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ALBANY COUNTY LEGISLATURE
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January 4th, 2024

Honorable Charles Schumer
United States Senator
Leo W. O'Brien Building, Room 827
Albany, NY 12207

Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator
Leo W. O'Brien Building, Room 821
Albany, NY 12207

Honorable Neil Breslin
New York State Senator, District 46
State Capitol Building, Room 430
Albany, NY 12247

Honorable Paul Tonko
United States Congressman, District 20
19 Dove Street, Unit 302
Albany, NY 12210

Honorable Patricia Fahy
New York State Assemblymember, District 109
Legislative Office Building Room 717
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Senators, Congressman, Governor, state Senator and Assemblymember,

We write to you concerning the future of the Central Warehouse building located in the City of Albany. As you know, the long-abandoned building has blighted the Capital Region and vexed local residents, public officials, private developers and 787 passersby for years regardless of their aspirational desires to redevelop the site. Like many of our neighbors, we believe it is now time to tear the building down once and for all. We hope you agree with our assessment and join us in advocating for its long-overdue demolition.

Though it once served as “an impressive illustration of the progress and expansion that is taking place in Albany,” Central Warehouse has more recently been described as “Albany’s greatest eyesore” and the “ugliest building ever built in the state of New York.” The building earned these distinctions thanks to years of property neglect, mismanagement and government inaction. Leaving Central Warehouse standing is a sign of a failure for New York State, Albany County and the City of Albany.

Numerous attempts by both the private and public sectors to rehabilitate Central Warehouse have all failed in recent years. Owners refused to pay their property taxes on the building while touting its various “possibilities.” The latest redevelopment proposal conveying the structure for \$50,000 to private property developers has also unfortunately stalled, due to exponentially increasing project costs, environmental remediation efforts and structural integrity concerns. So far it is unclear how the project has utilized the funds received from a \$9.75

million state grant in 2022, but the developers themselves have indicated they [need more public funding](#) to accomplish their goals, which [may include demolishing the structure](#) anyway. The City of Albany in December spent nearly half a million dollars to cover parts of the building in [black safety netting](#) to prevent more chunks of concrete from falling onto the railroad tracks below, and city officials have said they are billing the developer for this cost.

In addition, Albany County forgave \$500,000 in back taxes in order to have this redevelopment burden developed by private parties. Once the building is demolished, the land should be returned to Albany County for disposition, and not be a financial windfall for failed development efforts. We also ask you to consider the untapped potential of the site without Central Warehouse, located in an area already booming with development.

Cloaking the Central Warehouse and hiding its deficiencies from public view cannot prevent us from acknowledging the writing on the wall — the century-old structure is beyond saving. We can't add more taxpayer dollars to the problem without a clear solution. While we acknowledge historical, environmental and safety roadblocks to its demolition, we ask you to weigh the pros and cons of a planned collapse of this building versus the current unplanned collapse of the building, like the recent façade failures which caused suspensions of rail service in the area.

In government, we are elected to lead and leave behind a better legacy for future generations. We encourage you and all of our colleagues at the state and federal levels of government to join us in advocating for the best course of action. Any public funds on the project should be used for one purpose – demolishing Central Warehouse. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Frank A. Mauriello
Albany County Legislature
District 27, Minority Leader



Paul J. Burgdorf
Albany County Legislature
District 23, Deputy Minority Leader

Cc

Albany County Executive Daniel P. McCoy
Albany County Legislature Chairwoman Joanne Cunningham
Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan