



# EMPIRE DRAGON BOAT TEAM NYC

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Honorable Emily Lloyd  
Commissioner  
NYC DEP  
59-17 Junction Blvd  
Flushing, NY 11373

Dear Commissioner Lloyd:

We are writing on behalf of the Empire Dragon Boat Team as part of our “Green Team.” Our team is the only breast cancer and all cancer dragon boat team in the New York City area and we have forty members from all over the tri-state area. As cancer survivors, we are very concerned about the overall environment in New York City. As paddlers who practice in Flushing Bay three to four times per week, we are routinely reminded of the direct correlation between the waterways’ health and our own. Team members have contracted eye infections and several cases of diarrhea from exposure to contaminated water.

Firsthand experience of the effects of water quality issues, have made us keenly aware and, as such, deeply invested in the outcome of the Flushing Creek Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) process.

Our team has made it part of our mission to advocate and promote cleaner waters in and around New York City and to this end, we are dedicated to seeing an overall reduction in CSO outflows. We have been monitoring water quality in the Bay with the Citizens Water Quality Testing Project through the Water Trail Association, and we have also been active in oyster gardening projects in the Bay in conjunction with the Billion Oyster Project at the Harbor School. In addition, team members have been attending DEP meetings on the Flushing Creek LTCP. We are writing now because we are very concerned about this LTCP proposal, as well as the DEP’s process overall.

Although we have attended the meetings about the LTCP held thus far, we continue to have questions about the plan. What are anticipated CSO volume reductions and water quality improvements as a result of the plan? How does the Waterbody Watershed Facility Plan interface with the LTCP? What is the role of green infrastructure? We have found the presentations to be somewhat confusing and incomplete.

Further, we are especially concerned about disinfection as a preferred alternative for cleaning the water – especially as we have no clear understanding of whether there

will be meaningful reduction in CSO outflow and how this will be accomplished.

More broadly, we are concerned that the community is being asked to provide meaningful feedback on a powerpoint presentation, as opposed to a thorough, well documented actual Plan. In other waterbodies, the LTCPs ultimately submitted to the State have, on average, consisted of over 200 pages of information. Here, the public was presented with scant evidence. Having a more complete analysis to review is vital to the public process.

As far as we can tell, DEP is presenting no plans for green infrastructure, no plans for actual CSO reduction beyond pre-existing commitments (which would leave 1.2 billion gallons of CSO discharges annually to the creek, according to DEP's public meeting presentation), and no plans for year-round improvement of pathogen pollution. Based on what we have seen, we simply do not believe that a minimalist plan, along the lines DEP seems to be suggesting, would protect the health of recreational users like our team.

Our team represents a fraction of the recreational human powered boat enthusiasts who use Flushing Bay. The Bay is ideal for the sport of dragon boat – it is large and protected. There are no really good alternatives for this sport around New York City. But it seems that the DEP has abandoned Flushing Bay and Flushing Creek – we would like to see both the Bay and Creek some day be elevated to “swimmable”.

We are active members of the SWIM coalition and would like to endorse their recommendations on improving public participation in DEP meetings. Further, we would like to thank Mikelle Adgate for her work in green infrastructure and for helping us to better understand the issues around this that are unique to Queens.

Thank you for your attention to this. We look forward to your response. Please reply to [empiredragonsinfo@gmail.com](mailto:empiredragonsinfo@gmail.com).

### **The Empire Dragon Boat “Green” Team**

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Cc: Council Member Donovan Richards, Chair, New York City Council, Committee

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