



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Sean M. Ryan

Senator Sean Ryan, Assemblymember Jon Rivera Support Preservationist Plan To Save Great Northern Grain Elevator

SEAN M. RYAN September 16, 2022

| ISSUE: NYS SENATOR SEAN RYAN, NYS SENATE DISTRICT 60, HISTORIC PRESERVATION



SENATOR SEAN RYAN, ASSEMBLYMEMBER JON RIVERA SUPPORT PRESERVATIONIST PLAN TO SAVE GREAT NORTHERN GRAIN ELEVATOR

Legislators Join Local Preservationists to Urge Owner of Great Northern Grain Elevator to Find a Solution that Satisfies All Parties

BUFFALO – On Friday, September 16, 2022, New York State Senator Sean Ryan and Assemblymember Jon Rivera voiced their support for a proposal made by a group of local

preservationists to prevent the impending demolition of the Great Northern grain elevator on Ganson Street.

On Thursday, Preservation Buffalo Niagara (PBN) sent [a letter to Juan Luciano](#), President and CEO of Great Northern owner Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), proposing a plan to preserve the historic grain elevator at no cost to ADM. Under the proposed plan, PBN would enter into a long-term lease of the site from ADM and take responsibility for annual inspections and maintenance. PBN notes in the letter that the proposal is a win-win that would save ADM millions of dollars and keep a local landmark standing in Buffalo.

A group of local stakeholders that included Senator Ryan and Assemblymember Rivera previously attempted to engage with ADM about potential options for preserving the Great Northern in February. The group [sent a letter](#) urging Luciano to come to Buffalo and take part in discussions regarding the grain elevator's future, but ADM officials declined to engage.

Senator Sean Ryan said, “Nine months after the storm that damaged the Great Northern, the building is still standing strong. It has become abundantly clear that this is not an emergency situation. Now that Preservation Buffalo Niagara has come up with a plan that will save this historic landmark without costing the building's owners a dime, I hope ADM will give it the consideration it deserves and open the lines of communication. There is no reason that we can't find a solution to this situation that satisfies all parties.”

Assemblymember Jon D. Rivera said, “The Great Northern is the very last brick-enclosed steel structure elevator left in North America. It represents not only the beginnings of modern industrial design, but the precipice of Buffalo as a city to be recognized and appreciated on a national stage. The elevator is far more than a historical relic — it's a testament to the origins of our great city and an identifying characteristic of Buffalo's blue-collar, hard-working

mentality. It should not be relegated to history, and I applaud the Campaign for Greater Buffalo History, Architecture & Culture for pursuing another appeal and injunction against demolition.”

Jessie Fisher, Executive Director of Preservation Buffalo Niagara, said, “Cultural Heritage Tourism has emerged as a leading sector of growth in our region. Preservation Buffalo Niagara stands willing to partner with Archer Daniels Midland to protect this important civic landmark in such a way that will also preserve ADM's ability to conduct its business. We urge ADM to come to the table with us and find a solution that works for everyone.”

A December 2021 windstorm damaged the Great Northern’s outer brick wall, leaving a hole in the northern end of the building. Citing safety concerns, building owner ADM applied for an emergency demolition permit, which was later granted by the City of Buffalo. The city did not consult an independent structural engineer before granting ADM the demolition permit, instead relying on the assessment made by the building owner’s own engineer. Opponents of the demolition contend that the damage does not pose any immediate danger, as evidenced by the fact that the building has not sustained further damage during the nine intervening months.

Built in 1897, the Great Northern is believed to be the last grain elevator of its kind in the United States. ADM purchased the building in 1993, three years after it was designated a local landmark. ADM has previously received conditional approval for demolition from Buffalo’s Preservation Board on multiple occasions, but in each case eventually declined to comply with the conditions. The emergency demolition permit granted after the windstorm has allowed ADM to bypass the Preservation Board.

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