



October 5, 2023

Open Letter To Cincinnati From East Palestine: Vote No On Issue 22

The Unity Council for the East Palestine Train Derailment writes this letter in solidarity with the Derail the Sale Campaign to urge the constituents of Cincinnati to vote N on issue 22. As the railway owner, Cincinnati retains oversight powers regarding its proper and safe use, something East Palestine did not have and still does not. **There are no potential benefits from the sale of Cincinnati Southern Railway that outweigh the health of your families.**

Since the derailment in our community of a Norfolk Southern train on February 3, 2023, we have learned of the negligent practices and lack of safety focus within Norfolk Southern and the railway industry as a whole. A few honorable mentions are:

- **Precision Scheduled Railroad**- Railroad workers have raised concerns about safety due to reduced inspections and staffing on trains. PSR has also allowed for extended lengths of trains.
- **Bonus structures that reward overlooking safety concerns**- Executives received millions of dollars in cash after the company made its trains longer and took other actions critics say made their trains more dangerous.
- **Lack of focus on the health and safety of their team members**- The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) fined Norfolk Southern nearly \$50,000 for workplace safety violations during the chemical cleanup at the site of its East Palestine, Ohio train derailment. As part of a settlement, the company will also have to monitor any medical issues of workers brought in to clear and rebuild the tracks at the site.
- **Lack of focus on the health and safety of communities their trains run through**-Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost filed a civil lawsuit in federal court seeking to hold Norfolk Southern financially responsible for the Feb. 3 train derailment in East Palestine that caused the release of over 1 million gallons of hazardous chemicals, "recklessly endangering" both the health of area residents and Ohio's natural resources.
- **Gross negligence in covering contamination in blatant disregard of human life for profit**- It was not in the best interest of human health and welfare and the environment to simply cover it up and keep going without at least a preliminary evaluation to determine if the level of vinyl chloride that was present in the soil was going to create a potential contamination threat to surface or groundwater.
- **Lies about facts that led to the decision to blow up five tankers of highly carcinogenic chemicals over our communities**- Experts called by the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), to testify about the February train derailment said at a hearing that tank cars containing vinyl chloride were not undergoing a chemical reaction that would have caused them to explode – calling into question the decision of first responders to vent and burn the hazardous chemical inside.
- **Lack of dedication to "making things right" for the communities that have been shattered**- Eight months after the derailment in East Palestine, residents are still sick, financially struggling and desperate to find ways out of the homes that are making their families sick. Norfolk Southern's assistance center, set up to help residents, humiliates those asking for help, makes unfair determination of reimbursements and fails to provide the assistance residents are desperate for. Homes and residential soil have not been tested and the town is taken over by the dust of contaminated soil still being removed from the derailment site. Creeks still have the same chemical sheen they did on day one and residents still have the same unanswered questions. Suffering communities in PA have received zero help or testing.

Do not make the same mistakes our community did and ignore the dangers associated with railways. Open your eyes, look around you, research the facts to make an informed decision for your families health, your children's health and the health of future generations. We never want another community to feel the earth shattering words of the CDC telling you that you all have had chemical exposure and they don't know what to do about that BUT they do know how to treat the cancers it could cause in the future. No matter the benefits of the sale, your health and the health of your families is the most valuable thing you have. **Once your health is gone, there are no second chances, so do the right thing now and vote "no" on issue 22 to protect your families and the families of your fellow Ohioans.**

Thank you,

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For more information on the current health issues and struggles in East Palestine Oh, please follow our facebook "Unity Council for the East Palestine Train Derailment"