

October 9, 2018

Commissioner Catherine McCabe  
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection  
401 East State Street  
PO Box 402  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0420

Re: Climate Resilience in the Meadowlands

Dear Commissioner McCabe,

This past summer, a diverse group of parks and environmental advocates, academic institutions, businesses, philanthropists, and state and municipal representatives, as well as former Governor James Florio convened to consider the long-term threat that climate change poses to the communities, infrastructure and ecology of the Hackensack Meadowlands.

Both on a boat tour led by Hackensack Riverkeeper, and in a round table discussion, participants had the opportunity to exchange knowledge, celebrate the strong track record of environmental achievement in the Meadowlands, and find common ground about what steps could be taken to ensure that this critical area of our state – and the greater metropolitan and northeast region – continues to survive unique challenges that are worsening with the intensifying impacts of climate change.

Following the convening, participants worked together to craft a joint statement building on the outcomes of the day and the many years of effort from dedicated groups to protect and enhance this important place. The statement is detailed below.

We, the undersigned hereby state that:

- 1. The Meadowlands region has served as an important location to advance concepts of regional planning, ecological management and scientific monitoring;*
- 2. The Meadowlands region is a critical area for the vitality of New Jersey and the greater Tri-State Region, due to its concentration of population and employment centers, multiple networks of infrastructure and one of the largest remaining contiguous tracts of urban open space and natural systems;*
- 3. The impacts of climate change, including increased flooding from more intense and frequent storms, higher storm surges and increasing sea level rise – and the associated degradation of water quality – directly threaten the communities, infrastructure and ecology of the Meadowlands region, particularly given its legacy of contamination, and need to be addressed;*
- 4. Long term planning and education that engages the public and key stakeholders to focus on climate adaptation – including the importance of restored and healthy wetlands and resilient infrastructure – in and around the Meadowlands should be continued and expanded; and*
- 5. The Meadowlands region, building on its legacy as an area known for innovative planning and management, should be studied for the adoption of a new model of park – a climate resilience park – that expands as sea levels rise and helps to educate about and protect communities from the impacts of climate change and our responses to climate change.*

Therefore we call on the State of New Jersey to:

- Address the long term impacts of climate change in the Meadowlands within the forthcoming NJ SEA Master Plan, including the concept of a climate resilience park;
- Grant all applicable state-owned open space, natural lands and waterways in the Meadowlands special designation that recognizes the Meadowlands as a cohesive unit of park, preserve or natural areas system within the state's existing framework of natural lands stewardship; and
- Work with other government entities and willing property owners to acquire any high-priority, privately-held wetlands remaining in the District, and add them to the specially designated area.

As environmental, open space and smart planning advocates, academic and research institutions, professional membership organizations, businesses, designers and topic-area experts, we commit to this vision for the Meadowlands and will align our efforts to help implement it.

Signed,



CC: Honorable Phil Murphy, Governor, State of New Jersey  
Honorable Vincent Prieto, President & CEO, NJ Sports and Exposition Authority  
Honorable Sandra B. Cunningham, Senator, 31<sup>st</sup> District  
Honorable Nicholas Chiaravalloti, Assemblyman, 31<sup>st</sup> District  
Honorable Angela V. McKnight, Assemblywoman, 31<sup>st</sup> District  
Honorable Nicholas J. Sacco, Senator, 32<sup>nd</sup> District  
Honorable Angelica M. Jimenez, Assemblywoman, 32<sup>nd</sup> District  
Honorable Pedro Mejia, Assemblyman, 32<sup>nd</sup> District  
Honorable Brian P. Stack, Senator, 33<sup>rd</sup> District  
Honorable Annette Chaparro, Assemblywoman, 33<sup>rd</sup> District

Honorable Raj Mukherji, Assemblyman, 33<sup>rd</sup> District  
Honorable Senator Paul A. Sarlo, Senator, 36<sup>th</sup> District  
Honorable Clinton Calabrese, Assemblyman, 36<sup>th</sup> District  
Honorable Gary S. Schaer, Assemblyman, 36<sup>th</sup> District