



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Kavanagh

Elected Officials, Community Board 1, and Community Advocates Oppose State Decision to Proceed with Development at 5 World Trade Center without Securing Greater Affordability

BRIAN KAVANAGH May 3, 2023

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New York, NY – State Senator Brian Kavanagh, Congressman Dan Goldman, Assembly Member Charles Fall, Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine, Council Member Christopher Marte, Manhattan Community Board 1 – all of whom represent the site of 5 World Trade Center -- and the Coalition for a 100% Affordable 5 World Trade Center today voiced unanimous opposition to the announcement by the Empire State Development (ESD), the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC), and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey that they will proceed with public approvals for the proposed residential development of the site without securing the additional resources necessary to increase affordability at the site.

The agencies originally proposed developing a building with 1,200 apartments, 300 of which would be affordable and 900 of which would be luxury market-rate housing. Having identified no new funding source that they would dedicate to affordability at the project, they now propose either to proceed with the original proposal or with an alternative that would include 360 income-restricted units, but with much fewer units affordable to lower-income residents.

Over the course of the past two years, elected officials, the Community Board, and community advocates have engaged in numerous discussions with the agencies and urged them to find a path to providing more affordability in the proposed building, which is located in a community that has lost affordable housing at a particularly high rate for decades. All the elected officials, the Board, and the Coalition have consistently emphasized that additional affordability, with clearly identified sources of funding to support it, is a prerequisite to their support for the project. The decision by the agencies to unilaterally proceed to seek formal public approvals at this time comes as a surprise to those who have been involved in these discussions on behalf of the community and undermines the basis for those discussions.

“It is completely unacceptable that these agencies are attempting to move forward with a public approvals timeline without coming to an agreement on how to maximize affordability at the site,” said **State Senator Brian Kavanagh**. “It is reasonable to expect that public agencies that control a major development site in a community where affordable housing is so scarce would work to provide significantly greater levels of affordability than we might expect from the sorts of deals that have typically been done on private development sites. I am disappointed that these agencies are now rejecting that premise, and I strongly urge them to reconsider.”

“The current housing crisis in New York City already leaves far too many households unable to pay rent and places huge financial strain on the most vulnerable families,” said **Congressman Dan Goldman**. “Access to affordable housing is a lifeline, and is sorely needed in the area surrounding the 9/11 site. The lower Manhattan community, including 9/11 survivors and elected officials, have repeatedly stressed the need for maximizing affordability at 5WTC. It is imperative that this project not move forward until there are significant steps to achieving that goal.”

“While 5 World Trade Center is primarily designed to be built as a residential tower, the surrounding community has made its voices heard in making sure there are affordable units. Ensuring real affordable housing for 5 World Trade Center gives us the unique opportunity to give back to the 9/11 responders, survivors and their families who have sacrificed so much. I stand with my colleagues in government and community partners to strongly oppose any agreement that doesn't prioritize actual affordability for 5 World Trade Center,” said **Assembly Member Charles Fall**.

“With 5 World Trade, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to provide a significant amount of affordable apartments in Lower Manhattan,” said **Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine**. “While I recognize that this project must move forward, I also believe that we cannot undermine this opportunity by imposing a one-year timeframe to maximize affordability. ESD and the development team must hold off on approvals and work with stakeholders to find the funding that will maximize the number of affordable homes in this project. In doing so, they will win the support necessary to have a successful development.”

“It is unacceptable that ESD would seek approvals for 5 World Trade Center when the unanimous call for more affordability on site has not been addressed. There is no reason to move forward now while the State has failed to answer our call to find necessary funds for this essential project. We are not asking for the potential for more affordability, but for a

serious commitment from ESD to find the financing we need before entering any approval processes. I am confident that a combination of state and city tools can result in significantly more affordable units at lower income brackets, and I will continue to support the community in their call for a truly affordable 5 World Trade,” said **Council Member Christopher Marte**.

“CB 1 doesn’t take rain checks for affordable housing,” said **Tammy Meltzer, Chairperson of Manhattan Community Board 1**. “Punting the conversation to some uncertain date, while moving forward on all the other approvals is tantamount to ESD shrugging its shoulders. We are not ready to give up and we ask the State to match our willingness to find a solution before proceeding.”

“The Coalition for 100% Affordable 5WTC is appalled that the LMDC would put forth a plan that ignores the community's needs. This community has fought for over two decades to build fully, deeply affordable housing that would promote diversity and give 9/11 survivors & first responders a home in the neighborhood they helped rebuild. The proposed plan is unacceptable both in quantity of affordable units as well as the level of affordability. And it is unacceptable that the public agencies effectively wash their hands of any responsibility for the search for and provision of funding for this desperately needed affordable housing,” said **The Coalition for a 100% Affordable 5WTC**.

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