

# For Immediate Release

**Media Contact:** Jeff Donaldson  
412-642-7700  
[jdonaldson@elias-savion.com](mailto:jdonaldson@elias-savion.com)

## **Event Management Company's Failure to Deliver on Promises Forces Three Rivers Regatta to Cancel 2019 Event – County, City Leaders Express Full Support for Regatta Leadership –**

**PITTSBURGH, July 30, 2019** – Pittsburgh Three Rivers Regatta, a nonprofit organization devoted to water recreation and enhancing public usage of the region's rivers, announced today that it is cancelling the 2019 edition of the waterfront event. Members of the organization's board of directors were flanked by County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and Pittsburgh Mayor William Peduto at a news conference to announce the cancellation.

"After careful deliberation over the past several days and in consultation with both county and city leaders, we came to the difficult but necessary conclusion that we had no choice but to cancel this year's regatta," said Charles D. Scholz, member of the Pittsburgh Three Rivers Regatta Board of Directors and an attorney with Houston Harbaugh who is also representing the board. "We learned late last week that the event management company charged with overseeing all aspects of the regatta failed to provide the necessary assurances for a safe, sanctioned and fully coordinated event. They did not secure the mandatory insurance for it, which forced us to withdraw our application for an event permit."

For several years, Pittsburgh Three Rivers Regatta hired LionHeart Event Group, a full-service event management and production company based in Pittsburgh, to handle event management of the regatta. This included purchasing insurance, securing permits, acquiring sponsors, collecting sponsorship money, contracting with food vendors, working with the race boat organizations, and working with the city and others to provide security. LionHeart had been giving regular updates to the regatta's board on the state of sponsorships and financial transactions related to the event. Late last week, the board learned for the first time that LionHeart had misrepresented the status of payments and insurance related to the event and had not met critical benchmarks to ensure it could go forward.

"We have launched a probe to unravel what has transpired. We are also working to communicate with all key stakeholders affected by today's announcement, including sponsors, vendors, entertainers and others," Scholz added. "We will pursue all legal means necessary to resolve this as we work to determine the future of this event."

"The Three Rivers Regatta is one of the events that lends itself to the energy and vitality of this region each year. In addition to providing free, family-friendly entertainment, the regatta celebrates our connection to our rivers, and people look forward to it all year round," Fitzgerald said. "This is one of dozens of events in our region put on by organizations that the county and city partner with, and while we're saddened by this announcement, we also know that our community will still have plenty of opportunities this year to celebrate our rivers."

"While this is surely disappointing to the regatta's many fans and the city businesses that have catered to them for decades, the board had no choice and made the right decision for all of us. I thank the regatta board for its responsible stewardship in this difficult time," Peduto said.

First held in 1978, the Pittsburgh Three Rivers Regatta is an annual motorboat and river festival named for the confluence of the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio Rivers. It is the largest inland regatta in the nation. In past years, it has included free concerts, food vendors, water sports, dragon boat races and fireworks displays.

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**About Pittsburgh Three Rivers Regatta**

Pittsburgh Three Rivers Regatta, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organized for the purpose of developing and maintaining programs and projects devoted to water safety, recreation and enhancing public usage of the rivers and waterways of Western Pennsylvania, including, but not limited to, the three rivers of the City of Pittsburgh, PA. The target audience is the tristate region but extends throughout the United States. The base financial support is through sponsorships of both corporations and foundations, and vendor fees. The Board also distributes annual grants to nonprofit causes that promote clean rivers and recreational use by the public on the rivers.