

March 6, 2024

Dear Assembly members and Mayor Morphet,

It was very disturbing to learn from Robin Reich at your 2/27 meeting that the borough manager had submitted an alternative dock design to Ms. Reich in December 2023. Since that was news to you, Ms. Kreitzer presumably chose the alternative without your direction. Her failure to consult with the assembly on alternatives for the draft EA and her submission of a design without assembly direction or knowledge is inexcusable. This manager consistently fails to provide you important information and also to ask for and take direction from the elected body whose directives she was hired to carry out.

HBC 2.20.020 Duties of the manager include “...**works closely with the mayor, borough assembly...**”, “carrying out the administration of borough government and duties **as directed by the borough assembly**” and “...**carry out the policies and directives of the assembly.**”

Since this new assembly and mayor were sworn in 4+ months ago, the manager has acted unilaterally on Lutak dock issues but explains away her actions by saying she was on vacation, busy with other projects, didn't see a critical email or, was just doing her job.

The Lutak dock is the borough's most important project at the moment with a looming deadline. The manager appears to be trying to run out the clock, ignoring the concerns of this assembly and the public in order to build the mega-dock promoted by the previous assembly.

The public process has been flawed since the RAISE grant application was filed in 2021 due to inaccurate information and multiple, improperly or never-noticed meetings in 2022. Since your election, you've been trying to catch up with a manager who is bent on pursuing a design whose supporters on the planning commission and assembly have been replaced by individuals concerned about the life time costs and environmental, social, and economic impacts of dock designs.

I would have fired the manager for insubordination last fall, and hired a project manager, with no agenda, to oversee the dock project. I recognize the responsibility that would have created for you as the Lutak Dock nears the draft EA stage. However, with your attention diverted by numerous roadblocks, you have been unable to pursue an alternative more suited to our small community and desired by a large segment of the citizenry.

Now 2 months into 2024, the manager has submitted her mega-dock alternative, the public's request for a "community dock" alternative has still never been addressed, LCC's month old "request for assembly action" has not received any response, and there is no real design alternative proposed for the draft EA.

NEPA requires a range of alternatives but they've only been given 2 designs, one a riprap, the other an encapsulation but both similar in size, both with steel bulkheads, each offering features providing the same undesirable function, i.e., the ability for handymax ships to tie up and receive ore. And, to date we have no information on the life cycle costs with which to evaluate the two designs.

The draft EA needs a true alternative, e.g., a shorter, rubble mound dock with smaller dolphins, no dredging, no 2000 lb/square foot load bearing capacity, and no sheetpile bulkhead or dock face, let alone a 700 foot long steel one.

I implore you to respond **asap** to LCC's "request for assembly action" and have a qualified engineer or company evaluate a modified, scaled down R+M dock design. Jason Davis said he'd work with the borough and do what they wanted. Given Turnagain's familiarity with the Lutak Dock design options, it seems like it would be simple for the company to evaluate the dock described above. Since that design would create fewer and/or smaller impacts than those of either mega-dock design, it may be possible to readily add it to the draft EA as a modification of the R+M phases 1-3 design submitted by the manager.

Although you've been repeatedly warned that it is too late to make any changes, NEPA requires alternatives in an EA and many citizens want to see the "community-scaled" alternative in the EA. Don't allow anyone including the contractors or the manager to scare you off from adding a real alternative to the draft EA. It is important to demonstrate to MARAD that Haines wants choice and an alternative to the mega-dock twins in the EA. If you don't provide such an alternative, the manager may provide one of her own, which is unlikely to represent the wishes of the public that elected you.

Thank you for your efforts,

Sincerely,  
Katey Palmer