

Sherburne Civic Association

March 19, 1999

James Jalbert
C & J Trailways
P.O. Box 190
Dover, NH 03820

Dear Mr. Jalbert,

On behalf of the Sherburne Civic Association, I want to thank you for involving our organization in your plans to build a new bus maintenance facility at the Pease Tradeport. Members of our organization greatly appreciate the fact that you were willing to take the time to acquaint us with your plans and answer questions concerning projected operations.

After that meeting, members of our group traveled to Dover to observe your current facility first-hand. We met on Wednesday, March 10 to discuss their observations and to determine how we felt that activity would impact the quality of life in our neighborhood. Following are some of the observations and concerns expressed by our group:

1. The noise from bus engines idling, and the beeping backup alert, carries a considerable distance in the early hours of the morning and at night—a time when most of the busses are operating around the facility. Between three and seven busses at a time were observed to be idling 40 minutes or more while drivers warmed up their vehicles and prepared to start their morning runs).
2. Observers were able to smell diesel fuel even at a distance of several hundred yards from the facility. Your facility, if built at the proposed site, would be less than 100 yards from the nearest home.
3. Members of the group are keenly sensitive to the possibility of future expansion. While there are only 7-8 busses now, that number could increase in the near future. While you expressed concerns that proposed rail service would cut, rather than increase, the number of vehicles you would be operating, the truth is, that particular initiative is at least a decade away from happening according to those working with the Rockingham County Planning Commission. I have known Portsmouth since 1962 and have watched your business grow from a one-vehicle limousine service to a whole fleet of first-class coaches, so there is no doubt about your business prowess and your ability to grow. Along these lines, our group is also concerned about opening the door for future development in the area directly following the construction of your proposed facility.
4. During our meeting, we discussed environmental issues associated with operations at the facility. The constant running of diesel engines would not only reduce the air quality in the immediate area, it would also introduce an unburned “diesel fuel” precipitant contamination. Given the right weather conditions, oily residue would eventually settle on everything in the nearby area including homes, vehicles and places where individuals would be susceptible to accidentally ingesting this material—like dishes and eating utensils. Residents were also concerned about effluent from the facility’s wash racks. Some of the problems that led to the Pease Tradeport being identified as a SuperFund site came from the practice of allowing aircraft wash rack effluent flow into unprotected sewer systems. While I am sure that the EPA requires fuel separators and other preventive measures, there is no guarantee that unsupervised actions concerning diesel fuel won’t happen in your maintenance area. Again, while many of the aircraft wash racks were far removed from residential areas, the contamination still found its way into the groundwater resources that feed the artesian wells that supply water to the City of Portsmouth and our neighborhood.

Given these observations and concerns, our group unanimously voted not to support your proposed plans for a bus maintenance facility at the current site. As the group’s vice president, they also asked me to strongly encourage you to choose another location— for the well being of our neighborhood. We hope that you will move forward in the consideration of the other reasonable options we know are available.

We hope you understand that we are not trying to sabotage your business plans or cause you added expense. We are just trying to preserve our quality of life and protect the physical well being of our friends, neighbors and children—not to mention our property values. Having shown yourself to be an astute and reasonable man, I know you understand our position.

If you have any questions about our decision, I would be glad to talk to you. It is our hope that you would consider our needs and concerns as you move forward in your plans to build a new maintenance facility. We wish you the best of luck in your endeavors.

Sincerely,

Tom Cocchiaro
Vice President
Sherburne Civic Association

cc:

Evelyn Sirrell, Honorable Mayor, City of Portsmouth
George Meyer, executive director, Pease Development Authority
Peter Loughlin, board of directors, Pease Development Authority