

Robert Gioia, Chairman
Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation
95 Perry Street, Suite 500
Buffalo, New York 14203-3030

May 28, 2019

Dear Mr. Gioia:

The League of Women Voters of Buffalo Niagara responds to ECHDC's "preferred plan" for the Buffalo Outer Harbor. The League supports plans for the waterfront that provide and ensure year-round access to the waterfront, and a coherent regional planning process arrived at and adopted with adequate public participation. We support only such commercial development as makes appropriate use of a waterfront location. We support development of services and facilities necessary for a variety of recreational activities within a framework that protects and enhances the natural environment at the water's edge.

We acknowledge the time and effort put forth by ECHDC staff and the various consultants. The League has considered ECHDC's "preferred plan" and applied League positions. There are aspects of the plan that are aligned with our priorities, such as regenerative initiatives, and expansion of recreational opportunities.

However, there are some concerns. ECHDC appears to present this preferred plan as a "master plan." We believe Terminal A should be included in the preferred plan. The process used to create the plan has some flaws. Public participation via public hearings has been omitted. Specifically, testimony was not collected in large group settings with opportunities for participants to learn what other community members prefer along with their concerns.

Additionally, there has been a lack of transparency regarding the nature of Outer Harbor land. We are aware that current Outer Harbor land is man-made as a result of massive industrial and urban waste dumping. Much of this waste is contaminated. The public should be informed in order to appropriately consider ECHDC development initiatives.

We will follow ECHDC activity through the SEQR process, announced at the May 2 public meeting at the Burchfield Penney Art Center. Thank you for the opportunity to respond. We hope you will address League concerns.

Sincerely,

Joan T. Parks
President, League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara