

Ms. Chrissy Hopps
DEP Waterways Regulation Program
One Winter Street, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Ms. Hopps,

I'm writing to express my strong support for rebuilding the bridge to Long Island. The bridge is an essential part of the plan to reopen a comprehensive recovery campus on the island, to help those suffering from substance use disorder throughout our region.

In 2014, for the safety of Boston's most vulnerable residents, Mayor Walsh made the difficult but necessary decision to close the 63-year-old bridge. The City built a new homeless shelter on the mainland, and found new sites for the public and nonprofit programs that were housed on the island.

The City averted a tragedy and built up a robust network of recovery services on the mainland. But over the last five years, the opioid epidemic has continued to grow into the worst public health crisis Massachusetts has ever seen. More people need help. More people are falling through the gaps between the various stages of care. What we need is a more seamless pathway from detox to residential treatment to sober housing, social supports, and long-term recovery. That's the purpose of the new campus.

Long Island is the best, most feasible location for that campus. There is an existing public health campus on the island that has been closed since the Long Island Bridge was closed. Rebuilding the bridge will allow us to reopen that campus. It's a peaceful, tranquil location that is close to Boston's medical centers, but offers people some distance from old routines and tough situations.

A bridge is the necessary transportation connection for that campus. If there was a fire or other emergency, Boston Fire, Police, and EMS would need access to the island. Some ferry service within Boston Harbor has been suspended in the past due to the weather, and we cannot risk being unable to access the island for even a few hours. A bridge provides the reliable connection that can't be achieved through a ferry service. Furthermore, many treatment programs require reliable access to emergency medical services as part of their licensing process and ferry service would not be sufficient. **The bridge will be constructed using the strictest environmental standards, with the minimal possible impacts on the surrounding communities.**

While the City and Commonwealth have made strides in the treatment options available to residents of the Boston region, the fact is that the Long Island Recovery campus is the best method to address the extreme opioid epidemic plaguing Massachusetts families. This bridge will save lives and make our communities healthier, safer, and stronger.

I support the rebuilding of the Long Island Bridge, and I urge you to do the same.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____