

# JERSEY CITY ANTI-VIOLENCE COALITION MOVEMENT

**Saving our sons and daughters; one mind at a time.**



October 15, 2020

VIA EMAIL:

Olivia Glenn, Deputy Commissioner  
State of New Jersey, Department of Environmental Protection  
401 E. State Street  
Trenton, NJ 08608

Deputy Commissioner Glenn:

I was truly encouraged to learn the State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection appointed officials to focus on the needs of underserved communities and environmental racism. It is my hope that Governor Phil Murphy and the senior officials of his administration are sincere in written and public pronouncements regarding social justice and equity.

Again, while I remain hopeful, I lament on previous Administration's long history of environmental racism against Jersey City's communities of color in Liberty State Park. For years, our communities have been ignored while decisions about the Park were made without our feedback or approval. This disappointment is compounded by the reality that the park is located in the predominantly African-American section of Jersey City, Ward F.

I have several concerns regarding what is and has been happening in Liberty State Park. First, the proposed Protection Act's advisory committee does not reflect the diversity of Jersey City. How can we boast that New Jersey is the gateway to freedom, justice and democracy for the entire world while allowing the representation of the Liberty State Park to only reflect paternalistic and status quo views of the dominant culture? Where is the social justice in that position? Local community organizers and public elected officials of Jersey City must be included in the Protection Act's advisory committee.

Secondly, the 1977 Master Plan clearly outlined that activity recreation should be a major component of Liberty State Park. That progressive vision was right then. It is right now. But the 1977 Master Plan has been swept under the rug to the detriment of communities of color at a time when we need more positive outlets for your youth who are literally dying in the street of New Jersey, in part, because of a lack of recreational activities.

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Lastly and most importantly, how can your department possibly think that one single public meeting be sufficient for the 265,000 residents of Jersey City and the nearly 9,000,000 residents of New Jersey? If you want to show us your office is serious about environmental justice, that you really care about the thoughts and opinions of Black and Brown people, we need multiple meetings on the urban planning of Liberty State Park.

I implore your office to do the right thing: hold more public meetings on the future of Liberty State Park and provide a process where our voices will actually be heard.

It is my hope that we can work together to make Liberty State Park a beacon of hope for all of New Jersey, especially giving hope to historically underserved communities.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pamela N. Johnson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Respectfully,".

Pamela N. Johnson, MPA  
Executive Director  
Jersey City Anti-Violence Coalition

C: Sandra D. Cunningham - Senator, NJLD-31  
Angela V. McKnight - Assemblywoman, NJLD-31  
Steven M. Fulop - Mayor, Jersey City, NJ  
Catherine McCabe-Commissioner NJ DEP