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February 13, 2023

The Honorable Martin J. Oberman - Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423

RE: Surface Transportation Board Decision, Docket No. FD_36575

Dear Chairman Oberman,

Local communities recently learned that Townline Rail Terminal, LLC, an affiliate of CarlsonCorp, Inc., plans to construct and operate a new rail line in the hamlet of Kings Park, New York. According to the newly discovered plans, the line would extend approximately 5,000 feet on a portion of CarlsonCorp's industrial property running parallel to a residential neighborhood, a spur trailing off the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) Port Jefferson Line.

What is troubling to us is that the plans fail to show that the train yard will be only 500 feet from residential neighborhoods in Kings Park, with Fort Salonga being almost as close. Additionally, this site is within close proximity to thousands of homes in the communities of East Northport, Commack and Northport. What the plans fail to show is that there are a minimum of eight schools within a two-and-a-half-mile radius to the proposed rail yard. What is not included is that the area includes a federal government classified deep recharge area for a sole source aquifer.

This is going to be a regional train yard with five tracks totaling almost 10,000 feet, two buildings, with one spanning 80,000 sq.ft. (almost 2 acres in size), with the second covering 20,000 sq.ft., along with a freight car capacity for 161 cars, totaling 10,456 feet of train, neighboring homes with young children.

The surrounding communities were never advised by local, state or federal officials that this was ever a possibility. Just the opposite, the last the community knew, there was going to be an indoor compost facility on this property. That was in 2018. Community members were brought into town hall, shown a detailed PowerPoint presentation, and then marginalized, not to be spoken to again about this property.

Several local elected officials have written letters to the STB in favor of this proposal, with one even stating there is no other option nor any type of organized opposition. To start, the surrounding communities were unaware of this plan until after the new year, and second, and more importantly, we now know, we are organized and we are strongly opposed to the plan in its entirety. The above-mentioned officials failed in their duty as elected representatives to advise, educate and give community members an opportunity to be heard before writing formal letters supporting this plan. The Smithtown Planning Department has denied that any type of permit had been submitted, though the Surface Transportation Board has requested specific details about this proposed project from them, more specifically, detailed information relating to composition of structures, etc. These questions cannot be answered without prior knowledge of or collaboration with Townline Rail Terminal or its parent, CarlsonCorp.

This proposal has many questions, and more problems than solutions. This is not an industrial area in the middle of nowhere. The truth is the location of the proposed train yard is on the very edge of the industrial area, literally in the back yard of families and their homes. No reasonable person would believe that a berm, which the town's supervisor has mentioned, would ever hide the noise, fumes, site, nor minimize the numerous health risks this yard threatens. Moreover, with its proximity to residential neighborhoods and to the deep recharge sole source aquifer, it is beyond our understanding that the Surface Transportation Board granted a waiver to Townline Rail to forego a full

Environmental Statement for a scaled-down Environmental Analysis. The ground water from this industrial park has resulted in a large pollution plume north and east. By allowing CarlsonCorp to build a rail terminal on this site, on top of what is already devastated and overburdened ground, the families, whether twenty, two-hundred or two-thousand, will be affected and the ones paying the price with their health and the health of their children.

It is important for the Surface Transportation Board to also know that the surrounding communities already bear the burden of several major sources of environmental blight, including the Huntington Resource Recovery Facility (Covanta incinerator), the Northport power plant, the nearby Huntington and Smithtown landfills and their methane burners/vents, the medical waste incinerators at St. Catherine's Medical Center and the Northport VA Hospital, and the various heavy industrial uses that have been going on in this area for decades, many of which continue to operate illegally and unchecked by both the towns of Smithtown and Huntington.

We respectfully ask that the Surface Transportation Board A) revisit the OEA's decision on revising the move from an EIS to an EA, based on prior operations of CarlsonCorp and its subsidiaries. and B) to look at viable options that others have rejected for unknown reasons and put a halt to this project before innocent families have to suffer the consequences. We are aware of the eventual closing of the Brookhaven landfill, which will happen incrementally. We are also aware that there are far better locations moving forward to tackle the issue of removing ash off Long Island, such as the Winter Bros. 228-acre site in Yaphank, which will be almost three times the size of the proposed Townline Rail Terminal. As well, the landfill in Babylon Township will be using rail to remove ash and other materials. These are viable options, yet our elected officials say otherwise.

I appreciate your attention to this project.

Sincerely,

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