

May 22, 2009

Dear Mr. Rosenthal,

As a citizen who is very interested in the history and preservation of the historic beauty of the Lower Hudson Valley Region, I ask that the DEC work with Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) to take a very hard look at any impact the proposed United Water New York desalination plant may have on historic sites and viewsheds.

The history and beauty of the Lower Hudson Valley is the richest source of a sense of place and personal identity for our residents, and one of the region's strongest economic engines. Existing viewsheds and appearances should be preserved. Those viewsheds and shorelines that have already been disturbed should not be further diminished. Therefore, I respectfully request that the EIS **closely analyze and provide studies on any effect** that the proposed desalination plant may have on the following

1. The Stony Point Battlefield and the Stony Point Lighthouse (a National Register of Historic Places Site): the riverside and riverbank approaches to the battle ground and fort area -- and its viewsheds, and its land and river context. Please provide studies and analyses including, but not limited to, viewshed analyses, and economic analyses for potential loss of tourism including regional and onsite visits as well as the day20boat tourism industry. *The Battle of Stony Point was one of the last major Revolutionary War battles in the northeastern colonies. This is where Brigadier General Anthony Wayne led his corps of Continental Light Infantry in a daring midnight attack on the British, seizing the site's fortifications and taking the British garrison as prisoners on July 16, 1779.*

2. The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area: its viewsheds, natural scenic areas, cultural and historic sites. Please provide studies and analyses including, but not limited to, viewshed analyses, and economic analyses for potential loss of tourism including regional and onsite visits as well as the day boat tourism industry. *The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area was established by Congress in 1996 and is one of 40 federally designated Heritage Areas, funded through the National Park Service and Department of the Interior by annual appropriations.*

2. The Washington-Rochambeau Route: and the historic landing site (Kings Ferry) and viewshed approaches to Kings Ferry from the Hudson River itself, as well as the view from Verplanck, NY across the Hudson River looking toward Rockland County .Please provide studies and analyses including, but not limited to, viewshed analyses, and economic analyses for potential loss of tourism, including regional and onsite visits and reenactments of Crossing the Hudson, as well as the day boat tourism industry.

The Washington-Rochambeau Route is proposed as a National Trail, and may be designated by the United States Congress later this year. This Trail extends from Rhode Island through New York and New Jersey, to Yorktown, Virginia, and includes the crossing of the Hudson River from Verplank to Kings Ferry. In the Lower Hudson Valley Region, many of the roads, historic structures, ridgelines, shorelines and viewsheds of that time are still remarkably intact to this day. Existing viewsheds and appearances should be preserved. Those viewsheds and shorelines that have already been disturbed should not be further diminished. As part of the 225th Anniversary of this historic march toward the American victory in Yorktown, a reenactment of the crossing of the Hudson was held and attended by over a thousand people including foreign dignitaries and

internationally acclaimed Revolutionary War scholars. Diminishment of this important Revolutionary War route would have a negative impact on tourism and the experience of 're-visiting' one of the most important chapters in our Nation's history.

Additionally, I request that the NYSDEC and NYSOPRHP reach out to Colonel Jim Johnson, Chairman of the NYS Committee of the Washington-Rochambeau Trail for comments from the NYS Committee as well as from National Committee of the Washington-Rochambeau Trail (including the committee's scholars and international representatives). Additionally, please reach out to the United States Department of Interior and any other national or federal agencies and organizations who have oversight on National Register of Historic Places Sites, National Trails and National Heritage Areas -- including such agencies and organizations as the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Council of Historic Preservation Officers.

Additionally, please reach out to Ms. Heather Duke (Rockland County Commissioner of Tourism) for her comments, and to Mr. Thomas F.X. Casey (Rockland County Historian) for his comments.

Thank you for your consideration of these points.

Sincerely,

Janet Burnet
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French General Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, Comte de Rochambeau, sailed into Newport in July of 1780 with an army of 5,000 officers and men. After wintering in Newport, Rochambeau's army marched through Rhode Island and Connecticut, in June and July of 1781, and joined General George Washington's Continental Army in Phillipsburg, New York. Abandoning the idea of attacking New York, held by the British under General Clinton, they devised instead a southern campaign to attack General Cornwallis in Virginia. In August and September, Washington's and Rochambeau's armies marched through New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, reaching Williamsburg in late September. Together they attacked and held under siege the British-fortified town of Yorktown. A French fleet under the command of Admiral De Grasse blocked the Chesapeake Bay to either reinforcement from New York or sea escape from Yorktown. On October 19, 1781, after three weeks of siege, General Cornwallis surrendered to General Washington, marking Yorktown as one of the most decisive American victories in the War for Independence. Rochambeau and his army wintered in Williamsburg, then marched back in the summer of 1782. While small contingents stayed in different ports and left for France the following year, the bulk of Rochambeau's army sailed from Boston on Christmas Eve 1782. In all, nine colonies formed the route and supported the march, providing ports, roads, camp sites, officers' lodging, provisions of food and supplies. These colonies are today the states of Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and Massachusetts.

Historic Events in New York

- On July 2, 1781, General Rochambeau's First Brigade reached the burned-out village of Bedford and established their first camp in the State of New York.
- The 20 French Army in its entirety assembled at North Castle, now known as Mount Kisco, on July 3, 1781
- The French Expeditionary Force stayed near Philipsburg (now Greenburgh), for six weeks in July and August of 1781 alongside their American allies. The Philipsburg encampment was the longest of the French campaign in New York State

- On July 8, 1781, General Washington reviewed the French forces encamped near Philipsburg. The following day, French officers were invited to observe as the American Army presented arms.
- The allied U.S.-France army made a Grand Reconnaissance against the outer ring of defenses around New York City, July 21-23, 1781
- On August 14th the allied generals received news that Admiral de Grasse could support the allied armies in the Chesapeake Bay area, but not New York, and plans to move south were finalized.
- On August 19, the Continental Army, some 2,700-strong, marched through Dobbs Ferry on its way to crossing sites on the Hudson River. The New Jersey Line and Hazan's Regiment crossed that day at Dobbs Ferry and the rest crossed at King's Ferry on August 20-21.
- The French Army returned to North Castle (Mount Kisco) on August 20th. The soldiers bivouacked and endured heavy rains at North Castle before marching to and camping at Hunt's Tavern (currently the Town of Yorktown) the following day.
- The French forces camped at Verplanck on August 22-24 before crossing the Hudson River. The crossing involved two regular ferry boats and an array of flat boats and sailing craft.
- On August 23, 1781, Rochambeau, accompanied by Washington visited the fortress at West Point.
- Between August 24th and 25th the French Army was encamped at Haverstraw (known today as Stony Point). The Americans had camped there in July of 1779.
- On August 25th the army established camp in the village of Suffern, its last camp before leaving the state on the march toward the Chesapeake.
- After a decisive victory at Yorktown and a winter stay in Virginia, the French regiments made their way back to New England. On September 13, 1782, the French re-entered New York state and created three separate camps in the same area of Suffern as the previous year. Continuing to retrace their steps, the French next stayed at Haverstraw, September 14th-16th.
- After again crossing the Hudson River, the French army marched through Verplanck, where the American Army was camped, and rested in Peekskill from September 17th through the 23rd.
- On September 23, 1782, Rochambeau's troops established four separate encampments near Hunt's Tavern, staying until October 21st.
- After a troublesome crossing of the Croton River, the French made their last camp in New York State the following day at Salem before marching east into Connecticut on September 23, 1782.

2006 Aug 26-27 (Patriots' Weekend):

Crossing South at Verplank 225th, Verplank, NY Re-enactors camped by the Hudson

at Verplanck, New York and portrayed the crossing by both American and French armies at King's Ferry from Verplanck to Stony Point on 1781 Aug 25-27. We had over 150 people, including 2 officers and 23 West Point cadets, at the lecture, which was well received. We had around 100 people at the ceremony for 8 French soldiers buried at Old St. Peter's with Congresswoman Sue Kelly, Assemblywoman Sandy Galef, Cortlandt Town Supervisor Linda Puglisi, and French Deputy Counsel General Chavin. Over the weekend we had about 1,000 public and 125 re-enactors. Dr. Johnson attended ceremonies at and spoke in Suffern to some 50 people along with Supervisor St. Lawrence and Mayor Keagan.