Re: Liberty State Park Design Task Force**

Dear Commissioner LaTourette:

I serve as Counsel for Liberty State Park for All Coalition. I am a member of the Liberty State Park Design Task Force (the "Task Force"). As you know, the Task Force was formed pursuant to Administrative Order No. 2021-18 (the "Order"), a copy of which is annexed hereto as Exhibit "A". Pursuant to the Order, the Task Force was created for the "express purpose of operationalizing public feedback, DEP wishes to establish a working group comprised of diverse voices, experiences and viewpoints who would together engage with DEP and its professionals in advancing conceptual and detailed design plans for LSP, the goal of which workgroup would be to better inform DEP's iterative planning and design decisions to help ensure that outcomes are responsive to and meet the needs of the LSP's host community, its stakeholders, and the broader public." The Task Force is composed of:

- a. The Mayor of Jersey City, ex officio, or a designee;
- b. The Director of the Jersey City Department of Recreation and Youth Development, ex officio, or a designee;
- c. The Hudson County Commissioner for District 3, ex officio, or a designee;
- d. The Chief of the Hudson County Division of Parks, ex officio, or a designee;
- e. The Superintendent of the Jersey City Public Schools, ex officio, or a designee;
- f. The President of the NAACP, New Jersey State Conference, ex officio, or a designee;
- g. The President of the NAACP, Jersey City Branch, ex officio, or a designee;
- h. The President of the Friends of Liberty State Park, ex officio, or a designee;
- i. The President of Liberty State Park for All, ex officio, or a designee;
- j. The Superintendent of Liberty State Park, ex officio, or a designee; and,

- k. The Bureau Chief of DEP's Office of Natural Resource Restoration, ex officio, or a designee; and,
- l. Not more than four Jersey City residents selected by the Co-Chairs and approved by the Commissioner.

As you are aware, since the adoption of the Order, the Task Force has been diligently working with New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection ("NJDEP") and has held several meetings and site visits with representatives from the NJDEP on September 21, 2021, November 10, 2021, December 9, 2021, December 10, 2021, February 28, 2022, June 21, 2022 and June 28, 2022. During these various meetings and site visits the Task Force stated their desires for the use of the park land. The Task Force submitted survey responses with respect to the proposed active recreational uses for the land. Copies of the survey responses are annexed hereto as Exhibit "B". During these meetings, the Task Force also reviewed and considered the Liberty Park Interior Restoration 30% Design Concept Drawings ("30% Drawings") prepared by NJDEP. A copy of the 30% Design Concept Drawings are annexed hereto as Exhibit "C".

Upon reviewing the 30% Drawings, the Task Force expressed concerns about the proposed plans and the uses identified therein. Even with these concerns expressed, it appeared to the Task Force that the NJDEP was going to continue pursuing the 30% Drawings. Based on this concern, the Task Force prepared an alternative design concept for the park land, which all members of the Task Force are fully in support of implementing. A copy of the Task Force's design is annexed hereto as Exhibit "D". The Task Force's design proposes the use of the park land for various recreational uses including, but not limited to, a public indoor recreation facility that includes a community center swimming natatorium, four (4) full size basketball courts, two (2) 2,000 seat NHL size hockey rinks, an indoor track, health center, concessions and/or restaurants, and community space; an enhanced waterfront area with kayak launch, community gardens and greenhouses, extensive walkways to explore the park, 7,000 seat open concert and event venue, 5,000 seat open, lighted football/soccer/multi use complex with fields and stands for spectators, Olympic level open space 400 m 8 lane track and field facility, and a three (3) season open community activity center for use for farmer's markets, craft fairs and for flex space.

Pursuant to the Order, "a final detailed design for the Interior, and any related LSP conceptual design suggestions" was to be presented to the Commissioner by no later than June 30, 2022. To date, the Task Force has not been provided with a copy of this final detailed design and doesn't even know if one has been prepared and presented.

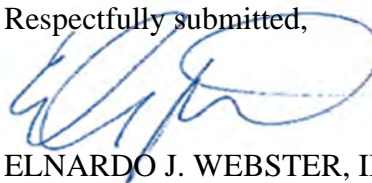
We are also aware that on or about June 30, 2022, Governor Murphy signed into law P.L. 2022, C. 45, which amends certain provisions of the Liberty State Park Conservation, Recreation and Community Inclusion Act, so as to establish the Liberty State Park Design Task Force. We, as the current members of the Task Force, are concerned that this bill will create a new group of constitutes and that the last several years of ideas and plans for the parkland will be forgotten.

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The purpose of this letter to ensure that you are aware of the tremendous effort that the Task Force has put in to establishing an appropriate design concept for Liberty State Park. We believe that the Task Force's proposed plan for the Park is substantially more environmentally resilient than the 30% Drawings as it creates a barrier from any future storm surge and helps with storm water management. The 30% Drawings fail to address the resiliency plans put forth by the NJDEP. We, as members of the community and elected officials, fully appreciate the importance of this park land and want to see it put to its best use while also helping to protect the City of Jersey City from any future storm surges.

We appreciate your attention to this matter. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,



ELNARDO J. WEBSTER, II.

EJW/jnm  
Enclosures  
cc: Members of the Liberty State Park Design Task Force (*via e-mail*)