



Labor, Economics, Education, EmPowerment

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November 24, 2020

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The members of Labor, Economics, Education, EmPowerment (LEEP) are writing this letter in support of Diamond State Port Corporation's (DSPC) request for a permit to proceed with the development of a Cargo Port at the Edgemoor site. LEEP was created to craft equal opportunity for those less fortunate through education and uniting labor organizations, civic associations and the community collectively. We stand with our brothers and sisters of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) and their continued fight for equity, equality and rebuilding of the middleclass in the City of Wilmington and the State of Delaware.

*Ronald  
"Kimoko"  
Harris*

*Angela  
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Floyd, Jr.*

The Port Expansion Project/Edgemoor site offers the residents of the state of Delaware the opportunity to a future of certainty, prosperity and independence. During a time when jobs and lives have been lost in unprecedented numbers, emotions and morale are at an all-time low, this port project would be a life saver for countless individuals and families.

The Port of Wilmington is recognized for its outstanding workforce and businesses trust the port establishment. It has been an essential component to the economic wealth of this state contributing hundreds of millions of dollars each year in tax revenue and thousands of jobs.

We know of the vision, exertions and years the ILA spent pursuing their desire to see the Port of Wilmington become a viable player on the Delaware River. The shipping industry has changed – the port must expand to exist - time couldn't be more necessary than it is today and we are in no position to allow other nearby states or doomsday fears for aquatic life to interfere with the economic survival of the Port of Wilmington.

We are in an unusual time in history but we are optimistic that we can survive these uncertainties and be better because of the exceptional workers and location of the port

on the Delaware River. DSPC has an opportunity to cleanup and redevelop a polluted parcel of land that otherwise would be left abandoned. This would generate millions of dollars in needed revenue, position DSPC to maintain in the shipping industry and create thousands of jobs that are essential to restoring the middleclass here in our State of Delaware.

The Philadelphia Port Authority has 8 terminals and the South Jersey Port Authority has 4 terminals a combined total of 12 terminals on the Delaware River. Delaware (DSPC) has no terminals on the Delaware River. With this being the case the Port of Wilmington (DSPC) will not have the infrastructure or capacity to accommodate the larger container vessels coming up the Delaware River which will eventually lead to eradicating the shipping industry in Delaware.

It is no surprise that both Philadelphia and New Jersey have each built a new terminal on the Delaware River within the past three years with expectation of monopolizing the larger ships from the opening of the Suez and Panama Canals. They requested that the Delaware River main channel be dredged to 45' ft so those larger vessels will be able to travel past Delaware to their states with no concern for the workers at the Port of Wilmington and all of the jobs that will be lost when Delaware is no longer able to provide the necessary services that a container terminal provides.

Why is the Port Expansion and the Edgemoor Container Port Project critical and important to LEEP? As explained earlier, LEEP is an organization whose objective is to unite organized labor and the community around common issues - union members are community members. LEEP stands in the forefront of fighting poverty. People and communities work their way out of poverty thru good paying blue-collar union jobs.

It is estimated that over 30% of black people in Wilmington live below the poverty line. An estimated 6,000 – 8,000 people between the ages of 18 to 25 in Wilmington are not registered in any educational training program nor employed. These numbers can most likely be mirrored in the surrounding black communities in the county. LEEP thru our Delaware Pathways to Apprenticeship (DE P2A) program is leading the effort to tackle and turn around these issues of poverty and the destructive social impact and environment they create. One of the motivations for the creation of DE P2A was the Port Expansion/Edgemoor project and the construction jobs created.

The shipping industry is thriving, as will the demand for cargo port access. The LEEP board and members urge you to strongly consider approval of the DSPC permit application to develop a Container Cargo Port on the Edgemoor site.

Respectfully,  
The Executive Board of LEEP