

Dear Mr. Petrilla,

On behalf of the Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT) Board and Staff, I would like to express my appreciation to US Customs & Board Protection (USCBP) for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Assessment for the facility proposed in Blind Bay. Given the scope and scale of the proposed facility, USCBP has taken an important step when it comes to ensuring participation, equity and inclusiveness.

Since its inception, TILT has worked on a multitude of local and regional projects and initiatives from Cape Vincent to Morristown. No matter the outcome, we have always found that our position is improved by involving our local constituents and stakeholders and ensuring that we remain open and transparent.

For that reason, we believe it is important to inform USCBP that TILT has recently reached an agreement with Blind Bay Associates LLC to acquire and protect the remaining undeveloped waterfront and 20 plus acres of upland habitat in Blind Bay. Discussions surrounding the proposed USCBP facility and the community's concerns have reinforced the importance of being proactive in conserving the sensitive habitats that are so critical to the health of the River, a thriving economy and our overall quality of life.

While TILT is opposed to the siting of the proposed USCBP facility in and around Blind Bay, we hold very high regard for the Agency and the role that it plays in homeland security and protecting our nation's borders. Therefore, we would like to offer staffing resources to assist USCBP with the identification and evaluation of alternative sites. With our long-standing relationships in the River communities and our deep knowledge of the region's complex ecosystems, TILT is uniquely positioned to work with USCBP to avoid other sites that may be equally or more sensitive than Blind Bay.

Again, we truly appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Assessment and USCBP's willingness to pursue alternative sites. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us, as we are available to assist.

Attached, please find a copy of the press release being issued this week.

Sincerely,

Jake R. Tibbles, Executive Director
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