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April 22, 2022

Via email: christine.hopps@mass.gov

MassDEP Waterways Program
Attention: Chrissy Hopps
1 Winter Street, 5th floor
Boston, MA 02108

Re: Waterways Permit Application Number 22-WW01-0045-APP

Dear Ms. Hopps,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Waterways Permit Application Number 22-WW01-0045-APP submitted by Hangman Productions USA, Inc. and their proposal to temporarily install “diving platform, fencing, gates, tent, equipment, and appurtenances” from Thursday, May 31, 2022 - Saturday, June 4, 2022 “in association with a public ‘Cliff Diving’ event.” Boston Harbor Now has had an opportunity to meet with the proponent and attended the public meeting held on April 13, 2022. We believe that many of our concerns prior to the meeting have been resolved and submit the following letter to ensure that the principles we’ve laid out are captured in the licensing process.

As advocates for an activated waterfront and public programming that attracts a diversity of users and uses, Boston Harbor Now was excited to hear about the proposed return of the Red Bull Cliff Diving competition at the Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA). The previous competitions in 2011, 2012, and 2013 are often held up as the standard for programming the Harborwalk and the water sheet, attracting positive attention to our urban harbor, and welcoming people from all walks of life to enjoy what was then an emerging district with few special events. At the time, the Seaport’s Harborwalk was incomplete and there were fewer public amenities and attractions. Much has changed in the subsequent decade, but we hope that this event can be executed in a way that it can continue to be model for watersheet and Harborwalk activation.

In order to ensure that Boston’s waterfront and Harborwalk remain welcoming and accessible to all Bostonians, we believe that it is critical that special waterfront events be free. We have demonstrated this with annual fireworks shows and ice sculpture strolls, and we have seen others replicated



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this with tall ships visits and other events. Due to safety concerns and the changes in land use since those early diving events, we understand the need to restrict some access to the Harborwalk and the filled tidelands that now serve as open space between Northern Avenue and the water's edge. With unrestricted access to practice sessions on Friday, June 3, with the fences erected for only seven hours of the three-day project (11:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Saturday, June 4), and with free (no cost) access to the event, we believe that the proposal is largely consistent with the goals of Chapter 91 and Boston Harbor Now. We would like to see a final plan for fences and gates that provides as much unrestricted access as possible and would like to better understand how free tickets will be made available in advance of and on the day of the event.

Overall, the attention to detail in temporarily relocating ferry and water taxi services, removing sections of the marina, and setting up restricted areas outside of the flow of the Harborwalk and its adjoining parks has been carefully considered. We were pleased to hear that public water stations, bike valet, Bluebikes dock services, and public transit promotion are now included in the planning for the event.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. We look forward to remaining engaged with this project through its implementation and welcome further conversations by you and other permitting agencies to ensure that a set of best practices are established for Harborwalk closures for public events.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alice Brown".

Alice Brown
Chief of Planning and Policy
Boston Harbor Now