



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

H32(2280)

FEB 26 2014

Mr. Edwin Fehre, Chairman  
Planning Board  
Borough of Englewood Cliffs  
482 Hudson Terrace  
Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632

Dear Mr. Fehre:

The National Park Service (NPS) is writing in response to information we have gathered regarding the proposal of LG Electronics USA to build a high rise office tower in Englewood Cliffs, NJ. This development is immediately adjacent to the Palisades of the Hudson National Natural Landmark (NNL) and the Palisades Interstate Park National Historic Landmark (NHL), located in Bergen County, NJ and Rockland County, NY. Designation as an NHL and an NNL is a rare dual distinction. The site protects Triassic period cliff formations along the west side of the Hudson River, a nationally significant geological and scenic feature that has been protected through precedent-setting conservation efforts for over 100 years.

While the NPS does not have any formal review authority regarding this project, we provide technical and financial assistance for a variety of properties that preserve significant properties outside the National Park System that are neither federally owned nor directly administered by the NPS. Some of these properties have been recognized by Acts of Congress, while others have been designated by the Secretary of the Interior under an appropriate authority. The NNL program was established to encourage and support the conservation of sites that illustrate the nation's geological and biological history, and to strengthen the public's appreciation of America's natural heritage. NNLs are selected for their outstanding condition, illustrative value, rarity, diversity, or value to science and education. The NHL program, established by the Historic Sites Act of 1935, recognizes historic buildings, sites, structures, objects, or districts that represent an outstanding aspect of American history and culture. Both NNLs and NHLs are designated by the Secretary of the Interior after in-depth scientific study and all new designations must have landowner permission.

The NPS administers the NNL and NHL programs, reporting on the condition of the properties, acting as an advocate for protection, and supporting landowners and managers in their efforts to protect these nationally significant sites. The designation does not dictate how landowners manage these properties; however, it does encourage voluntary conservation, preservation, and wise stewardship.

The Palisades of the Hudson NNL was designated in June 1983. The Palisades sill is well known as an example of an intrusive body of igneous rock known as diabase or dolerite. It forms a prominent ridge for 50 miles along the west side of the Hudson River sweeping northward from New Jersey into New York State. The magma which formed the Palisades sill was one of a series of intrusive and extrusive flows that occurred during the Triassic Period in the eastern United States. It is the nation's best example of a thick diabase sill formation displaying excellent examples of columnar jointing, an olivine formation, thermal

metamorphism, and glaciation. In addition to their geological and biological significance, many NNLs exhibit exceptional scenery, as is the case here.

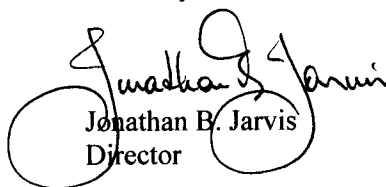
The Palisades Interstate Park was designated as an NHL on January 12, 1965. In 1900, New Jersey and New York formed the interstate park commission, which worked to acquire the towering formations and the immediate land above along the ridge line that provided for the protection of the formations and the views of them from the river and points east on Manhattan. This remarkable and successful early effort in the history of park development was recognized as one of the key moments in conservation history when the Secretary of the Interior designated the Palisades Interstate Park as an NHL.

Over the past century, in spite of the growth of the communities along the Palisades, no significant intrusive development has occurred along the ridge behind the park lands, which has allowed the view of the cliffs and the wooded ridge line to remain. North of the George Washington Bridge, the 300-to-500-foot cliffs stretch unbroken for 12 miles where they have been protected through the precedent-setting conservation efforts of many individuals and the states of New Jersey and New York. This record of respect and coexistence demonstrates that the growth of communities can be achieved while at the same time respecting the natural environment and the public amenities that have been established at considerable effort and expense for the use and enjoyment of all people.

The current development proposal for the 143-foot-tall office tower adjacent to the Palisades NNL and NHL, threatens the nationally significant, historic scenic integrity of the Palisades in a major way. If built, this tower will introduce a massive incompatible feature that will be visible for miles along the river and from vantage points along the west side of Manhattan as well as from the bridge. Given the size of the property in question, it seems entirely possible for the development to achieve its needs and conform to the borough's existing zoning regulations.

It is in the best interest of all Americans to protect and preserve the Palisades as an outstanding and visually unique example of our Nation's natural and cultural heritage. If you or the members of the Planning Board have any questions or need further information in this regard, please contact Stephanie Toothman, Ph.D., National Park Service, Associate Director, Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science at 202-208-7625.

Sincerely,

  
Jonathan B. Jarvis  
Director