Thursday, July 22, 2021

Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. My name is Kevin Garcia and I am the Transportation Planner for New York City Environmental Justice Alliance. NYC-EJA was founded in 1991 and is a non-profit city-wide membership network linking grassroots organizations from low-income neighborhoods and communities of color in their fight for environmental justice.

The rapid growth of the logistics industry and online retail in recent decades has substantially increased the volume and frequency of freight flows in U.S. metropolitan areas. Before the pandemic, logistics and online consumption were rapidly growing. Today, online consumption has exponentially grown as more households have been pushed to online shopping for everything from basic goods to groceries. This growth has led to a surge in distribution facilities throughout the city and in particular in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color.

While having goods delivered to your door quickly is convenient, it is not without tradeoffs. Having a warehouse located down the street or in your community is not so great. Communities closest to last-mile warehouses suffer the most from the demand for faster delivery services. These warehouses send vehicles throughout the city that contribute to traffic in already overburdened neighborhoods and leave a trail of toxic diesel soot and smog-forming pollutants. Since the start of the pandemic, it is estimated that about 2.4 million packages are delivered in the city every day, and demand is only expected to grow in the future. Thus, traffic conditions and air pollution are only expected to worsen.

Neighborhoods such as Sunset Park and Red Hook already suffer from congestion and pollution generated by fossil fuel-using trucks and car trips. The rise in distribution centers has only exacerbated these issues as delivery vehicles move through our narrow roads, create unsafe pedestrian conditions, and lead to worse road conditions. The pandemic made clear the particular vulnerabilities faced by environmental justices communities, who have experienced higher rates of morbidity, with research indicating how death rates have been compounded by the impacts of poor area quality. Therefore, we must look for solutions to minimize vehicular traffic in neighborhoods across the city with poor air quality and high asthma rates.

We encourage consideration of using rail and maritime transportation options. It is a critical part of the Freight NYC plan to invest in multimodal hubs by utilizing barge and railroads. These alternative modes of transportation will lead to reductions in truck trips, traffic congestions, and air pollution. Additionally, plans such as The Green Resilient Industrial District (GRID) Plan and the Waterfront Comprehensive Plan provide recommendations and solutions not only for how we can utilize our harbors to transport goods but also how to go about this process and address our climate and resiliency problems.

While freight hauling is an important part of transportation, it creates environmental and health problems. As e-commerce continues to expand, transportation and environmental policy must address warehouse and logistics locations.
Thank you once again for your time.

**Focus:** Citywide issue and impacts & transportation concerns

- Talk about the volume of car/vehicle/truck movement is far in excess of any kind of use. This is happening in industrialized neighborhoods throughout the city.