

CITIZENS FOR THE WELFARE OF OUR RICHLAND/LEXINGTON COMMUNITY

CSX Railroad has approached landowners between Mount Vernon Church Road and Old Hilton/Wessinger Roads in White Rock, SC. According to information obtained from these landowners, CSX wants to construct a rail siding approximately 7,000 feet in length. They have been surveying from Hopewell Cemetery (east of Mt Vernon Church Road) to just beyond Old Hilton Road. This stretch of existing track crosses Mr. Vernon Church Road, 3-Dog Road and Old Hilton/Wessinger Roads. CSX says this siding is needed to increase train traffic flow between Columbia and Newberry and both CSX and Northern Southern railroads would use it. As citizens building our Richland/Lexington community, we believe this is a very bad idea. We oppose the location of such a siding for the following reasons:

- **Restricted Evacuation Routes**

In the event of a rail accident on the stretch of track being considered, if an evacuation were needed, the three most direct evacuation routes for those on the Lake Murray side of Hwy 76 (Old Hilton, 3-Dog, Mt. Vernon Church roads) would be effected or blocked to homeowners, Lake Murray Elementary School and the Lowman Home's nursing and retirement communities.

- **Increased Air/Soil and Water Pollution**

Hwy 76 in this area sits atop the divide between the Broad River and Saluda River drainages. Any chemicals released through an accident would either drain toward the Broad River or Lake Murray, potentially affecting the water supply for Columbia and tens of thousands of private wells, not to mention wildlife and fishes in these drainages. Fumes from idling and revving diesel engines, as trains sit or maneuver on and off the siding, will pump tons of acrid gases into the air daily. In event of an accident releasing toxic gases, residents would also face this danger.

- **Disruption of Traffic.**

Traffic on Hwy 76, the main route between Chapin and Ballentine for commuters and local traffic, will likely be slowed or disrupted as vehicles on its main crossroads are slowed or forced to stop as trains slow to enter the siding, idle on the siding, or accelerate to reenter the main line. Three of the roads within the area being surveyed (Old Hilton, 3-Dog and Mt. Vernon Church) are the main routes to and from Lake Murray Elementary School for families living on the I-26 side of Hwy 76.

- **Increased noise pollution**

Diesel engines idling and revving as trains enter the siding, wait on the siding, or reenter the main line; noise from breaking and the dynamite-like din of rail cars slamming into each other; diesel horns blasting as trains pass, enter crossings, or signal their intent to reenter the main line will literally drown out the peace and quiet of our community.

Our section of Richland and Lexington counties is a mix of suburban homes with associated businesses, four churches, a school and one of South Carolina's premier retirement/nursing facilities. In fact, three churches and The Lowman Home sit within a few yards of the area being surveyed and Lake Murray Elementary is less than 3 football fields away.

We have been good neighbors to CSX, accepting the noise and interruptions of their trains as a part of our surroundings. However, we do not believe that the site they have chosen for a siding is the only one, let alone the best location for a rail siding. We ask that CSX show good faith toward the citizens of our part of Richland and Lexington counties by dropping their plans for a siding, or selecting a more appropriate site in a less populated area or consider expanding existing sidings.