July 13, 2003

Carol Mitten, Chair
DC Zoning Commission
441 4th Street NW #210
Washington DC 20001

Dear Ms Mitten:

As residents of the District of Columbia, we are opposed to rezoning public land for private use. In this specific case we are referring to the National Park Service intention to transfer land just west of the Key Bridge to Georgetown University so that the university can build 33,000 square foot boathouse there for their use. This will require your commission's action to rezone the land. We walk along the public trail bounding this site many times a year. Despite its heavy use by bicyclist, hikers, and rollerbladers, we have found it a place where one could be at peace, and close to the river and nature. Georgetown University's plan would take that away from us.

On a level more in line with sound urban planning, building such a large structure for private use in an undeveloped floodplain is not wise or unwarranted. The building as currently planned would clear much needed riparian landscape for a building that would be 63 feet above the water line and block the view of the river from the C&O Canal. Development of this magnitude in better suited for the empty areas east of Key Bridge.

Moreover, we understand the memorandum of understanding between the National Park Service and Georgetown University stated the university boathouse would not exceed 15,000 square feet and not be more than 40 feet above the water level. With such increased size and mass, surely the environmental consequences must be reassessed. A true environmental assessment would not only measure the consequences, but also look at all reasonable alternatives. Such a process would include public comment.

We encourage you and the commissioners to reject any notion of rezoning this property for private use. Barring that, you and the commissioners should defer a decision and insist that the National Park Service complete a full environmental assessment as specified in the National Environmental Policy Act before the applicant returns to the commission. Any proposal for a boathouse of this size, especially where rezoning is needed, should include a significant public use component.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments and requests.

Sincerely,

H Rombach

Harry Rombach

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ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 02-30
Exhibit 379

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-30
EXHIBIT NO.379