



Strengthening Accountability in the RFK Stadium Legislation

September 10, 2025

The August 1 vote on the RFK legislation included several community-focused provisions, such as requiring union labor for construction of the stadium and much of the surrounding development. Yet in several places, the legislative language lacks clarity or otherwise falls short of locking in key commitments made by the Commanders. There are also a handful of provisions that allow actions that run contrary to long-standing DC policy and should be changed, such as allowing the destruction of more than 30 heritage trees.

The following would strengthen the legislation by providing more specificity and guarantees that the development of RFK will match commitments made by the team.

Ensure Community Benefits Package Is Followed: The legislation doesn't include the specific community benefit commitments made by the team. It should be amended to list the specific commitments, such as bringing a grocery store to Ward 7, and it should include language allowing the Attorney General to enforce the CBA terms.

Specify Housing and Affordable Housing Terms: The legislation should specify that there will be 6,000 housing units and that 30% of housing square footage will be affordable; that the affordable units shall match the requirements of DC's public land

disposition rules; and that the team cannot solicit any city funds for the affordable housing. The legislation must have enforceable requirements to build the housing no later than 2036. To limit the incentive to slow development and use the land for surface parking, gameday parking should be allowed only in parking garages and revenue generated from gameday parking anywhere else on the campus should revert to the Community Benefits Fund.

Comply with and Strengthen Codified Sustainability Standards: The deal sets LEED Platinum as the “goal” for the stadium, but that is insufficient to meet DC’s commitments on clean energy, zero waste, sustainable transportation, and water quality.

- **Clean Energy:** All buildings on the entire site (not just the stadium) should be powered by efficient, clean energy, with no fossil fuel combustion.
- **Sustainable Transportation:** Parking should be reduced; Metro should fully serve the site by stadium opening; Metrorail should have capacity to transport a majority of event attendees.
- **Anacostia Waterfront Environmental Standards:** The legislation should expressly state that the Anacostia Waterfront Environmental Standards Act of 2008 is, and have been, applicable to the Development and Financing Agreement and are not subject to waiver by the Mayor.
- **River and water quality:** Any construction in the 100 year floodplain should comply with the Anacostia Watershed Corporation Reorganization Act of 2008, as amended by D.C. Law 19-192, 59 DCR 10174, effective October 23, 2012, and cannot be exempted by a decision of the Mayor or Department of Energy and Environment. It should leave the water’s edge natural so that animals can get in and out of the river.
- **Wildlife in Anacostia Development Zone:** Commit to Migratory Local Wildlife Protection Act in the RFK economic development zone to incorporate measures, such as bird-safe glass products, to save migratory birds. The legislation should mitigate light pollution by requiring night-time lighting should be used only where needed, targeted, and as dim as feasible, and warmer colored.
- **Zero Waste:** All beverages should be sold in reusable cups; food rescue and composting should be required. The stadium should have an onsite place to wash reusable foodware, a room for separating compost, reuse, and recycling; and water bottle refill stations.
- **Protect RFK’s Heritage Trees:** Eliminate language in RFK stadium legislation that provides an exemption to the Urban Forest Preservation Act of 2002, giving special permission to remove 31 of the District’s largest heritage trees.
- **Technical Assistance and Environmental Accountability:** Like the Community Benefits Oversight Committee, the legislation should create an Environmental Oversight Committee comprising a team of experts (e.g., LEED-compliant architecture) to provide technical support in stadium design and construction and

to monitor the project to assure the statutory mandates are met. The DC Attorney should be authorized to enforce the environmental requirements.

- **Include Environmental Benefits in the Stadium Deal:** Few things benefit a community more than a healthy, robust, and nurturing natural environment. The deal should include specific commitments to invest in environmental and natural resources protection, including restoration of Anacostia River shorelines and wetlands, maintenance and improvement of community access to Kingman and Heritage Islands and the Anacostia River, and full support of community efforts to reduce the impacts of climate change, including natural approaches to flood control such as restored wetlands, prevention and mitigation of heat islands, and participation in community climate resilience programs.

Guarantee Fair Market Rent for Non-Stadium Land: The Commanders committed to paying Fair Market Rent for the land beyond the stadium that they will develop, after 32 years. But the legislation needs to be clarified to ensure “fair market rent” is defined along objective metrics by District entities, not selected by the team.

Real Incentives to Meet Development Deadlines: The housing and commercial development beyond the stadium is essential for DC to benefit economically and fiscally, so having firm development deadlines with accountability measures is essential. Yet the legislation currently has modest penalties that won’t kick in until 2057. That should be changed.

Ensure Real, Accessible Green Space: The Commanders have committed to 30% open space, but there is no legislative definition for “green space.” The preliminary plans replace the frequently used community green space and trees along Oklahoma Avenue with parking. The legislation should guarantee that the green space is entirely publicly accessible and natural green space. This is essential to mitigating Kingman Park’s status as a Heat Island.

Statement Sponsors: American Economic Liberties Project, Anacostia Parks and Community Collaborative, Anacostia Watershed Society, Beautify DC, Black Led Zero Waste Coalition, Campaign to Reduce Lead Exposure and Asthma, Capital Nature, Casey Trees, Campaign for Lead Free Water, CCAN Action Fund, City Wildlife, Climate Institute, Dark Sky DC, DC Climate Action, DC Environmental Network, DC Fiscal Policy Institute, DC for Democracy, DC Voters for Animals, EARTHDAY.org, Elderly Tenants Associations Presidents and Presenters, Fair Budget Coalition, Friends of Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, Friends of Kingman & Heritage Islands, Nature Forward, No Billionaire’s Playground, RFK Future Task Force, Sierra Club DC Chapter, The Committee of 100 on the Federal City, Ward 8 Woods, Warriors Empowering District Communities, Washington Parks & People, Wentworth Green Strategies and Washington Interfaith Network.

Note that all signed organizations support efforts to improve the RFK stadium deal, but each organization is not necessarily advocating for every recommendation listed here.