

Public Comment on Docket#2020-P-Multi-0024 - Listen to communities on the Port Expansion

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To: HearingComments, DNREC (MailBox Resources) <DNRECHearingComments@delaware.gov>

Dear Public Hearing Officer,

With all that is going on today, and with the impact this will have on communities near the port. I think it is very important to have additional public hearings and for the Port to be forced to really engage the community and ensure a CBA is in place before proceeding. I know this is not mandated in law, but sometimes we have to do what is right, not necessarily what is written.

I am concerned about the planned expansion of the Port of Wilmington as it was outlined in a Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC). Public Comment hearing held on September 29, 2020 (Docket# 2020-P-Multi-0024). Three detailed plans were presented, with communities given only one month to respond to very technical information. DCBAC and other groups voiced their concerns and the comment period was extended for 30 days to December 1, 2020.

I am now expressing my support for the following:

- ? Establishment of an inclusive development/planning process
- ? A binding Community Benefits Agreement developed with DCBAC and its impacted community residents
- ? Protections from potential health and environmental dangers as well as safeguards against existing resident displacement due to port-related land use issues, in advance of permit approvals
- ? Additional Public Hearings on the port expansion

I support development when it is done appropriately and understand that the DCBAC feels the same. Many members of the communities near and around the port have experienced years of under and disinvestment. I am therefore interested in development, as long as it does not cause harm to the health and wellbeing of citizens or environment, is conducted in a transparent manner and deeply engages local residents as partners in a port expansion.

The disproportionate and unchecked siting of polluting facilities in and near people of color and low-income communities is well-documented. Black communities near the port already suffer from high rates of cancer, and respiratory ailments. These pre-existing conditions have resulted in higher death rates during this Coronavirus Pandemic. The result of this environmental racism is that Black communities have often been used as Sacrifice Zones.

Toxic compounds like Dioxin and Arsenic will be released during the dredging process to deepen the Delaware River for the port expansion. Communities have not been included in essential discussions about the potential impact of increased diesel emissions from trucks or possible neighborhood disruptions from off-port development. This is not right.

Again, as with the DCBAC, I support development when it is done right. Several areas in the nation have approached port expansion with communities as partners. The DCBAC is seeking the same kind of inclusion here in Delaware. The DCBAC is communicating with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the EPA is supportive of collaborative port planning models.

Sincerely,

Dustyn Thompson

12/1/2020

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