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

Per: DOCKET NUMBER FD_36575

January 14, 2024.

Dear Sir:

My home is located about three miles east of the proposed Carlson rail yard development. Whatever happens there is not likely to affect the market price of my house. You could say I “don’t have a dog in that fight.” But I do, as does the entire population of Long Island, have “skin in this game,” the skin being my own biological person, and for that I have deep concerns.

The Northeast corridor has been called “the armpit of the U.S.” because of the tendency of air pollution to travel from west to east across the country, and Long Island has one of the highest cancer rates in all of New York State. In this immediate area alone, we are exposed to toxic pollution from the Northport Power Plant, the Huntington/Covanta Incinerator, medical waste incinerators at the Northport VA and St. Catherine’s Hospitals, the methane venting systems of several capped landfills, and a fair number of businesses that add more pollutants from sand mining, concrete crushing and asphalt production. And let’s not forget the emissions from all the trucks that serve the businesses in the area and the considerable—often choking—emissions from the LIRR diesel trains.

And now Carlson wants to construct a 5-prong rail spur to be able to transport **even more ash** through this area.

Ash is a known carcinogen. It seems like a very foolish and risky idea to consider moving even more of it through a densely-populated suburban area, one that is certain to further compound the existing air pollution hazards. And by rail? Has there been a month yet when we haven’t heard about a significant derailment somewhere in this country (East Palestine, Ohio, anyone)?

In addition to our concerns about toxins in the air, we also have considerable fears about our drinking water. Surely you’re aware that much of our groundwater here on Long Island is already polluted at levels beyond what the EPA deems acceptable. The notorious Bethpage plume, for example, will take many years and many millions of dollars to ameliorate. The Carlson property is located in a federally designated deep recharge area of a sole source

aquifer. If this highly sensitive area of the aquifer is compromised by the leakage of hazardous materials it would affect the drinking water for all of Long Island. Do you really want to further endanger our population by contaminating our drinking water as well as our air?

Lastly, the parties involved in this proposal—or, I daresay, scheme—have been anything but forthcoming about their intentions. Although this plan has been in the works for almost two years, Toby Carlson, the owner of Carlsoncorp, Smithtown Supervisor Edward Wehrheim and Suffolk County Legislator Robert Trotta have kept this a secret. The community only found out about this project when a story about it by David Ambro appeared in the Smithtown News.

Is this any way to run a railroad, sir—or to develop a property? If lacking a conscience, has anyone at least the ability to learn from guilt and shame?

I thank you for reading this far. On behalf of my fellow homeowners on Long Island as well as everyone who lives or works here, I hope you take the concerns I express with the seriousness they deserve.

Sincerely,
Barbara K. Lane