

# INTRO 10-5

FILED 4/11/22 11:24 AM 3117

## A PROCLAMATION TO BE SUBMITTED BY LEGISLATORS GRANT, MAZUR, HOGUES, MARINELLI, LOUGHRAN, McCracken & DIXON

**RE: Supporting the Proposal Advanced by Congressman Brian Higgins for the NFTA to Transfer Its Ownership of Outer Harbor Property to the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation**

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes contain 20% of the world's supply of fresh water, and acres of waterfront land in Erie County that are adjacent to Lake Erie – one of the five Great Lakes – have been under the jurisdiction of the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) for 58 years; and

WHEREAS, this property is known as the “Outer Harbor” and is widely viewed by the citizens of Erie County as an example of lost opportunity; and

WHEREAS, there is no compelling public interest served by the NFTA continuing its stewardship of this community resource, as the core mission of the Authority is public transportation – including airport development and maintenance as well as support for the Metro bus and light rail system; and

WHEREAS, failure to strategically develop the aforementioned public resource had inhibited the access and utilization of the Outer Harbor by the citizens of Erie County and has depressed private sector investment; and

WHEREAS, the demonstrated success of the early stages of Inner Harbor Development by the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) has been met with accolades by the general public and more than \$80 million in private investment to date; and

WHEREAS, it is critically important for our region to leverage private sector investment along the shores of this world-renowned freshwater resource, and this can best be accomplished by handing over the stewardship of the Outer Harbor to ECHDC; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper for the Erie County Legislature to convey its support for a cohesive approach to waterfront development that will marry the success of the Inner Harbor to the potential of the Outer Harbor; and

WHEREAS, Buffalo's waterfront should be viewed as a regional, state and national asset that should not be limited to the jurisdiction of any one local government; and

WHEREAS, the highest and best use of this waterfront resource can be achieved by ECHDC, which has made both passive and active recreational access by the public to the Inner Harbor a top priority that encourages private investment; and

WHEREAS, this Honorable Body fully supports the transfer of control of the Outer Harbor property from the NFTA to the ECHDC for the sum of \$1; and

WHEREAS, this transfer will trigger more than \$11 million in improvements to the Outer Harbor, including but not limited to: 1) clean-up and greening of the land, 2) creation of a sand beach at Gallagher Beach, 3) breakwall rehabilitation that includes bike and pedestrian path extension, 4) decorative lighting and benches, and, 5) dredging of the waterway.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature go on record in support of the proposal advanced by Congressman Brian Higgins for the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) to assume full control of the approximate 384 acres of property known as the "Outer Harbor;" and be it further

RESOLVED, in accordance with the Higgins' proposal, that this transfer of property from the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) to ECHDC shall be accomplished for a payment of \$1 to the NFTA; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Legislature is hereby authorized to forward certified copies of this resolution to Congressman Brian Higgins, the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation, the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz and all other parties deemed necessary and proper.

FISCAL IMPACT: None for resolution.