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March 6, 2024

Honorable Kenneth Welch, Mayor  
City of St. Petersburg  
All Members: St. Petersburg City Council

The purpose of this letter is in support of the *Hines Historic Gas Plant Partnership*, comprised of the Hines Group and the Tampa Bay Rays and the subsequent projects related to this redevelopment project. People Empowering and Restoring Communities (PERC) strongly encourages St Petersburg City Council to vote YES in support of this massive, historic project and moment in the history of St. Petersburg.

As an agency, PERC could not be more excited at the opportunities these projects will bring to our community and stands ready to partner with Hines and the Tampa Bay Rays in all ways possible in the greater interest of the neighborhoods where we live and the clients we serve. We envision multiple roles including but not limited to developing and expanding workforce and affordable housing, assisting in workforce development projects with graduates of our programs while creating upwardly mobile and sustainable career pathways, and providing hard to place and underrepresented populations employment opportunities while meeting project contractual requirements of this long-term redevelopment.

The intentional commitment of real dollars and resources into the Gas Plant communities and bridging these neighborhoods to downtown and all of St. Petersburg is long overdue. The opportunities that the projects related to this are vast and will bring real and sustained growth in our community for decades to come. When PERC named our plaza on the 16<sup>th</sup> Street corridor the Dr. David T. Welch Center for Progress and Community Development in honor of our now Mayor's father (he was on the County Commission at the time), we did so in the spirit of this moment – where the intersections of growth and opportunity will uplift the clients we work with and the communities we serve. The intentionality of the design of this project through listening sessions, RFP processes and the final selection of the Hines/Rays group now culminates in 'crossing the finish line' as we embark on the next century of the City we all love and call home.

Thank you for your time and consideration, but more importantly – please vote to move this forward!

Sincerely,

Michael Jalazo  
CEO/Executive Director  
People Empowering and Restoring Communities

**Pinellas County Locations**

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