

Southeast Side Coalition to Ban PetCoke

nopetcokechicago@gmail.com

Sent via email to: petcokecomments@cityofchicago.org

January 31, 2014

Department of Public Health
Attn: Environmental Permitting and Inspections
333 South State Street, Room 200
Chicago, IL 60604

Re: Request for Public Comment Review Period Extension and Outreach

Dear Responsible Officials:

I am writing on behalf of the *Southeast Side Coalition to Ban PetCoke* ("the Coalition"), a community organization made up of residents of Chicago's Southeast Side. The Coalition was formed to provide concerned residents with a forum to organize and respond to the storage of bulk materials along the Calumet River in Southeast Chicago. Consistent with that goal, the Coalition submits the following comments requesting an additional extension of at least 30 days to the public comment review period and additional outreach by the Chicago Department of Public Health.

Coalition members have been organizing since October 2013 to respond to the bulk materials stored along the Calumet River. They have voiced their concerns by contacting governmental officials, organizing community-wide meetings, and speaking with the media. Given their extensive efforts to make themselves available and to make known their deep investment in this issue, Coalition members are disappointed that the Chicago Department of Public Health did not reach out to them before proposing these regulations. The Coalition hopes that the Department will correct this oversight through additional outreach and extension of the comment period.

The Coalition acknowledges, and appreciates, that the Chicago Department of Public Health has extended the comment period. However, this extension still does not provide an adequate opportunity for Coalition members to be involved in the public comment process. Coalition members are busy parents and students, some have full-time jobs, and others hold more than one job. Even under the best circumstances, it would be a challenge for Coalition members to review and comment on proposed regulations during the span of a few weeks. Given the added complication of the recent holiday season and the problematic weather, community organizing has proven even more difficult over the last month. The snow and bitter cold have made it challenging for Coalition members to hold meetings discussing the proposed regulations and to spread information to community members. The Coalition needs additional time to understand the proposed regulations, to communicate with other community members, and to organize their response.

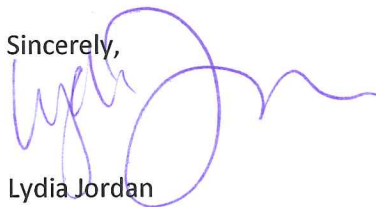
Several members of the Coalition attended the public hearing on January 13th, 2014, including some who submitted verbal comments. Many members of the Coalition found that the hearing was

inadequate. They expressed disappointment that there was no opportunity for questions or any dialogue to foster greater understanding about the proposed regulations. Many Coalition members felt unprepared to give comments because the Department did not engage in sufficient outreach to help community members understand the proposed regulations. Effectively, this excludes many Coalition members from meaningful participation in the public comment process. Coalition members would like the opportunity to ask questions about the proposed regulations and how these regulations will safeguard their health and their community.

The Coalition would like the opportunity to be involved. We request that the Chicago Department of Public Health schedule a public meeting on the Southeast Side within the next 30 days and that this meeting include an opportunity for community members to ask the Chicago Department of Public Health questions about the proposed regulations. We respectfully request an extension of 30 days from the date of the public meeting to submit comments on the proposed regulations. This extension will allow the community, including Coalition members, to digest the information that they receive at the meeting, to communicate with each other, and to compose comments that will help the Chicago Department of Public Health to make an informed decision that protects the health and wellbeing of Chicago's Southeast Side residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Lydia Jordan

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