

The Daily News

Dim view of 9/11 memorial: Critics call for a halt to project blocking Liberty Park cityscape

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For three years, a 1.6-acre lawn on [Liberty State Park's](#) waterfront has been fenced off, hiding a giant pile of dirt inside.

The pile is the beginning of a 9/11 memorial authorized by executive orders of two former governors, [Donald DiFrancesco](#) and [Jim McGreevey](#).

Plans to turn the pile into a memorial called Empty Sky, facing the [World Trade Center](#) site, have been stymied by lack of funds and political and community opposition.

The nonprofit Friends of Liberty State Park says the memorial will block views of [Manhattan](#) from what used to be a public plaza where summer concerts were held.

"In this economic crisis, Gov. [Jon] Corzine is wasting the taxpayers' money on the continuation of the [New York City](#) skyline view-blocking memorial," said [Friends President Sam Pesin](#), son of Liberty State Park's late founder, Morris Pesin.

The nonprofit has sued the state to stop construction, saying the Department of Environmental Protection failed to hold public hearings required for a project of this scope. The memorial project should be moved to another location (*in the park - note by Sam*) or scrapped, the group says.

[Jersey City Mayor Jerramiah Healy](#), along with the entire [Hudson County](#) legislative delegation, has asked Corzine to halt the project.

"If there really is the need for another 9/11 memorial, we should put it in another place that is not blocking the most spectacular view in the Northeast," Healy said.

The memorial would consist of 30-foot-high, 200-foot-long parallel walls inscribed with the names of the 691 [New Jersey](#) victims of 9/11, set inside a 10-foot-high hill.

Because the state lacks the funds to finish the memorial, its future is in doubt. The nonprofit's lawyer, [Cynthia Hadjiyannis](#), said state documents show almost \$4 million already has been spent on creating the hill and at least \$22 million would be needed to complete the project - compared with a 2003 total-cost estimate of \$7 million.

Community opposition is widespread. Many argue that the park already has a memorial, called the Grove of Remembrance - a tree planted for each New Jersey victim, and a plaque (*on a large boulder in the Grove of Remembrance - note by Sam*) with his or her name.

About 100 people - including Sam Pesin's mother, Ethel, 94 - attended a recent protest at the new memorial's site.

"We once had that nice paved park (*Frances meant to say that we had a nice public plaza - which mostly consisted of wooden pavers - note by Sam*) where we had shows," said [Frances Oakley](#), 101, a [Jersey City](#) resident since 1914. "Now it's just full of dirt."

The governor's office did not respond to requests for comment by press time.