

Testimony by the American Institute of Architects New York Chapter
to the Empire State Development Corporation
in regard to the New York Sports and Convention Facility
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The AIA New York Chapter, the founding Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, representing 3,700 architects, professional affiliates and public members, has reviewed the site plans and architectural drawings of the New York Sports and Convention Facility at every iteration, and has exhibited models and renderings of the stadium and convention facility at our Center for Architecture on LaGuardia Place in Greenwich Village. Today we reiterate our strong support for this exemplary stadium proposal based on the quality of its design, its environmental features, its role in providing much needed expansion of the City's convention capability and its siting in relation to the NYC2012 Olympic proposal, which we have also endorsed.

In a letter to various elected and appointed officials dated 23 April 2002, the AIA New York Chapter initially outlined the positive features of the preliminary design for the Jets Stadium which we called at that point "a significant architectural anchor for the development of the Far West side." We noted then that the use of the stadium for convention and large meeting functions made the site more active than more typical stadiums used only for a handful of football games. This point was driven home to us that year when we first proposed, five years in advance, bringing the spring-time national convention of the American Institute of Architects to the Javits Center to mark the 150th anniversary of the founding of the AIA in 1857 in Lower Manhattan. The Javits Center was booked for May of 2007, and for most of the spring for every other year before and for a decade after. Our convention will go to Las Vegas this year, and Los Angeles next. Last year it was in Chicago and the year before in San Diego. In 2007, instead of seeing 25,000 architects and building product representatives staying in New York City hotels and eating memorable meals in New York City restaurants, they will be in San Antonio remembering the Alamo. We would have fit in the New York Sports & Convention Facility and so would many other conventions with large plenary sessions and growing trade show tie-ins.

In a public meeting in June of 2003 we repeated our support for the proposed multi-purpose facility, noting, in particular, "proposals for integrating green design including co-generation and zero carbon consumption provide major environmental benefits and expand the envelope of what is deemed possible in New York." The building design is extraordinary and environmentally advanced; by giving it the go-ahead, we can demonstrate that New York City can once again construct creative and innovative structures that are at the leading edge of technology. The New York Sports and Convention Facility is the keystone to our City's 2012 Olympic proposal, and it will provide a much-needed boost to New York's efforts to bring lost conventions, lost conventioners, back where they belong. I know that if you build it, we will come.