



William D. Euille
Mayor

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June 5, 2008

Mr. David T. Lawson
Vice President Industrial Products
Norfolk Southern Corporation
Three Commercial Place
Norfolk, VA 23510-9217

RE: Ethanol Transloading Terminal in City of Alexandria

Dear Mr. Lawson:

Pursuant to the unanimous request of the Alexandria City Council, I am writing to express the City's vehement objection to the unilateral and ill-advised decision by your company to locate a bulk ethanol transloading terminal at the former Norfolk Southern intermodal facility in Alexandria's West End.

First, as I advised you in 2006, this is not an appropriate location for such a terminal. Its proximity to the homes of thousands of City residents, a public elementary school, the Capital Beltway and main north-south interstate highway serving the east coast, and the WMATA Metro Blue Line makes that conclusion inescapable. Even under the most optimistic assessment, a facility for the transport, storage and handling 50 or more railcars, each with a capacity of 30,000 gallons of highly flammable liquid, presents an unprecedented and unacceptable threat to public safety in this City, vital infrastructure serving governmental and private interests in the nation's capital, and untold millions of dollars in private property. Many Alexandrians saw first-hand the devastation caused by flammable liquid in the attack on the Pentagon, and saw too the security precautions made necessary by the high profile national security trials in the City's Federal Courthouse. For them and for the City, the risk presented by this facility is real.

Second, the installation of such a facility, without any outreach whatsoever to the affected residents and businesses, is unworthy of a Fortune 500 company. Norfolk Southern has, and is regularly seen to deploy in the national media, formidable public relations assets. In 2006, City staff and I insisted that, if you elected to proceed with this project against our recommendations, your company needed to offer a comprehensive program of education and outreach to the community as part of the City's special use permit process. Failing to make even a minimal public outreach effort was inexcusable, and suggests a conscious decision to conceal the company's activities.

"Home Town of George Washington and Robert E. Lee"

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Third, the company commenced and continued operation of the facility, knowing that the Alexandria Fire Department, and indeed every other fire department in the region, lacked the specialized foam and equipment needed to respond adequately to an ethanol-fueled fire either at the terminal itself, or at an accident scene involving the heavily laden tanker trucks which leave the facility throughout the day. This conduct demonstrated a willful and wanton disregard for public safety. As a result, I, my colleagues on the council, and our citizens, question the good faith of today's expressions of concern for, and pursuit of, safety by the company. The company must undertake an extraordinary effort to redeem its reputation.

The City intends to pursue every available avenue to stop Norfolk Southern's operation of this facility, and to redress the grievous wrong that has been perpetrated here. The claimed railroad operation at issue here -- unloading tank cars of flammable fluid without adequate and permanent storage for the hazardous cargo -- appears not to comply with federal safety standards, and the City has no option but to seek closure of the facility by the appropriate federal authority, or a determination that the facility as operated is subject to full compliance with the City's safety and zoning authority. But the right thing is for the company voluntarily to cease operations, and shutter this facility now.

The City and its residents continue to face enhanced public safety risks every day that this facility continues to operate. As you know, the City presented Norfolk Southern with a list of equipment and training needs, found necessary by the Fire Chief to enable our first-responders safely and adequately to address an ethanol-based incident. While the company agreed to fund part of these needs, a substantial number were refused. When I became aware of the scope of this operation, and the safety risks it presents, I concluded that Norfolk Southern has a clear moral obligation to provide all of the resources on the original list, and any other items that the City identifies as necessary, given our fuller understanding of the risks presented by your facility. If operations continue, the company must do this now.

Let me conclude by stating once again that Norfolk Southern has initiated its Alexandria ethanol transloading operation at a totally inappropriate place. I reiterate my request that the company immediately cease this operation.

Sincerely,



William D. Euille
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Tim Kaine
The Honorable James Webb
The Honorable John Warner
The Honorable James P. Moran
The Honorable Members of City Council
City Manager James K. Hartmann
City Attorney Ignacio B. Pessoa
Ingrid Sanden, Cameron Station Civic Assn.
John Pecic, President Summers Grove HOA