

Anne Eisenhower
790 Madison Avenue
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Members of the National Capital Planning Commission
401 West 9th Street, NW
North Lobby, suite 500
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Members of the National Capital Planning Commission,

As you may know, the Eisenhower family has issued a statement voicing our concern about the Eisenhower Memorial design. We have spoken to Chairman Siciliano, Frank Gehry and the Commission staff, but feel it is important for you to hear directly from us about the issues involved. If consideration of the Gehry design is on NCPC's agenda in February, we are writing to request an opportunity to speak.

We are calling for an indefinite delay in the approval process and an indefinite postponement of the ground breaking for the memorial until there is a thorough review of the design. We have been told by a number of professionals that this memorial has been "fast-tracked" to meet some arbitrary deadline. We believe it is inappropriate given the controversy that surrounds the design and its concept. It is far more important to adopt a memorial design that has the support of the Eisenhower family, Congress and the American people than it is to rush forward with a design and a concept that are flawed. I attach a letter from my father, John S.D. Eisenhower, Dwight Eisenhower's heir and executor of his will.

To summarize our position, the following points represent our collective objections, but they are not the sum total of them.

- The Eisenhower Memorial is not fulfilling its Congressional mandate. The 106th Congress Public Law 79 states that "an appropriate permanent memorial to Dwight S. Eisenhower should be created to perpetuate his memory and his contributions to the United States." The current design does very little to depict the reasons, as stated by Congress, that Eisenhower is being honored: for Supreme Command of Allied Forces during WWII and subsequently as 34th President of the United States. Instead the central theme of the memorial is to a "barefoot boy from Kansas."
- Celebrating Eisenhower's roots rather than his accomplishments risks isolating Ike from contemporary visitors, especially those from urban industrialized parts of the country and immigrant communities. Eisenhower has as much to say to these Americans as he does to farm children from the mid-west. During the war, Eisenhower liberated not only Europe, but also the victims of the Nazi Holocaust.

During his presidency he successfully desegregated the Armed Forces of the United States, and the nation's capital, Washington DC—to name only two of his civil rights accomplishments.

- The "one of a kind" delicately woven tapestries are not likely to be sustainable over the centuries. The proposed Eisenhower Memorial could easily look dated or uncared for in a matter of years, despite best efforts at maintenance. Wind-swept debris and metal discoloration are but a few concerns that come to mind. As innovative and exciting as the tapestries are per se, they are inappropriate in this space and do nothing but serve as an expensive and unnecessary backdrop to a flawed concept. Great monuments to our leaders are simple in design and made of durable stone for a reason. This memorial must speak to the ages and last just as long.
- The memorial has its "back" to the Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education. Despite the translucency of the metal tapestries, it is symbolically inappropriate that the memorial tapestries "exclude" rather than "include" the building named for a man who was the leader of a co-equal branch of government at the time. President Eisenhower was proud that he accomplished so much during his two term presidency. This was in no small measure due to the bi-partisan atmosphere Ike worked hard to foster. His relationship with Lyndon Baines Johnson, who was Majority Leader (D-Texas), was critical to this success.
- The Memorial relies on interactive technology to "tell the story." This role is rightly and appropriately played by the Eisenhower Presidential Library and the Eisenhower Foundation, as well as other organizations founded by Dwight Eisenhower himself. Interactive technology will require expensive on-going updates, especially as technological capability continues its revolutionary pace.
- The EMC is pushing a very aggressive time line, despite our opposition to the design and the brewing controversy that surrounds its concept. With EMC staff present, Mr. Gehry told my sister, Susan, and me on December 1, 2011 that he is willing to make major changes. Despite his promises there has been no follow-up with us —either by EMC staff or Gehry and Associates —despite an email to them from me.

The Eisenhower family is requesting an indefinite delay in the design approval and ground breaking—pending further discussions with the family about significantly changing the concept, scale and scope of the memorial.

Sincerely,


Anne Eisenhower, representing all members of the Eisenhower family