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Dear Members of Toronto City Council,

May 7, 2013

The City of Toronto's Office of Emergency Management has declared May 5-11, 2013 Emergency Preparedness Week. As Chairs of two of the Working Groups of the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition we feel it is necessary to voice our concerns about emergency preparedness as well as the health implications of the service and operations of the Billy Bishop City Centre Airport.

Little is known in the nearby communities about the volume of fuel and other toxic chemicals that are transported through densely populated neighbourhoods and stored on site on the Island. Expansion plans will increase risks and pollution when jet fuel is added to the current uses not only to those who live in along the waterfront, but to commuters on nearby highways and workers at the airport. No expansion plans should be contemplated until risks to public health and to the downtown core are fully evaluated and weighted against the Porter and other Airlines' plans.

Cumulative air studies carried out in the S. Riverdale Beaches communities by the Toronto Environment Office and Toronto Public Health showed that diesel fuel from surface traffic was the largest contribution to poor air in that neighbourhood. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has classified diesel fuel as a class 2A probable carcinogen. We need to evaluate the current exposures of Torontonians and increased exposures posed by expansion of flights. However no study on the relative loading to the downtown core from air and surface traffic and other local emissions has been done. An accident, spill, or fire associated with the airport could require an evacuation of the downtown core and the Islands such as the one closely avoided during the Mississauga Train disaster when the wind thankfully shifted. These are long-term public health issues. Studies should also consider seasonal conditions like summer temperature inversions that could hold pollution close to the ground as well as the impacts of an accident or mishap over Lake Ontario or the Inner Harbour. For these reasons we urge you to prevent further exposures and potential for emergencies by rejecting plans for expansion at this time. Studies of public health and safety threats of these business plans should underpin your decisions today.

Yours truly,

*Sarah Miller*

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