

EI- 20647

## **Public Hearings and Oral Arguments: Notice of Intent to Participate**

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Docket #: FD -35852 - -

Subject: \* CPA Surface Rail

First Name: \* Donald

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Group/Affiliation:

Message:



Railroad.docx

Intended and limited use;

Canaveral Port Authority Rail Extension Environmental Impact and plan to file request with Surface Transportation Board; Public Meeting on November 19, 2014

Disclaimer:

Thoughts and opinions expressed by me are only my own and are not to be extended to anyone or anything else. I am a resident of Merritt Island and enjoy the quality of life here. As requested by the Surface transportation Board website; my name and address is as follows; Donald Pittman, 470 Apache Trail, Merritt Island, FL. My privacy is hereby requested and made known. Nearby, we can still visit the beaches without paying for parking, go fishing in the rivers, and live without the hustle and bustle of over-populated areas. Although I am an optimist, I am also intelligent enough to recognize the politics that are in motion and because of that I believe that this hard rail system will become a reality. The following provides pertinent background, includes questions that are welcome to be answered here, and facts to consider.

Background;

Field Hearing ; Subcommittee of Government Operations of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform House of Representatives; Feb. 10, 2014      Mr. John Walsh, CEO of the Port Canaveral Port Authority (CPA), attended Field Hearing. At that time it was stated that added testing such as vibration impact analysis would be performed and that government costs would be reduced via the rail system option.

Canaveral Port Authority Rail Alignments Comparative Evaluation & Recommendation, Phase 1; findings included 865,000 tons of rail cargo per year = 166 rail cars weekly, not including tank cars for Seaport Canaveral's handling of ethanol and biodiesel fuels.      On May 22 of this year, Community Awareness Briefing was conducted at the Canaveral Port Authority Maritime Center. When asked about the frequency of use; the answer of once/week was provided.

If that frequency of use is accurate, then the existing under-utilized barge Canal and Rt. 528 are definitely adequate. And the cost of \$23,000,000 for the proposed rail system would be avoided.

What is the frequency of use for the proposed rail system?

Current status;

Since that meeting in May, there has been momentum building in support of the hard rail system that would extend from the Port, go across the Banana River, enter near KARS Park, traverse Merritt Island near existing residential neighborhoods, into the National Wildlife Refuge, and join the single rail system on government property. There has been mention of fruits, vegetables, automobiles, and other cargo via this proposed rail system. And the Panama Canal expansion project is intended to double the capacity of Panama Canal by 2016 by creating a new lane of traffic and allowing more and larger ships to transit, giving passage to super-tanker ships with their aim on Florida ports.

What is the projected frequency of use, total tonnage and type of cargoes, of the proposed rail system two years after completion?

During the meeting in May, it was stated that mailings would be sent to residents within a 2 mile distance of the proposed hard rail system. After the meeting, data available on the Internet indicates that train noise from the Locomotive engine itself and noise from the steel wheels rolling on steel rails. Train noise from a locomotive engine in Cocoa, which is three (3) miles away, can be heard on Merritt Island. Sea Turtles are protected from lights during their nesting season on the beaches. There would be headlight pollution that penetrating the National Wildlife Refuge disturbing its animals.

What distance will mailings be sent to residents on Merritt Island?

When are the proposed operational hours of the hard rail system?

While operational costs for government land owners would be reduced, the operating costs (i.e. equity) of home owners would plummet. There are several neighborhoods within noise-traveling distance of the proposed railroad. For example, The Savannahs, which is located less than one (1) mile from KARS Park, has over two hundred (200) homes.

How near to KARS Park would the egress of the proposed rail system be located and is that location to the North of the Park?

Automation at cargo Ports is being utilized more often and those technologies are applied, and that decreases the number of jobs created. And the existing infrastructure surrounding the CPA is limited in capacity.

There are numerous significant environmental impacts that are to be accurately quantified (per EIS and other independent) and then mitigated. In addition to the vibration impact analysis mentioned, there are the following impacts to assess;

Drainage of rain water after the train tracks are installed between residential neighborhoods and the river.

Damage to wetlands and habitat for several animal species, as well our National Wild Life refuge which is a treasured national asset.

Preservation of our local river beds (river grasses, clams, etc.) and water quality is recognized by our Nation's government, as demonstrated by the recent federal grant for river bed preservation starting near Sykes Creek (located near the Barge Canal) and in planned to include the Mosquito Lagoon as well as the Banana River.

There is a 3:1 land preservation recovery for intruding upon undisturbed land.

Where is that 3:1 undisturbed land in Brevard County to be preserved?

What mitigation tactics have been taken in the accidental fuel spill into the Banana River?

What response has the National Parks and Wildlife organization provided to the CPA about their proposed rail system?

Let's fully disclose the facts to the public, maintain communications as this rail system is decided upon, mitigate risks, and do what makes the most sense. Thank you