



May 30, 2018

The Honorable Venetia Lannon  
Deputy Secretary for the Environment  
State of New York Executive Chamber  
633 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10017

Dear Deputy Secretary Lannon:

Thank you for your letter of May 24th, regarding New York State's and Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's unprecedented new commitment to funding and planning for estuarine protection within the Hudson River Park and the Park's Estuarine Sanctuary.

The \$30.7 million in capital spending for estuary-related improvements committed to in your recent letter, as well as the process you outline for creating a robust and meaningful roadmap for well over \$100 million in future habitat restoration and research funding, represents the best opportunity for real and sustained habitat improvement and the advancement of scientific research in the Hudson River Park since it was created twenty years ago.

My colleagues at Riverkeeper and I look forward to collaborating with the State and the Trust, as proposed in your letter, on the creation of a new Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan to provide, as you put it, a robust and meaningful roadmap for expanding investment in habitat restoration and research in the Sanctuary. As you propose, the key to achieving this goal is formal incorporation into the Management Plan of the 31 restoration and research projects, with an estimated cost of \$134 million, that are outlined in the Hudson River Foundation's December 22, 2017 plan for "Advancing Science and Restoration in the Hudson River Park Estuarine Sanctuary". We would anticipate that, going forward, the capital and operating costs of implementing the Estuary Sanctuary Management Plan will be incorporated into the annual updates of the Hudson River Park Trusts Park's Financing Plan.

Riverkeeper is also happy to accept your offer to have our staff biologist join the “Restoration and Research Technical Advisory Committee” working on the Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan. In accordance with your expectation, we will work closely with the Hudson River Foundation and the other members of the Technical Advisory Committee to further refine and integrate the projects outlined in the Hudson River Foundation’s 2017 restoration and research plan into the Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan ahead of its envisioned formal approval this coming winter.

We thank Governor Cuomo for working with the New York State legislature to secure \$50 Million in capital funding for the Park this year and, as the enabling legislation for that investment puts it, to ensure that the Estuary Management Plan is complete and the marine sanctuary is protected. We look forward to working with the State and the Trust, as you propose in your May 24th letter, to expand capital spending on the Sanctuary and achieve these goals.

In this same spirit of cooperation, we ask that the State and the Trust work with Riverkeeper and the Hudson River Foundation in the design and execution of the four sanctuary-related capital projects (i.e, shoreline habitat restoration at the Gansevoort Peninsula; oyster and other habitat restoration and ecological enhancements of pilings and bulkheads; ecological get-down at Pier 26; and, the Pier 26 Estuarium) committed to in your May 24th letter for this fiscal year, so that they will provide the best possible results in connection with our shared habitat protection and research goals.

Indeed, we view these projects, and in particular, the capital work at Gansevoort and the pilot restoration and enhancement projects of the bulkheads, piers and pilings, as having the potential to be innovative and significant elements of the Park’s revived commitment to the Sanctuary. Understanding their true ecological value will help inform future work in the Park and other urban waterfronts throughout the State. The key to this success will be ensuring that designs move forward on the basis of sound science, careful monitoring, and the principles of adaptive management, and we trust the Park will commit the resources to make this happen.

We would also be more than willing to assist, if desired, in connection with the Park's other capital projects for this fiscal year, including Pier 55. With regard to Pier 55: Riverkeeper believes the short and long term commitments to habitat restoration, research and planning in the Hudson River Park's Estuarine Sanctuary that are contained in your May 24th letter will be sufficient to compensate for that project's likely environmental impacts.

Again, our thanks to Governor Andrew M. Cuomo for his exciting new commitment to the protection and study of the magnificent Hudson River Park Estuarine Sanctuary. We look forward to working with you and the Trust to build upon the capital investments being made this year and fund the remainder of the projects set forth in the Hudson River Foundation's December 2017 restoration and research plan, once they are incorporated into the Trust's Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan.

Sincerely,



Paul Gallay  
President and Hudson Riverkeeper