

**Subject:** Public Comment on Saving Bassick High School for GC3 Meeting 12/06/2022

**Date:** Tuesday, December 6, 2022 at 8:58:49 AM Eastern Standard Time

**From:** Steve Cartagena

**To:** DEEP ClimateChange

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Bridgeport's Bassick High School is proposed to be rebuilt in the South End neighborhood, at 115 Broad St and 80 University Ave, replacing a demolished University of Bridgeport building.

This proposed location is problematic for four main reasons.

- 1) The new high school would be built in a FEMA designated Special Flood Hazard Area;
- 2) neither the City Environmental Impact Study (EIS) nor the State Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE), were conducted;
- 3) there was no public hearing; and
- 4) the school would be in walking and breathing distance of multiple major air polluting fossil fuel energy plants including Bridgeport's Harbor Station 5 (PSEG), Bridgeport Energy LLC (Cogentrix), and two NuPower hydrogen fuel cells.

This is textbook environmental racism putting our young students, dedicated teachers, and local residents in harm's way.

**Subject:** Comment for Governor's Climate Task Force

**Date:** Tuesday, December 6, 2022 at 1:54:43 PM Eastern Standard Time

**From:** Matthew Lieber

**To:** DEEP ClimateChange

**CC:** Save Our Shoreline

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Hello,

Thank you for all you are doing to decarbonize our state economy and for offering this opportunity for citizen input.

**Why are our elected leaders in Connecticut promoting subsidies for air travel, the most carbon-inefficient means of travel?** Globally, aviation is responsible for 5% of warming, presently equivalent to a top ten emitter country like Germany or the UK, but growing on pace to triple by 2050, according to the International Coalition for Sustainable Aviation. The best prospects to truly decarbonize commercial aviation are decades from realization and mass-scale adoption. Ground transit offers immediate options for expanding zero-carbon movement options across regional distances. Yet our state's Congressional delegation has pushed in Washington for a very questionable airport expansion/privatization at Tweed New Haven. And our Governor has applauded this expansion.

**Why are airports considered an "economic development engine" for Connecticut?** The airports, Chambers of Commerce, and public bureaucracies call them this, authoring friendly studies with anecdotal evidence quoting insiders ... **but really because of large-scale federal subsidies for airports.**

- Airports and air travel do generate firm creation and employment, but the studies do not analyze whether they create more enterprise as compared to any other economic activity. Public cheerleaders and industry supporters are not interested in seriously evaluating the myriad factors affecting firm instantiation (they should be studying firm origination-- the conditions that favor startups-- not firm relocation and poaching from other states, which is about economic cannibalization and the politics of differential state tax and subsidy treatments). Nor do our representatives or our Governor ask about the most efficient returns on taxpayer subsidies: somewhat understandably, they see money available for Connecticut's airports, and push for the state's share.
- If truly studied comparatively in terms of return on subsidies, airport subsidies in Connecticut might well prove to be *less stimulative* than subsidies for green infrastructure in public works, schools, hospitals, and parks that contain the activity locally and support local supply chains and entrepreneurship. We know that most of the travel from Tweed is leisure and family driven. It likely drains more spending from our state than it adds, spurring working residents to spend on an expensive trip south and skimp on dining and entertainment locally.
- Furthermore, increasing air travel would likely exacerbate economic inequality in general ways and Connecticut-specific ways. Many of CT's more affluent natives now claim residency in Florida due to tax advantages, often owning second homes. Promoting mass air travel to Florida makes it more convenient for these older property owners to service their affluent lives. Our state already suffers from some of the most severe economic disparities in the country.

**Airports are economic engines because they bring in millions in US FAA grants to the state.** Without these federal subsidies, airports would not be particularly special. Seizing Connecticut's share of the pie and pretending that airports are especially stimulative would be fine, if airports did not generate harms, to climate and locally. **Aviation is a legitimate industry, but it has a major emissions problem- a global harm- and brings local harms to public health, ecology, and equity.**

**As a matter of state policy, we should not be subsidizing airport expansions, which prolong the use of this unsustainable technology.** And please, let's stop calling airports "economic development engines," something that they are not. Yes, many livelihoods depend on the federal subsidies. We will continue to need air travel for long-distance transit.

The climate reality means we all have to do our part. We should phase out taxpayer subsidies for carbon emitting infrastructure and shift those subsidies to carbon-zero options available now.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Lieber

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***Matthew A. Lieber, Ph.D.***  
***18 Hampton Rd., East Haven, CT 06512***  
***(m) 1-401-451-8394 | [mlieber8@gmail.com](mailto:mlieber8@gmail.com)***

**Subject:** Public Testimony Climate Change Presentation 11/6/22

**Date:** Tuesday, December 6, 2022 at 2:45:22 PM Eastern Standard Time

**From:** Margaret Wheeler

**To:** DEEP ClimateChange

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Tweed Airport Carbon Footprint, Particulate Matter, Ozone NonAttainment , Lead, Noise, VOCs

Expanding Airports around the country is contrary to the goals that hope to decrease our carbon footprint and global warming. Increases in PM, Ozone, Noise, VOC's and lead have a direct and long term effect on public health based on many studies.

Plans to expand Tweed New Haven Airport in New Haven within an Environmental Justice Area and ozone nonattainment speaks against our State DEP goals. The FAA has no standards in the Environmental Assessments to protect the public health of the community nor to avoid any increases in carbon footprint

According to my calculations using the DEP carbon footprint calculator, expanding the airport with hopes to bring in more flights to longer distances will grossly affect the carbon footprint adding over 402,000 metric tons of carbon. This calculation includes the Master Plan's goal to reach 1 million passengers( they already claim to reach 500k) and a modest number for transportation coming to and from a 20 mile distance.

With calculations proposing a 58% increase by 2024 ( based on Partner Program Research) this would increase to a massive level of 635,000 metric tons of carbon emissions..

1. How is the state of CT going to work to stop this increase?
2. Also a reduction in an increase is still an increase and does not work to help our global warming crisis.

How can we establish more guidelines at the State Level to protect these airport expansion plans such what is happening in France?

3. Are there any plans to develop a low carbon electric train to bring people to Bradley from New Haven.
4. How will the State DEP protect us from the Federal FAA establishing no limit on Particulate Matter, Lead, Noise and Ozone from increasing in Environmental Justice and Ozone Nonattainment areas?

Can the DEP mandate air monitoring stations directly at airports? Can we ask the CT DEP to help the community monitor various emission and noise levels and measure the public health issues in the area.

5. Net Zero promises include offset carbon footprints and disguise as a way of decreasing an obvious increase by playing with the numbers of a new expansion project such as Tweed Airport.

How can we get the DEP to help the local community evaluate and assess the EA and EIS reports.

6. Green building includes decrease in heat reflected asphalt areas and roof tops. How will the CT DEP protect the public from federal and local building projects that have purposeful zoning and building codes to protect the local area from increases in the local heat given off from such large projects as increasing runways and large terminal roof top and parking areas?

Thank you, Margaret Wheeler  
111 Clark Ave  
Branford, CT 06405  
[mcwr914@gmail.com](mailto:mcwr914@gmail.com)  
203 444 5292

--

Respectfully Yours,  
Margaret Wheeler  
111 Clark Ave  
Branford, CT 06405  
203-444-5292

**Subject:** Public Comment on Bassick High School for GC3 Meeting 12/06/2022

**Date:** Tuesday, December 6, 2022 at 2:59:55 PM Eastern Standard Time

**From:** Martha Klein

**To:** DEEP ClimateChange

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EXTERNAL EMAIL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear GC3,

The proposal to rebuild Bassick High School at 115 Broad Street in Bridgeport's South End neighborhood is a textbook example of environmental racism, putting students, teachers and residents in harm's way. A proposal to site this school in the midst of highly polluting infrastructure is overtly unjust because it further harms those already subject to air pollution and other environmental toxicities. This project will add to the suffering in an area with one of the highest rates of EJ associated illnesses such as asthma.

Building Bassick in a high risk FEMA flood zone is an unnecessary risk that ignores the severity of climate change, sea level rise, and extreme weather events, especially with Resilient Bridgeport, designed for flood protection in the South End, stalled indefinitely. Schools are built to last multiple decades. Scientists predict that storms and hurricanes like Sandy will become stronger and more frequent. Building Bassick in a vulnerable, high-risk floodplain would make it impossible for the school to act as a shelter in the event of a weather emergency. This is a terrible investment of \$129 million taxpayer dollars.

Burning fossil fuels, including shale or "natural" gas, to produce electricity creates emissions of sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), fine and large particulate matter (PM), carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), mercury (Hg), other hazardous air pollutants (HAPs), and other pollutants. These pollutants are known to contribute to adverse health outcomes, including dementia, cancers, heart and lung diseases, greater numbers of emergency room visits and hospital admissions, and premature deaths (EPA, 2022). Connecticut is building renewably powered schools, in Mansfield and elsewhere. The fact that the state's few clean powered schools are located in wealthier, whiter communities speaks volumes about the entrenched racism and environmental injustice endured by communities like Bridgeport, which has more air pollution than other parts of the state and thus should be very first in line for investments in clean powered infrastructure.

This proposal would contradict statewide legislation and executive orders on climate change, environmental justice, and public health equity. These include but are not limited to:

Governor Lamont's Executive Order No.3 on the Governor's Council on Climate Change

Governor Lamont's Executive Order No.21-3

Connecticut's Environmental Justice Statute (CGS § 22a-20a)

Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA)

Public Act No. 21-35 Declaring racism a Public Health Crisis

Public Act No. 21-115 An Act Concerning Climate Change Adaptation

The Clean Air Act

Local advocates are requesting at minimum a full environmental impact study of the proposal and the opportunity for public involvement and comment. GC3 should encourage any large municipal construction project to be in compliance with EJ orders and laws.

Sincerely,  
Martha Klein, RN, MPH  
Norfolk, CT

**Subject:** Emailed public comment, GC3 meeting, 12/6/22  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 6, 2022 at 3:08:02 PM Eastern Standard Time  
**From:** Donegan, Mary  
**To:** DEEP ClimateChange

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I am disappointed that in the Mitigation Group, the CTDOT's policy priorities did not highlight the role walking and biking -- and thus pedestrian and bicycle policy and infrastructure -- play in addressing climate change and only focused on cars and buses. The transportation modes of walking and biking are the best transportation options in terms of low GHG emissions; additionally, the electric buses we are all excited to see depend on riders' ability and willingness to walk and/or bike to and from stops. This year CT has hit record high ped/bike deaths (66 and counting). We can't fully realize sustainable modes of transportation without developing policy and infrastructure to not just protect people on streets but make people feel safe, welcome, and willing to use them. Ultimately, I believe this is evidence of how concepts of equity and environmental justice were not fully pushed into this group—the 66 victims have been concentrated in our cities and disproportionately children, elderly, disabled, poor, immigrant, and POC. Recent research suggests that electric vehicles will increase deaths on our streets and these concepts need to be part of what we address.

Thanks,

Mary Donegan, MRP, PhD (she/her)  
Assistant Professor-in-Residence, Urban & Community Studies, University of Connecticut  
Affiliate Faculty, Geography, University of Connecticut  
Faculty Affiliate, Sustainable Global Cities Initiative, University of Connecticut  
Research Affiliate, W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research  
Departmental Homepage: <https://urban.uconn.edu/mary-donegan/>  
Research: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mary-Donagan>



**Subject:** Comments for GC3 members

**Date:** Tuesday, December 6, 2022 at 3:31:45 PM Eastern Standard Time

**From:** Denise Rodosevich

**To:** DEEP ClimateChange

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(1) Does each state agency consider climate change, resiliency, and sustainability implications of their actions? I ask because I recently started receiving notices of various DEEP proposed decisions, and was surprised to see a notice of intent to approve an application where DECD was seeking a waiver from floodplain requirements relative to a 604 multi-family unit development close to the New London shore (Fort Trumbull parcels). Even if only the roadway associated with the project may be jeopardized in a 100-year flood, the GC3, and DEEP in particular, knows storms are increasing in number and magnitude and significant flooding is unlikely to be confined to the 100-year floodplain. So, if state agencies aren't considering climate change, resiliency, and sustainability, shouldn't they?

(2) It is my understanding that natural gas pipelines have leakage which has received a wink and a nod as being acceptable. Connecticut needs to take a lead on this (with the Attorney General?) and stop these leaks to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

(3) DEEP needs more staff and the GC3 and each agency's legislative liaison should be pressing the Governor and OPM to provide them with a sufficient budget to fully staff up. DEEP is a fundamental partner in the ability of GC3 to be successful. Without having sufficient DEEP staff to conduct inspections, sampling, and verification of permit and regulatory compliance, for example, CG3's efforts are undermined and may be miss-placed.

Thank you.

- Denise Rodosevich  
[drodosev@gmail.com](mailto:drodosev@gmail.com)



# LETTER 9.8: Stop Tweed Airport expansion

SHIRLEY MCCARTHY | 10:31 PM, SEP 07, 2022


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The plans to massively expand Tweed New Haven Airport demonstrate a disregard for human health and the adjacent ecosystem. The surrounding neighborhoods in several towns are highly populated; therefore, lives would be forever changed. There is ample [scientific evidence](#) that airplane noise pollution causes annoyance; disturbs sleep and increases use of psychotropic medications; impairs cognitive performance; increases the incidence of hypertension, myocardial infarction, and stroke; decreases academic performance of children by affecting their cognitive skills, such as reading and memory; and decreases standardized academic test scores.

Furthermore, the air pollution for residents living near the airport is significant, [decreasing health](#) due to a number of causes but primarily from respiratory and cardiovascular disease. Premature mortality is increased within 12.5 miles of an airport.

Airplane deicing compounds entering the Sound are toxic to marine and shoreline animals; loss of vital wetlands and other habitats would cause wildlife death and disrupt a major migratory bird pathway. [Wildlife must be](#)



Expanding this airport completely ignores our urgent need to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, not markedly increase them. New Haven and Yale leaders are putting economics and convenience above the urgent need to decrease greenhouse gases. France is considering banning private jets since aviation is one of the planet's top carbon emitters. Private jets are estimated to cause five to 14 times as much pollution as commercial planes per passenger, and 50 times as much as trains. Electric vertical take-off and landing aircraft are already flying! UPS has committed to buying 10 electric aircraft from Burlington, Vermont-based Beta Technologies beginning in 2024, with an option to buy an additional 150 of the aircraft. There are more than 700 designs from nearly 350 companies that are trying to get into the electric vertical take-off business. Why push ahead with a soon-to-be outmoded transportation project that will irrevocably damage public health and the environment? Why take business from Bradley International Airport that has recently expanded?

Finally, this planned expansion is an obvious example of social and environmental injustice; decreasing the property values, the health and quality of life for those living near the airport and damaging their adjacent ecosystems. Please cancel this proposal.

**Shirley McCarthy**, MD, PhD, is a professor emeritus at the Yale School of Medicine. Contact her at [shirley.mccarthy@yale.edu](mailto:shirley.mccarthy@yale.edu).

SHIRLEY MCCARTHY



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**Subject:** Bassick High School

**Date:** Tuesday, December 6, 2022 at 5:05:10 PM Eastern Standard Time

**From:** Melinda Tuhus

**To:** DEEP ClimateChange

EXTERNAL EMAIL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear GC3 members,

I have been looking into the different options enumerated over the past few years for building a new Bassick High School in Bridgeport, and I am dismayed that the current option being undertaken violates the state's Environmental Justice principles. The school is slated to be built in a FEMA Special Flood Hazard Area Zone AE without a full scope City Environmental Impact Study (EIS) and a State Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) and without public comment or hearings for Bassick students, their parents, faculty, or staff. I have lots of experience with projects being forced through that lack participating by those most impacted.

Making matters worse, the high school would be within walking and breathing distance of two DEEP designated air polluting facilities including Bridgeport's Harbor Station 5 (PSEG), Bridgeport Energy LLC (Cogentrix), and two NuPower hydrogen fuel cells. We all know that this pollution is associated with adverse health outcomes like heart or lung diseases (e.g asthma, bronchitis, and susceptibility to symptoms), increased emergency room visits and hospital admissions, and premature deaths (EPA, 2022).

Building Bassick here would endanger the lives of students, faculty, and local residents, leaving them vulnerable to climate change-induced sea level rise and extreme weather events as scientists predict that superstorms and hurricanes like Sandy will become stronger and more frequent.

I call on DEEP Commissioner Dykes and DAS Commissioner Gilman of DAS to stop this effectively immediately by denying the final application and/or terminating their school construction MOU. DOT and DPH commissioners and the Office of the Governor can also work to stop this from moving forward. This is a clear case of environmental racism and I hope all members of the GC3 will go on record declaring such. There are other locations that were/are being considered and these should be explored.

Sincerely,

Melinda Tuhus

CT Climate Crisis Mobilization

Hamden, CT

203.623.2186



December 7, 2022

Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3)  
CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford CT 06106-5127

*Submitted via email to [DEEP.ClimateChange@ct.gov](mailto:DEEP.ClimateChange@ct.gov)*

**Re: Equity and Environmental Justice in Resilient Infrastructure - Siting of Bassick High School in Bridgeport**

As a follow up to the December 6 meeting of the Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3), we'd like to echo concerns raised at the November 17 joint meeting of the GC3 Equity and Environmental Justice and Resilient Infrastructure and Nature-based Solutions working groups about the siting of Bassick High School in Bridgeport.

The State of Connecticut is funding this \$129 million school construction project at a 78% reimbursement rate through the Department of Administrative Services Office of School Construction Grants and Review. Those taxpayer dollars are funding a brand-new building in a FEMA flood zone. Further, the siting process has violated key principles of environmental justice.

The City of Bridgeport proposes to rebuild Bassick High School in the South End neighborhood at 150 Broad Street, replacing a University of Bridgeport building. The site is located in close proximity to Long Island Sound in a FEMA Special Flood Hazard Area Zone A, indicating a 1% chance of annual flooding and 26% chance of flooding over 30 years. The design proposes to address the flood risk by raising the lot with fill, but this does not address concerns about flooding of adjacent roads to access the school, or concerns about climate change impacts including sea level rise and increased frequency and severity of storm surges. Resilient Bridgeport, a massive federally-funded coastal flood risk reduction project designed to protect the neighborhood where the new Bassick High School is slated to be built, has ballooned in cost since funding was originally granted, resulting in a \$30 million funding gap that will inevitably delay construction.<sup>1</sup> There have also been concerns about how expanding impervious surfaces on the selected site will increase runoff into the adjacent Long Island Sound. Additionally, the site is located in close proximity to several major air pollution sources, which may impact the health of the school community, especially as students walk to and from school or play outside. These include PSEG's Bridgeport Harbor Station and Cogentrix's Bridgeport Energy facility.

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<sup>1</sup> The funding for Resilient Bridgeport, initially awarded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development in 2014, has been extended to 2025. Construction was supposed to begin this winter but is now on hold as the City looks for ways to close the \$30 million funding gap.

While it is possible that the site is suitable and planned adaptations are sufficient, we cannot know that because a thorough environmental assessment of the site was not completed and stakeholders' valid concerns about environmental health and safety at the site have not been directly addressed. Students, parents, teachers, staff, and administrators have a right to feel confident that the building they will eventually work and learn in is a safe, healthy space.

Bridgeport is a DECD-designated distressed municipality and an environmental justice community, and the South End neighborhood in particular has been and continues to be impacted by environmental racism. This means particular care must be taken to incorporate community feedback to avoid continuing down the historical path of environmental injustice. And yet, in this environmental justice community, once again there has been no public engagement or stakeholder input in decision-making when it came to selecting the current site. A city official told us there were two public meetings on the project over the last four years and that they were not well attended. To us, this means the public sessions were not accessible or well-advertised; to her, it seemed to be an indication that the community was not invested in the project. The community does have concerns, but these were ignored when the decision was made to expedite the process and skip any sort of environmental site assessment.

In 1991, the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit adopted 17 principles of environmental justice that still guide the environmental justice movement today.

These principles include:

- Environmental Justice affirms the fundamental right to political, economic, cultural and environmental self-determination of all peoples.
- Environmental Justice demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making, including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.
- Environmental Justice affirms the right of all workers [including educators] to a safe and healthy work environment without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment.

To ensure an equitable process and promote equitable outcomes, all levels of government should include the voices of stakeholders early and often in planning processes that impact them. These voices should not just be heard *pro forma*, but should be offered a venue for meaningful engagement. The City of Bridgeport should recognize its residents as experts on their own experience and consider them partners on projects such as school redevelopment. The State should not allow the City to bypass critical stakeholder engagement or a thorough environmental site assessment when it is providing the majority of the funding for the project.

A new Bassick High School must and will be built, but it should be sited with due process and input from the impacted community. We ask the GC3 to engage on this issue and ask DEEP to withhold any pending approvals of this project until the City can complete the steps that should have been done in the first place: community engagement, including evaluating and seeking stakeholder input on alternative sites, and a thorough environmental site assessment.

While we'd like to see an equitable resolution to this particular project, that the siting process has been able to get this far without considering valid community concerns speaks to the need for improved equity and environmental justice in public infrastructure siting and planning processes statewide, especially in light of the impacts of climate change.

Thank you,

Aziz Dehkan, Executive Director  
Allison Pilcher, Policy Director  
Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs  
[ctclimateandjobs.org](http://ctclimateandjobs.org)

**Subject:** Public Comment on Bassick High School for GC3 Meeting 12/06/2022

**Date:** Thursday, December 8, 2022 at 9:58:18 PM Eastern Standard Time

**From:** Alison Sanchirico

**To:** DEEP ClimateChange

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EXTERNAL EMAIL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Governor's Council on Climate Change,

I'm writing to you about the proposal to rebuild Bassick High School within walking and breathing distance of multiple major air polluting fossil fuel plants in a FEMA designated Special Flood Hazard Area. As I understand it, there has been no public comment or hearings for Bassick students, their parents, faculty, or staff. And there hasn't been a full scope City Environmental Impact Study or State Environmental Impact Evaluation.

As we all know, we are very nearly out of time for making good decisions. We must do everything in our power to be intentional about the things we do going forward. We must do what is best for our communities. Rebuilding Bassick High School in a high risk FEMA flood zone is an unnecessary risk that ignores the severity of climate change, sea level rise, and extreme weather events. Building Bassick in this location is also a public health risk to all students and staff (as well as residents). The nearby fossil fuel plants emit pollutants that are known to contribute to adverse health outcomes, including the development of heart or lung diseases such as asthma and bronchitis, increased susceptibility to respiratory and cardiac symptoms, greater numbers of emergency room visits and hospital admissions, and premature deaths (EPA, 2022). I understand the sense of urgency in needing to get things done. But when we rush, we make mistakes. We leave things out. And most importantly, we leave people behind. We don't do the work that we're truly capable of doing. And a rush job is not something to be proud of.

I encourage DEEP Commissioner Dykes and DAS Commissioner Gilman to use their power to slow this down. We have no more time to rush through things. We must take our time and do what is right, not what is quick and easy. I ask the commissioners to deny the final application so that this project can have the opportunity to move forward with intention and community involvement. One necessary step to improve the process would be to evaluate alternative locations and host accessible in-person and virtual public hearings for Bassick High students, their parents, staff, and other affected residents. Another would be to promote the pursuit of federal funds to update and implement Resilient Bridgeport and protect the South End! The best option already exists within the community. Use your power to slow down this process so the time can be taken to make it a project of pride. To save Bassick High School and rebuild it as the equitable educational institution that it deserves to be. For the students, the faculty, the staff, the city of Bridgeport, and all of us.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Alison Sanchirico  
Naugatuck, CT 06770



**Subject:** Public Comment to GC3 Regarding Bassick High School

**Date:** Friday, December 9, 2022 at 11:00:09 AM Eastern Standard Time

**From:** Alexandra Mastorakis

**To:** DEEP ClimateChange

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Dear President Aidee Nieves and esteemed members of the City Council,

My name is Alexandra Mastorakis and I live in Rocky Hill, Connecticut. I stand against the previously approved discontinuance of portions of Lafayette Street and University Avenue for the construction of Bassick High School as well as the overall construction of Bassick in that location.

Specifically, I **strongly denounce** building Bassick High School at a 115 Broad Street because protecting the integrity of schools across the state is imperative for public safety and the safety of children and families across CT. With climate change destructively impacting our waters and storm systems, schools and other public spaces are necessary for keeping communities safe. Not only this, but as a result of prolonged construction, the potential damage to the local waterways, especially the Long Island Sound, are staggering. To move forward on this project without the specific consultation of Bridgeport residents is a violation of citizens' rights.

As someone with family and friends in the Bridgeport community, I understand how this project will negatively impact them and their direct environment. This also sets a negative precedent for other towns and cities across the state to act against the interests of environmental safety and citizens' rights.

**I respectfully recommend** the City Council act within their power to: halt construction of Bassick until the City Environmental Impact Study and the State Environmental Impact Assessments are completed; evaluate new or reconsider old alternative locations for Bassick; hold public hearings for affected residents and Bassick affiliates; and pursue climate resilience and flood mitigation for the South End neighborhood.

This will enable Bridgeport residents, Bassick students and staff, to evaluate the potential options and find a new school that will support their academic success and physical wellbeing while having a fair say in the future of their community!

Building Bassick in a better location will reflect a commitment to the health and wellness of young students who deserve a bright future and the dedicated teachers and staff who work to help them thrive! Building Bassick better is taking steps to dismantle environmental racism, to protect the overburdened and vulnerable South End residents, and move Bridgeport toward climate resilience and environmental justice.

This is a time sensitive issue and we NEED Bridgeport City Council members to act on this immediately.

The safety of students, families, and our communities depend on defending the environmental integrity of this city, not putting it at greater risk.

Thank you for reviewing my testimony against the discontinuance of portions of Lafayette Street and University Avenue for the construction of Bassick High School at the currently proposed location of 115 Broad Street.

Sincerely,  
Alexandra Mastorakis

**Alexandra Mastorakis**

M. Ed. College Student Affairs Administration

she / her / hers

[alexandra.mastorakis@gmail.com](mailto:alexandra.mastorakis@gmail.com)

860-816-9190

**Subject:** Public Comment to CG3 Regarding Bassick High School

**Date:** Friday, December 9, 2022 at 2:54:44 PM Eastern Standard Time

**From:** Mar Pelaez

**To:** DEEP ClimateChange

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EXTERNAL EMAIL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear DEEP

My name is Mariana Pelaez and I live in Clinton, Connecticut. I stand against the previously approved discontinuance of portions of Lafayette Street and University Avenue for the construction of Bassick High School as well as the overall construction of Bassick in that location.

Specifically, I strongly denounce building Bassick High School at a 115 Broad Street because it's a huge EJ crisis. It is a clear cut case of environmental racism to place a school for mostly Black and Brown students in a FEMA floodzone. It is also unacceptable to make such a huge decision like this without consulting the affected community.

I respectfully recommend that CG3 act within their power to: halt construction of Bassick until the City Environmental Impact Study and the State Environmental Impact Assessments are completed; evaluate new or reconsider old alternative locations for Bassick; hold public hearings for affected residents and Bassick affiliates; and pursue climate resilience and flood mitigation for the South End neighborhood.

This will enable Bridgeport residents, Bassick students and staff, to evaluate the potential options and find a new school that will support their academic success and physical wellbeing while having a fair say in the future of their community!

Building Bassick in a better location will reflect a commitment to the health and wellness of young students who deserve a bright future and the dedicated teachers and staff who work to help them thrive! Building Bassick better is taking steps to dismantle environmental racism, to protect the overburdened and vulnerable South End residents, and move Bridgeport toward climate resilience and environmental justice.

Thank you for reviewing my testimony against the discontinuance of portions of Lafayette Street and University Avenue for the construction of Bassick High School at the currently proposed location of 115 Broad Street.

Sincerely,  
Mariana Pelaez

Mar Pelaez  
She/ They  
Organizing Director @ Renew New England

**Subject:** GC3 Public Comment: Meeting 12-6-2022

**Date:** Sunday, December 11, 2022 at 11:31:48 PM Eastern Standard Time

**From:** Caitlin Daddona

**To:** DEEP ClimateChange, Frances.ortiz@bridgeportct.gov

**CC:** katharine@katmorris.me

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Hello,

My name is Caitlin Daddona, I am writing to you today as an hopeful yet extremely concerned member of the CT public on the matters discussed at the GC3 meeting on 12/6/22, as well as a member of the DEEP team. I am currently a regulatory analyst with the Land and Water Resources Division within the Water Protection & Land Reuse Division, the team charged with permitting a Flood Management Certification for The Town of Bridgeport - this application processed before I was hired and I did not participate in application review. I am a lifetime resident of Connecticut, recent graduate from the University of Connecticut, and invested in our community.

A comment/recommendation on public access to the GC3 Meetings:

I was heartened by the intentionality of the Environmental Justice and Equity Working group, and resulting implementation of equity framework across certain GC3 presentations (i.e., public health starting with mental health of young folks implementing climate solutions, funding new farmers to try restorative land practices). However, these efforts were largely undermined by the exodus of many presenting officials before/during the public comment period. Vulnerabilities presented by constituents were disrespected by this behavior, and in change, undermined my trust in presentations conveyed. If we leave folks to share their powerful, emotional stories to empty chairs, what are we doing at all? Who do we expect to engage with us when trying to mobilize funds/power for community impact?

The GC3 is nothing without implementation. Climate is personal, it's what we eat, drink and breathe, and if we do not validate the observations of public constituents, I am not sure that DEEP holds a culture I want to represent - nor one capable of working on community-based solutions. Action goals mean nothing if there is no community to enact them. **Please consider equitable time across presenting officials and discussion with the public (instead of just hearing comments), or expanding public comment during GC3 meetings to at least 30 minutes, if possible. I would love to hear more about those public inclusive efforts if existing/proposed.**

A comment on the siting of Bassick High School in Bridgeport, CT:

I have come to understand DEEP has permitted aspects of the project re-siting Bassick High School in Bridgeport, CT within a VE flood zone and would like to share why DEEP should

slow/stop remaining permitting, which I understand to be an Individual Stormwater General Permit. Further, why current permitting does not disqualify this project from illustrating environmental racism, nor the halting of future permits:

1. **Flood Management:** Although DEEP has issued a Flood Management Permit, the permit only certifies a plan for “dry egress” in the case of emergency and raising of the school’s bottom level above a current mapped 500 year flood (a “flood” meaning waters, inland and/or coastal, overwhelming infrastructure - 500 years meaning a storm so severe in property risk/damage it has a 0.2% (1 in 500) chance of being equaled or exceeded within a year. A gentle reminder that FEMA is an agency that essentially handles insurance rates, so when permitting analysts review the FIRM maps (Flood Insurance Rate Maps), they are reviewing property damage if insured. Student homes, if not insured, are thus not the prime consideration of FEMA maps.

The elevation of the school itself does not account for transportation to and from the school, nor student communities impacting its day to day operation. Yes, FEMA mapped flood zones represent special risk hazards to communities. Even so, they are not updated with most current predictions of climate risk due to sea level rise. According to a sea level rise mapper created with data collected by CLEAR (Center for Land Education and Research) and [CIRCA \(CT Institute for REsilience & Climate Adaptation\)](#), there are implications of wave force energy not yet considered. I can confirm through conversations with fellow analysts that we have not reached a stage in our DEEP-LWRD permitting process that fully considers these predictions, operating mostly out of FEMA mapped zones.

To conceptualize flood risk to proposed and current sites of Bassick High School:

- Bridgeport bears the literal force of flooding waters from both sides: the coast as well as **failing inland stormwater infrastructure**. The level of development in Bridgeport can be traced back to redlining in CT and the bare minimum in righting state wrongs, polluting health and wellbeing of residents, is redirecting funds to consider Resilient Bridgeport and how to approach community flooding long term.
- This includes considering practicable alternatives and making that narrative publicly available.
- **Even remaining in its current location**, by 2100 with a conservative estimate of 20 inches of sea level rise, Bassick High School would receive flooding from the 100-year storm: meaning a storm that today is so severe it only has a 1% chance of being exceeded by the next (CIRCA/DEEP mapper).
- The hasty timeline of this proposal - the reasons for which were not shared with the public but likely rooted in funding source, a land deal with the University of Bridgeport, and **Bridgeport Military Academy Integration (see attached funding allocation by the city of Bridgeport)** - has disallowed this project from consideration within the Resilient Bridgeport, HUD (US Department of Housing and Urban Development) - funded program to revitalize infrastructure in frequently flooded South and West Edds, hit the hardest in CT by Hurricane Sandy ([Action Network](#)).
- I understand space for athletic fields was a factor in site proposals for a new high school ([News Release: Bridgeport Website](#)). I would question the ability to sustain these fields if regularly inundated with salt water: even if turf, maintenance and

seasonal access/team-scheduling implications.

2. **CEPA/NEPA Review:** [Under CT General Statutes \(CGS\) 22a-1a-4 to 22a-1a-5](#), RCSA (Regulations of CT State Agencies) [22a-1a-4 and 22a-1a-5: on Environmental Classification Documents](#):

- a. "Action" means an individual activity or a sequence of planned activities initiated or proposed to be undertaken by an agency or agencies, or funded in whole or in part by the state. "Actions" include, but are not limited to, capital improvements, alterations, or additions to the real property of the state; acquisition of real property for the purpose of capital improvements; lease/purchase agreements; grants-in-aid or financial assistance for housing, business, industry, restoration or demonstration projects; or other proposed activity for which an agency exercises judgment or discretion as to the propriety of that action.
- b. **Due to the influence of state funds within project financing, this project would fall under CEPA (CGS) and mandates a public comment period.**
- c. **Guidance from the ECD (Environmental Classification Document) on applicability of CEPA to Statewide projects clarifies:**
  - i. **II. Typical Actions That Require Public Scoping** To Determine Whether An Environmental Impact Evaluation Is Required: a. Construction of, or addition of, a facility: 1) located on undeveloped land without access to existing sewer and water infrastructure, that exceeds 15,000 gross square feet (GSF) of floor space or 15 residential units; or 2) located on undeveloped land with access to existing sewer and water infrastructure, that exceeds 40,000 GSF of floor space or 40 residential units; or 3) **located on developed land with access to existing sewer and water infrastructure, that exceeds 100,000 GSF of floor space or 100 residential units.**
  - ii. **Construction of a new parking lot, garage, or additions thereto, that provide for an increase in capacity of 200 vehicles or more;**
  - iii. **Any other action that may significantly affect the environment in an adverse manner, including consideration of the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of those factors identified in RCSA Section 22a-1a-3, and in connection with the proposed action's setting, its probability of occurring, its duration, its irreversibility, its controllability, its geographic scope, its magnitude, and regulatory requirements.**
  - iv. **At a minimum, a public scoping meeting is necessary** for reconsideration of EIS, through Environmental Impact Assessment, and sharing with the public.
- There have only been 2 informal hearings to my knowledge, one limited to the town of Bridgeport, and the other a [CEEJAC meeting](#) (CT Environmental Justice Advisory Committee within DEEP), neither exclusively focusing on the proposed project nor seeking alternatives/public recommendation.

Funds should be directed towards resilient Bridgeport community solutions, including constituents.

I find it important to suggest Bassick High School community & residents are teaching us the inadequacy of current permitting in preventing further environmental injustice.

The permitting of applicant actions **acting on** resources undermines the reciprocity of our environmental, climate, and a community approach. All these effects make it easier to understand why the implications to surroundings by elevation of the proposed structure above the 500 year flood zone were overlooked. This same elevation out of flood zones cannot and will not be done to homes in surrounding areas, who do not have access to such funds.

We permit human actions to “resources.” Our entire agency, from bureau to division is organized in this way, catering to “applicant needs.” This framework of permitting is fundamentally reactive to harm, rooted in prioritizing development just by nature of primary focus & organization. If we are to acknowledge racism has had a role in the siting and development of our cities, infrastructure, everything, it is about time our permitting process accounts for this. Action in this case can help set that precedent.

I would like to support Kat Morris, scholar/activist, founder of Seaside Sounds Club in Bridgeport, and salutatorian of Bassick High School, in her work acknowledging complicit environmental racism (even unknowing), and leading CT towards community connection and healing: In her words: featured by [CT Post in their Opinion article, \*\*Stop Environmental Racism in Bridgeport\*\*](#))

*“I call on Mayor Ganim, the Bridgeport Board of Education, Commissioner Dykes of DEEP, Commissioner Gilman of DAS, and newly reelected Gov. Ned Lamont to accept accountability for this project and:*

- *Stop construction of Bassick High without the City Environmental Impact Study and a State Environmental Impact Evaluation.*
- *Evaluate alternative locations and host accessible in-person and virtual public hearing for Bassick High students, their parents, staff, and other affected residents.*
- *Pursue federal funds to update and implement Resilient Bridgeport and protect the South End!*

“

To convey the urgency of the matter of environmental justice and public interaction with DEEP officers: I shared the story of a woman's public comment from New Haven to a fellow analyst. She is living below the Tweed Airway and had tested her soil, adding a dark soot deposited on her garden leaves supposedly from the plane engine combustion overhead. Soil chemists advised her of the high lead and heavy metal concentrations. In response to this story, a fellow analyst suggested:

“If you don't like it, then just don't move there.”

There are so many factors why people stay in communities, even when floods hit over and over. There are so many CT communities that are and will continue to face questions such as these, some more than others. There are so many reasons why CT cities like Bridgeport's South End is that community that's facing such hardships more than others and is classified as an “environmental justice community,” but is still a beautiful home to so many. We have little time to mobilize funds and attention to this community, to the people who stay through the storms and have their reasons why, and we may not know them, but we need to respect them.

We need to hear them as we will all need a listening ear in the coming years as our climates continue to shift. Check out Seaside Sounds (@seasidesoundsclub) if you've never been to Bridgeport and want to support the work of their community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Take care,

Caitlin M. Daddona (She/hers)



**Subject:** Public Comment to Biannual GC3 Meeting Dec 2022  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 13, 2022 at 4:54:12 PM Eastern Standard Time  
**From:** Katharine Morris  
**To:** DEEP ClimateChange  
**CC:** Governor Lamont, mayor@bridgeportct.gov  
**Attachments:** Bassick\_Bridgeport\_GC3 Public Comment\_KMorris.pdf

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Dear Governor Lamont, Commission Dykes, and Esteemed Members of the Governor's Council on Climate Change,

I hope this \*very long\* email finds you well as we enter the holiday season. My public comment will mainly focus on environmental justice with respect to Bassick High School. Please see the attached.

### Save Bassick High

This campaign was organized to account for four primary issues of climate/environmental injustice:

1. **The new high school would be built in a FEMA designated Special Flood Hazard Area in an area that currently lacks climate resilient infrastructure given the delay of Resilient Bridgeport.** I've read that the Bassick construction plans have been modified to account for this, however, such modifications are unknown to the public which counters the inclusive design process of Resilient Bridgeport. I'm aware that there has been correspondence between the City of Bridgeport and DEEP in relation to Resilient Bridgeport and the Climate Resilience Fund. I hope that meaningful progress has been made to address the funding issues, still, the lack of public transparency still and complete disregard for the affected residents raises many questions and concerns. This does not further the GC3 or State goals of equity and environmental justice. Below are notes/questions flagged to me by experts in the field:
  - a. "During Superstorm Sandy, there was a 9.81 surge in Bridgeport but it hit during low tide. If it came in during high tide and during a moon tide, still water elevation would have reached 14 ft NAVD. This does not include wave action and none of this takes into account sea level rise. **A concern would be where the fill is place[d] and if any of the building mechanicals are exposed.... What are the elevations of the catch basin inlets on surrounding roads.**" - Denise S., an environmental planner in Greenwich focused on wetlands and inlands and conservation— who worked in the operations center during Irene and Sandy.
  - b. "The elevation of the school itself does not account for transportation to and from the school, nor student communities impacting its day to day operation. **Yes, FEMA mapped flood zones represent special risk hazards to communities. Even so, they are not updated with most current predictions of climate risk due to sea level rise.** According to a sea level rise mapper created with data collected by CLEAR (Center for Land Education and Research) and CIRCA (CT Institute for REsilience & Climate Adaptation), there are implications of wave force energy not yet considered. **I can confirm through conversations with fellow analysts that we have not reached a stage in our DEEP-LWRD permitting process that fully considers these predictions, operating mostly out of FEMA mapped zones.**" Caitlin D., DEEP regulatory analyst with the

2. **Neither the City Environmental Impact Study (EIS) nor the full State Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE), were conducted** beyond the bare minimum of assessment namely Phase 1 & 2 ESA's (sampling for soil, soil-vapor, and groundwater pollution) and DEEP Flood Management Certificate as per the DEEP/DAS MOU for school construction (addresses engineering). I've been told by a DEEP employee that "there is no environmental impact" of Bassick's construction... I might not have a degree in climate science or engineering and I know for a fact that I do not know everything, but that simply does not add up. Please provide scientific evidence to justify that statement for the general public, particularly Bassick affiliates and members of the South End who will face the daily consequences of this decision. **Constituents, advocates, and scientists alike are concerned about the potential impact to the local ecosystem, namely the Long Island Sound and Seaside Park, which already struggle with existing pollution sources.** I've been told that the City of Bridgeport is pursuing solutions to existing combined sewage overflow issues in that area—with the caveat that excess stormwater will \*likely\* flow into Seaside Park. This is cause for concern as runoff contaminants could negatively impact the health of Seaside Parks flora and fauna. It was also specified that this is a completely separate project from Bassick's construction, again emphasizing a potential risk of negative impact from this infrastructure.
- a. Seaside Park holds a tremendous amount of life and history as a beautiful greenspace. According to the Freeman Center, the South End of Bridgeport was once known as Ethiope before being dubbed Little Liberia circa 1821. Liberia means 'land of freedom'— aptly named, not only was Little Liberia an Underground Railroad destination, but also a prosperous seafaring community of free African and Native Americans (e.g Paugussett tribe) who lived off the land [now Seaside Park] and advocated for human rights, inviting like-minded people of color to join them. According to Shinnecock oral tradition, the Long Island Sound provided food for the 'garden community' and night time canoe crossings on the Underground Railroad. This is a legacy worth remembering, celebrating, and protecting. Moreover, present day research shows that increased vegetation helps weaken coastal flooding and wave action during superstorms. I've been told that Seaside Park protected the South End neighborhood from suffering even more devastating damage from Hurricane Sandy by attenuating its wave force. The least we could do is return the favor by nourishing and protecting the park as it does for us, particularly in a city that suffers a lack of tree canopy already. **Prioritizing the health of the natural environment, however inconvenient, has long term benefits for public health and climate resilience.**
  - b. Additionally, Bridgeport was put on the waitlist for the EPA clean school buses which suggests that Bassick would use existing gas buses (and personal vehicles), thus contributing to an increase in air pollution of harmful vehicular emissions into the South End. The caveat for this is that there exists a two mile rule for school buses allowing transport for students. Meaning, the vast majority of West End students who would attend Bassick high would be either bused in on polluting vehicles or would have to walk a long and unsafe path to the new location if their home is less than 2 miles away. Considering that access to sports fields were a major factor for choosing this location, it is unfortunate that these athletes would have a long, late night walk home, worsened by the dark, cold nights of Connecticut's fall and winter. This is yet another concern I've heard raised by students. I'm sure there are more insights they could provide if given the opportunity.

3. **There was little to no public hearing/comment despite CEPA Law requirements.** The neglect is so egregious that I've encountered teachers, students, and parents who are entirely unaware of the prospective relocation. I cannot sufficiently describe how their eyes light up with concern or the way their eyebrows raise with apprehension before ultimately shaking their heads in disapproval. That said, those who do know have become jaded, activated, or a somber mixture of both. The few students who know have taken to their own measures of protection, collecting signatures of their peers for a petition to Save Bassick High (and Bridgeport Military Academy). A hundred signatures, one young girl collected, long before I even reached out. I've met local advocates who have given up their fight to Save Bassick after their first call, two years ago.
  - a. A public scoping meeting is necessary to rectify this and the lack of Environmental Impact Assessment. I've heard an argument made that Bassick would be built on developed land given the demolition of a UB building thus bypassing the Environmental Impact Assessment and Public Hearing/Comment requirement. It's unclear to me how valid that is but it is clear to me that **all parties involved would benefit from a public scoping meeting to answer questions from the community and hear their concerns directly. This would allow for a new foundation setting to move forward in the most just and equitable manner possible.**
  - b. Note: I am more than willing to organize this meeting! **An upcoming January 11th forum is an option.**
  
4. **Bassick would be within walking and breathing distance of two DEEP designated air affecting facilities including Bridgeport's Harbor Station 5 (PSEG), Bridgeport Energy LLC (Cogentrix), and two NuPower hydrogen fuel cells (i.e multiple major air polluting fossil fuel energy plants)** which community members actively protested to prevent being sited in their overburdened community. The South End, like the rest of Bridgeport, is a climate vulnerable, environmental justice community in a distressed municipality according to state statute and this siting of Bassick High in this location is a public health risk to our young students, dedicated teachers, and local residents. Burning fossil fuels to produce electricity creates emissions of sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), particulate matter (PM), carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), mercury (Hg) and other hazardous air pollutants (HAPs), and other pollutants. **These pollutants are known to contribute to adverse health outcomes, including the development of heart or lung diseases, such as asthma and bronchitis, increased susceptibility to respiratory and cardiac symptoms, greater numbers of emergency room visits and hospital admissions, and premature deaths (EPA, 2022).** In CT. **Black youth are nearly 5.5x and Hispanic youth are 4.5x more likely than White youth to go to the emergency room and/or be hospitalized for asthma (Weiss, 2020).** Additionally, the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health reported that **a small increase in long-term exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub> (air pollution) leads to a dramatic increase in COVID-19 mortality (Wu et. al., 2020).** Teachers went through hell and back during the COVID pandemic, turned endemic, the consequences of which we still face today with a massive staff shortage eclipsed by disproportionate death rates in communities like Bridgeport. This is not the thanks they deserve! Teachers deserve for their salaries to match that of those running the government, and for their desk chairs to be replaced with brookstone massage chairs. Bassick teachers deserve a healthy school and a say in the location of the next school they will support for decades to come. The SouthEnd community has long been seeking justice for their disproportionate suffering. They deserve better, as do Bassick students and teachers.

I'm providing this public comment as a concerned scholar-activist for environmental justice, but more

importantly, as a 2016 Bassick graduate, a daughter of a Bridgeport school's paraprofessional, and a true lover of Bridgeport, Connecticut, I have no intentions other than to Save Bassick High because I believe its students, faculty, and staff deserve nothing but the best. I believe residents of the SouthEnd deserve justice. I believe all other living beings we share our ecosystem with deserve consideration and protection. I am no one's enemy nor do I consider this campaign a battle to be won. I seek to collaborate, problem-solve, and move forward with anyone who agrees. Mutual progress, compassion, and care for the collective is my driving motive. I hope we can Save Bassick High together.

Sincerely,  
Katharine Morris

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**Kat Morris** *(she/her)*

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Master of Public Policy  
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~Climate Change-Maker  
for Yahoo's In the Know~