

WESTFIELD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION, INC  
P.O. Box 373  
MIDDLETOWN, CT 06457



July 2, 2008

Rosa DeLauro  
59 Elm Street  
New Haven, CT 06510

Dear Representative DeLauro:

On behalf of the Westfield Residents Association, a 27-year old neighborhood association, I am writing to you with respect to the proposed Army Training Facility on Boardman Lane in Middletown. We are active, concerned citizens of Middletown, and we are dismayed by the decision to place the Training Facility on Boardman Lane. This decision violates both the letter and the spirit of Congressional legislation, and we ask that you do everything in your power to prevent the Army Corps of Engineers from taking this prime land from Middletown.

The Base Relocation and Closure act of 2005 mandated that a Training Facility be built in Middletown, "if the Army is able to acquire land suitable for the construction of the facilities." The goals of this mandate were to provide intangible benefits to Middletown by integrating the military with residents and to provide tangible benefits to Middletown by the commerce associated with such a facility. We think the goals are laudable. Unfortunately, the Boardman Lane location does not realize either of these goals. Fundamentally, the Boardman Lane location violates a federal act: it is not land "suitable for construction of the facilities."

The isolation of the site precludes any meaningful interaction between the soldiers receiving training and the town. Boardman is a small country lane with 9 houses on large lots, a cemetery from the time of the American Revolution, and the 88-acre parcel of pasture and significant pristine wetlands. Boardman Lane is a secondary road that is utterly inadequate not just for the number of cars, but also for the heavy military vehicles and trucks making deliveries (no through trucks are allowed on Boardman Lane). Two streets feeding Boardman, Bell Street and Sawmill Lane, are even smaller. These three streets are part of several different cycle groups' featured rides through Middletown, two of them are also part of the Mattabessett hiking trail. None of these isolated, small country lanes are capable of handling the enormous increase in traffic that the Training Facility will generate. Boardman ends on Middle Street, which although only 2 lanes, is a major through fare for people working at Aetna and the many other companies within the IT zone adjacent to I91, as well as for people getting on or off of Interstate 91 to travel to or from Middletown. There are significant line of sight issues for any traffic turning from Boardman Lane onto Middle Street, which is already an overburdened and dangerous street. We fear that the only interactions that Middletown residents will have with military personnel is in bumper-to-bumper traffic.

The location of the site very far from any Middletown retail district precludes any economic benefit to the city. Boardman Lane is far more convenient and far closer to the hotels and cafés of Cromwell, Berlin, and Meriden than it is to those of Middletown. Middletown's businesses will not benefit from the presence of this training facility in Westfield. The citizens of Middletown have strongly supported the preservation of open

space. This land is zoned IT, and may not be preserved in its current condition of beautiful farmland and wetlands. However, it would be unfair for this land to be covered with the equivalent of two Walmarts and their parking lots, when the city bears a loss of tax revenue and an increase in the need for city services such as fire protection and water and sewer, as well as a decrease in the quality of life for our citizens. The loss of 88 prime acres zoned for Interstate Trade (IT) development forces Middletown citizens to pay higher taxes to support an Army Training Facility that provides no benefit to them. It is simply unfair to ask Middletown to make such an enormous sacrifice.

In addition to these traffic and economic issues, we note that the geology of the site will be very problematic for construction. This site is between two traprock ridges, Higby and Lamentation Mountains, and as would be expected, the ground is extremely wet and drains poorly, many of the houses in the neighborhood have special drainage systems to keep buildings dry. This site could require extensive blasting prior to construction. On ledge of the type found throughout this area, blasting forces travel large distances, and are known to damage homes and wells over 2,000 feet from the blast. Finally, there are significant concerns about whether there is adequate water pressure to accommodate a facility of this size.

In summary, the Boardman Lane site for this Training Facility does not meet the intent of the Base Relocation and Closure act of 2005. It provides no benefits to the city of Middletown, and comes at an enormous cost to our community's future. Please do everything in your power to urge the army to place the training facility in another location more suitable for the army and also more suitable and fair to our community.

Instead of Maromas or Boardman Lane, the Westfield Residents Association suggests that the Army look at an urban site that will revitalize an under-utilized property, in line with "smart growth" principles. This will provide the army with an opportunity to integrate itself as a valued institution within the community and within a neighborhood. An urban site will provide the City with economic and community benefits that are meaningful both to the community and to the military, and will fulfill the spirit and the law of the originating legislation as it was intended to benefit both the army and the community of Middletown

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of Middletown. We look forward to a meaningful sharing of ideas that meet both the military's needs as well as the needs of the host community.

Sincerely yours,

Stephen H. Devoto  
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