



United States Army
Corps of Engineers
New Orleans District
ATTENTION: REGULATORY BRANCH
7400 Leake Avenue
New Orleans, Louisiana 70118

Applicant Name: Greenfield Louisiana, LLC, % Ramboll US Consulting, Inc., 1615 Poydras Street, Suite 930, New Orleans, Louisiana 70112

Permit Application Number: MVN 2014-01518-2 EMM

March 23, 2021

Dear Scott N. Kennedy,

This letter is in response to the request for public comments regarding the construction of a grain elevator by Greenfield Louisiana, LLC in Wallace, LA. The health, environmental, and occupational risks of this project are far too destructive for a community already inundated with the disastrous results of industrialization and disenfranchisement of the Black descendant community. Wallace is part of “Cancer Alley,” a community already overburdened by petrochemical emissions including cancer-causing agents, respiratory irritants, noxious odors, and property damage from dust accumulation.

The legacies of the extractive plantation economy are present in Greenfield’s plans to exploit a predominantly Black and vulnerable community. The plans for this massive 248-acre footprint with 36 grain silos, 300 feet structures and 1.2 million cubic yards of excavation and fill were made with no consideration of the needs and quality of life for Wallace, Edgard and Vacherie residents. There is no way the residents can be protected from the noise, smells, dusts, and dangers that the elevator will bring.

Despite the massive footprint and disruption to our quality of life, Greenfield has not reached out to community members for our feedback or to hear our concerns. As a result, we cannot trust that Greenfield has any intent to be open and transparent with the community. It is extremely troubling that Greenfield was making plans to disrupt our community at a time when community members were trying to survive the height of the pandemic in a parish with the highest COVID-19 death rates at the time.

As natives of Wallace, whose families have been in this area for over 300 years, we founded The Descendants Project to protect the Black descendant community and heal the vestiges of slavery

through advocacy, education, and restorative practices for our health and our land. Our roots are diverse and our ancestral history is inclusive of the Indigenous, African, German, French, and Acadian peoples who lived right here in Wallace. Our plans are to preserve and acknowledge the material, historical and cultural artifacts of our ancestors.

According to consulting archaeologists, it is highly probable that the site contains a cemetery for the formerly enslaved. It is unconscionable to disregard the sacred remains of our ancestors by building facilities on top of their gravesites and destroying the community of their descendants. Greenfield's presence would destroy artifacts and data that are unique to Wallace, making our mission of preservation next to impossible.

Furthermore, the mental and psychological well-being of our descendant community is a key priority for our organization. Now, instead of our community members enjoying peace after a year-long period of stress and fear, we have been thrown into more anxiety and trauma. The psychological and emotional impact of this project cannot be overstated.

Our foundation, which will be housed in an 1806 plantation home, is immediately adjacent to the proposed site. Our plans are to start renovations by the end of summer. We have applied for several grants including funding from the African American Heritage Action Fund. However, the heavy operations from Greenfield could damage the foundation and facade of a rare historic home, and our site is not the only one.

The surrounding plantations, which are National Landmarks and National Historic Districts, have attracted over 100,000 people to Wallace. The noise, pollution, odors, and massive structures would disrupt the business of these historical museums, including Whitney Plantation which has earned international recognition for telling the story of enslaved men, women, and children in southeastern Louisiana. These plantation houses and structures are almost 250 years old and are extremely vulnerable to heavy construction and operations.

The project would also have devastating effects on our natural environment. The grain elevator would destroy portions of the marsh and impact local wildlife that are listed as endangered, federally protected and state protected.

We are actively working to not only preserve the community we love, but to also create a community for our future. Our vibrant history and the vast amount of attention we are already receiving makes this dream a viable one. **We ask you to reject the permit of Greenfield -- a company that seeks only to eliminate our community and destroy our history.**

We request a **virtual Zoom public hearing** (to accommodate as many voices as possible amidst a global pandemic) where our community's concerns will be further expressed.

Respectfully,

Joy Banner, The Descendants Project
Jordan Brewington, The Descendants Project
Jo Banner, The Descendants Project