



Signe Nielsen
President
New York City Public Design Commission
City Hall, Third Floor
New York, NY 10007

Justin Garrett Moore
Executive Director
New York City Public Design Commission
City Hall, Third Floor
New York, NY 10007

August 28, 2020

Dear Ms. Nielsen and Mr. Moore

We write to urge you to expedite the New York City Public Design Commission review of the United States Army Corps of Engineers South Shore of Staten Island Coastal Storm Risk Management Project, generally referred to as the Staten Island Seawall. This joint project between the Army Corps of Engineers, and the State and City of New York is critically needed to protect lives and property on Staten Island, and to provide peace of mind to residents nervous about the next hurricane.

As you know, the Corps of Engineers and New York City submitted their designs and plans for the initial components of the project to the Public Design Commission the week of August 17th, and the next public hearing by the Commission is scheduled for the week of September 14th. Until the Public Design Commission approves the plan, the City of New York cannot fund its share of the Seawall, delaying a project that's been in development for over five years. The quicker the commission can approve a final design, the sooner the Corps of Engineers can issue contracts for the project, and the sooner the final stages can be underway.

Staten Island has been vulnerable to coastal storms and flooding even before Superstorm Sandy, yet Sandy demonstrated just how exposed our community is. Staten Islanders today cannot help but be reminded of the storm when they see the empty lots where homes and businesses once stood along the East Shore, and they cannot help but feel anxiety paying ever-increasing flood insurance premiums each year. Too many residents, unable to pay these premiums, have had to decide whether to leave or stay in their homes without insurance, hoping that the next storm isn't the big one. The Staten Island Seawall doesn't just offer peace of mind for families living in fear of the next big storm, it offers financial security and a promise for them to stay in the community they love.

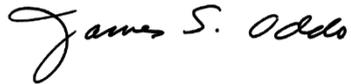
Over the past two years, we have worked hand-in-hand with the Army Corps of Engineers, New York State, and New York City to navigate bureaucratic hurdles and address challenges before they arise. We worked to secure an easement from the Department of Interior so the Army Corps could access part of the work site at Miller Field, and for the past year the Corps of Engineers has been surveying and clearing land in preparation for the heavy construction. Yet we've never taken our eye off the common goal—to ensure that this project to protect our community against future storms and flooding is completed as quickly as possible so as to secure the wellbeing and state of mind of our constituents.

We therefore urge you to expedite review and approval of the Corps of Engineers' plans, and to provide comments for any adjustments as soon as possible. Staten Island cannot wait any longer for this project to move forward.

Sincerely,



Max Rose
Member of Congress



James Oddo
Staten Island Borough President



Steven Matteo
Minority Leader
New York City Council



Justin Brannan
Councilman
New York City Council