



Working to protect the Mississippi River
and its watershed in the Twin Cities area.

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Dear Legislators:

We are writing to share Friends of the Mississippi River's continued opposition to state bond funds for First Avenue's concert venue at Upper Harbor Terminal in North Minneapolis.

On April 24, we shared with you 90 letters that community members wrote in opposition to bonding for this project. Additional letters have continued to come in since, and our concerns have only grown deeper.

In light of our current state, we ask again: **is First Avenue's privately-operated concert venue at Upper Harbor Terminal really Minneapolis's best bonding idea?** We believe funds should be instead directed to other projects that truly deliver racial and economic equity and respond to urgent needs.

The city's community engagement for Upper Harbor Terminal has been on hold since March, and no substantive updates have been shared. City leaders have been largely silent on the project even as COVID-19 and civil unrest have changed Minneapolis' needs.

Urgent public investment is needed to rebuild, especially given the need to disrupt market forces that will otherwise drive gentrification through redevelopment.

We recognize that racism and structural disinvestment in communities of color have brought us to this point. Recent events are just a more visible display of centuries-long structural injustice. We welcome the current sense of urgency to redress them but mourn the neglected opportunities for change that would have prevented George Floyd's murder and so many others.

We believe wholeheartedly that North Minneapolis deserves robust, creative community investment and development. We'd love to see that happen both at and beyond Upper Harbor Terminal, and quickly.

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Redevelopment ideas should be birthed in the community, led by and primarily benefiting Black and brown neighbors. The current Upper Harbor Terminal bonding proposal simply isn't that. The Upper Harbor Terminal development plan was created by United Properties and First Avenue long before any community process began.

Past community engagement efforts were controversial and have been put on hold for the past three months. Some ideas for partial community ownership of the project have been discussed, but there is no concrete agreement or approval. And the city hasn't told community members when these discussions will resume.

The city and development team's silence does not bode well for a transparent and inclusive process.

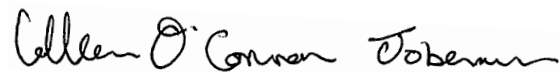
There are better community-led ideas and more urgent needs throughout Minneapolis. We hope that you will lead in advocating for state funds to rebuild the essential services and vibrant spaces that have been lost in recent weeks, rather than state funds for First Avenue's project at Upper Harbor Terminal.

Thank you for your continued service to all Minnesotans during this challenging time.

In partnership,



Whitney L. Clark
Executive Director



Colleen O'Connor Toberman
River Corridor Program Director