



Columbia County Board of Supervisors

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Ronald L. Knott
Deputy Chairman

James J. Guzzi
Deputy Chairman

Matt B. Murell
Chairman

Kelly S. Baccaro
Clerk

August 19, 2020

Rossana Rosado, Secretary of State
New York State Department of State
99 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12231-0001

Dear Secretary of State:

It would be valuable for your office to join our communities in our collaborative effort to review local government and regional public access needs and implementation.

We are vitally concerned with decades-long erosion of public river access, most of which is due to railroad policy and its operational procedures. Increasingly, we are counting on increasing river access in order to improve the economic health and social well-being of not only our individual communities, but to the region that defines us. Each of our municipalities is in a different place with respect to articulating our vision for the future. Some municipalities have adopted LWRPs and others have not. Some LWRPs were approved years ago and would benefit by updating. All that said, we all share a common interest in increasing our community's access to the Hudson River.

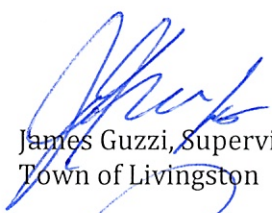
In March 2020, Scenic Hudson completed its Hudson River Access Plan, Poughkeepsie to Rensselaer. The plan was developed on the basis of a robust public engagement process including six meetings--attended by 300 people--over a span of three days. The plan's recommendations reflect over 1,000 comments and 5,500 "votes" for places where public access is enjoyed or needed in the future. Finally the plan includes 13 letters of support from not-for-profit organizations, several of our municipalities, County Executives and Legislatures, and our Congressional delegation.

As a result of our concern that precious river access may continue to be lost, and united by the Hudson River Access Plan's recommendations, our coalition is starting to review and update our local and regional public access needs based on those recommendations. We would appreciate your office joining us in this endeavor.


Sincerely,

Matt B. Murell, Stockport Supervisor
Chairman

Robert Beaury, Supervisor
Town of Germantown



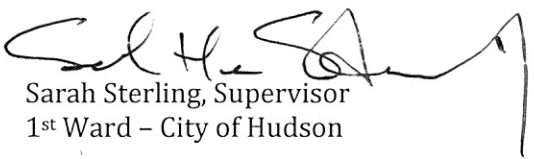
James Guzzi, Supervisor
Town of Livingston



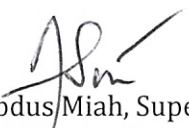
Ronald Knott, Supervisor
Town of Stockport




Raymond Staats, Supervisor
Town of Clermont




Sarah Sterling, Supervisor
1st Ward - City of Hudson



Abdus Miah, Supervisor
2nd Ward - City of Hudson



Michael Chameides, Supervisor
3rd Ward - City of Hudson



Richard Scalera, Supervisor
5th Ward - City of Hudson



Resolution
Board of Supervisors
County of Columbia
New York

Resolution No. 236-2020

Sponsored by Supervisor

J. Guzzi

A RESOLUTION URGING NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO JOIN WITH OUR COMMUNITIES IN A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT TO REVIEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGIONAL PUBLIC ACCESS NEEDS AND IMPLEMENTATION FOR LOCAL WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAMS

UPON, recommendation of the Finance Committee; at a meeting held on the 6th day of August, 2020;

WHEREAS, on January 12, 2018 Amtrak submitted to the New York State Department of State (NYSDOS) an application for Consistency Review for a series of gates and fences at eight locations in five municipalities between Rhinebeck and Stuyvesant along the Empire Corridor South Hudson Line; and

WHEREAS, five of these eight locations were in the Columbia County municipalities of Germantown (at Cheviot Park, Germantown Lower Main Street, and Ernest R. Lasher Jr. Memorial Park), Stockport (at Stockport Creek), and Stuyvesant (at Stuyvesant Landing, Mile Post 123.88 and Ferry Rd) and are enjoyed by residents throughout the County; and

WHEREAS, the hundreds of people expressed concern in comments to the NYSDOS that the construction of gates and fencing at these locations would reduce access for water-related recreational activities such as fishing, hunting, launching boats and ice boats, as well as viewing the Hudson River; and

WHEREAS, on September 6, 2018 five Columbia County Supervisors wrote to the NYS Department of State expressing serious concerns with the process that the DOS was conducting to review the proposal for gates and fences; and

WHEREAS, the September 6, 2018 letter stated that Columbia County Supervisors believed that "DOS has a greater responsibility to the people of the State of New York than to Amtrak" and requested that "the DOS take an interest in how the outcome of this (Amtrak's) application will have on the immediate and negative impact on our communities"; and

WHEREAS, on December 15, 2018 the Town of Germantown hosted a public meeting attended by approximately 115 people at which Scenic Hudson announced its white paper *At-Grade Passenger Rail Pedestrian & Trail Crossings*, the white paper documented modern techniques used to reduce risk and allow public access along and across Amtrak lines in other parts of the United States; and

WHEREAS, on January 7, 2019 a letter was sent to NYSDOS Secretary of State Rossana Rosado signed by 11 mayors and Supervisors between Hyde Park and Castleton-on-Hudson, including the Mayor of Hudson and Supervisors of Clermont, Germantown, Livingston, Stockport and Stuyvesant. This letter reiterated and expanded upon concerns raised in the previous September 6, 2018 letter; and

WHEREAS, on January 18, 2019 Amtrak, after meetings with the NYS Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and NYSDOS, withdrew its proposal for gates and fences so it could be revised in conjunction with a five-year corridor plan to improve safety. Amtrak's press release also stated that Amtrak would continue to work with affected communities, Town officials, and State agencies in formulating the revised plan; and

Resolution No. 236-2020 (page 2)

WHEREAS, on January 3, and 4, 2020 as part of public outreach for its *Hudson River Access Plan, Poughkeepsie to Rensselaer*, Scenic Hudson conducted three stakeholder meetings and three public meetings in Castleton-on-Hudson, Germantown, and Rhinebeck, at which approximately 300 people attended expressing the need to protect existing river access and expand future access; and

WHEREAS, during January 2020, Scenic Hudson conducted additional public outreach for the Hudson River Access Plan, which resulted in over 5,500 votes for various public access location and 1,000 comments on access needs were submitted;

WHEREAS, based on these meetings and public comments, Scenic Hudson on March 26, 2020 published the *Hudson River Access Plan, Poughkeepsie to Rensselaer*, which received letters of support from the Columbia County Board of Supervisors, County Legislatures of both Rensselaer and Dutchess Counties, County Executives of both Rensselaer and Dutchess Counties, municipalities of Castleton-on-Hudson, Hudson, Tivoli, Rhinebeck, Hyde Park, not-for-profit organizations Hudson River Heritage, Franklin D. Roosevelt-Hyde Park Foundation;

WHEREAS, on March 6, 2020 Congressmen Tonko, Delgado and Maloney sent a letter to Amtrak expressing hope that "Amtrak will work with all relevant state and local representatives to effectively reduce safety risks without compromising the public's ability to access the Hudson River;"

WHEREAS, this letter also supported cooperative efforts such as *Scenic Hudson's Hudson River Access Plan*, stated that "railroad development along both shores of the Hudson River has also created numerous barriers that may affect the public's ability to access the Hudson River," and expressed "a deep concern that the potential for loss of access runs contrary to New York State's Coastal Program;"

WHEREAS, on May 22, 2020 Congressmen Tonko, Delgado, and Maloney followed up with a second letter to Amtrak expressing that "the loss of access with which we are concerned is not limited to designated public parkland, but also other places along the shoreline where generations of people have fished or simply enjoyed river views;"

WHEREAS, this letter also stated that Congressmen "remain concerned that Amtrak should do more to address local officials' concerns regarding the past, ongoing and future loss of shoreline access" and expressed an interest in seeing a "cooperative effort that maintains, and ultimately increases, shoreline access throughout the corridor;"

WHEREAS, this letter referenced the *Hudson River Access Plan's* "11 clear recommendations and over 70 case-specific examples of crossings that need to be maintained or improved," urged Amtrak's project staff "to read the entire report before continuing to reformulate fencing and gate locations; adjust the proposal accordingly; and then explain on a case-by-case basis how risk can be managed without reducing river access at each location"

WHEREAS, on July 16, 2020 we were disappointed to learn via an Amtrak-convened video conference, that the reformulated *Five Year Fencing Program on the Hudson Line Section of the Empire Corridor* would expand the locations of gates and fencing to additional locations in Rensselaer, Dutchess and Columbia Counties, including new locations in the City of Hudson and Towns of Greenport and Stuyvesant;

WHEREAS, we are vitally concerned with decades-long erosion of public river access, most of which is due to, railroad policy and its operational procedures and the Columbia County Board of Supervisors views this loss of access as an impediment to our ongoing individual and collective efforts and initiatives to improve the economic health and social well-being of not only our individual communities, but to the region that defines us;

WHEREAS, each of our municipalities is in a different place with respect to articulating our vision for the future with some having adopted Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs (LWRP), others not benefitting by an LWRP, and still others working on draft LWRPs for approval; and

WHEREAS, every municipality in Columbia County, whether it benefits by a Hudson River location or not, shares a common interest in increasing our collective access to the Hudson River.

Resolution No. 236-2020 (page 3)

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT

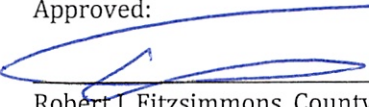
RESOLVED, that the Columbia County Board of Supervisors believes It would be valuable for the New York State Department of State to join our communities in a collaborative effort to review local government and regional public access needs and implementation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that a letter to the Secretary of State will be sent requesting assistance from the NYSDOS in developing a regional riverfront access plan; and be it further

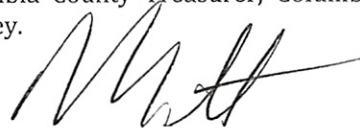


RESOLVED, that the Columbia County Board of Supervisors urges every municipality along the eastern shore of the Hudson River between Rensselaer and Poughkeepsie to make a similar request of the Secretary of State; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Columbia County Treasurer, Columbia County Attorney, NYS Dept of State, NYS Congressmen: Tonko, Delgato, and Maloney.

Approved:


Robert J. Fitzsimmons, County Attorney

Resolution
Committee

STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF COLUMBIA} ss:

This is to certify that I, undersigned Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Columbia, have compared the foregoing resolution with the original resolution, now on file in the office of said clerk, and which was adopted by said Board of Supervisors on the 12th day of August, 2020; and that the same is true and correct transcript of such original resolution and of the whole thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of said Board of Supervisors this 13th day of August, 2020.


Kelly S. Baccaro, Clerk of the Board