

William Molls

Chairperson, Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Association (BQNA)
633 Lake Shore Blvd West, Unit 501
Toronto, ON M5V 3B9



September 16, 2013

Mayor Rob Ford and
Members of Toronto City Council
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor Ford and Toronto City Councillors,

Toronto City Council is considering a proposal from Porter Airlines that would drastically alter the future of our community of Bathurst Quay.

Bathurst Quay is the closest residential neighbourhood to Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport. Residents of Bathurst Quay are among the most directly impacted by the airport's day-to-day operations.

While the airport has a long history as a part of our neighbourhood, it is clear that the aggressive expansion of Porter Airlines' commercial activity over the past seven years has significantly impacted the quality of life and desirability of our community, as well as the health and safety of area residents. This is due to the substantial increase in traffic volume and congestion, overall noise, and air pollution as a result of a bigger, busier airport.

Unfortunately, Porter Airlines and the Toronto Port Authority, the airport's owner and operator, have shown disappointingly little interest or desire to work with residents to reduce this very significant

impact, despite repeated assurances to the contrary to community leaders and to council. We wish to stress that, despite their claims of co-operation with the community, this has not been the case.

While a study of this proposal was established to provide recommendations on how council should respond to Porter, it also has provided an opportunity for the city to intervene on behalf of area residents, who have, to date, been treated as merely an obstruction to the airport's goals of expansion, instead of equitable partners in the development of a sustainable, desirable neighbourhood.

From our perspective, the Toronto Port Authority has demonstrated that it considers the needs and concerns of our community as secondary to the profitability of Porter Airlines, which is a significant source of the Toronto Port Authority's overall revenue. Importantly, this should bring into question the many facts and figures the Toronto Port Authority has provided for the purpose of this study. We hope that council will keep this fact – i.e. that the Toronto Port Authority is not an unbiased party in this proposal's outcome – in mind when considering this study's findings and making its decision.

While we recognize and commend the hard work of city staff on this study, it is clear that the potential impact on our community of amending the Tripartite Agreement to allow for jets has not yet been accurately accounted for. Considering that this proposal would significantly change the future of Bathurst Quay, such a long-term impact should be given due diligence, and not be considered secondary to the short-term commercial goals and profitability of Porter Airlines.

While we have many concerns with this proposal, which include the effects of jet-fuel related air pollution on our nearby community, the impact of jet-engine planes flying over the island bird sanctuary, as well as jet-engine noise from a model of plane that has yet to actually be fully tested, nor will be fully tested by the time staff make their recommendations, of paramount concern to our organization is the current volume of airport-related traffic, which our neighbourhood is simply not prepared to handle. To be clear, this is not speculation, but a measurable, ongoing reality, which will only be exacerbated should this proposal be approved.

The substantial increase in traffic to and from the airport is already at a critical stage, with the safety of Bathurst Quay residents, as well as travellers coming to and from the airport, being put at risk as a result. This is painfully clear at the intersection of Bathurst and Lake Shore West, which, in addition to being one of the most difficult intersections to navigate in the city, is far beyond capacity, causing motorists – and in particular, taxis – to seek alternative routes through our neighbourhood. As a result,

residential streets like Stadium Road, which were not planned to handle such volume, are often congested to the point of gridlock, even at non-peak hours.

Most importantly, the airport is located beside a school and community centre, with local schoolchildren needing to cross directly into the path of motorists heading to and from the airport. Despite the repeated objections raised by Bathurst Quay residents to this, the Toronto Port Authority has yet to implement any action that, in our opinion, would better ensure their safety, such as staging taxis off-site. This has shown, from our perspective, both a shocking lack of responsibility on the part of the Toronto Port Authority to its neighbours, and an incredible unwillingness to work with residents to address the reality of the airport's location and its impact.

With this sadly unhealthy relationship between the airport and its neighbours in mind, it is clear that, should this proposal be accepted outright by Toronto City Council, these critical issues of infrastructure and resident safety will only be intensified, and will continue to go unaddressed.

It is our opinion that these concerns must no longer be put off. They must be addressed immediately, before any proposal to even further expand commercial operations at the airport is considered.

This is an opportunity for Toronto City Council to do the right thing and put the needs and safety of ordinary Torontonians ahead of the commercial interests of one private airline. While we very strongly oppose this proposal as it stands and hope that you reject it at the next available opportunity, we would also encourage you to use this opportunity to do a more thorough and comprehensive analysis of the airport's current impact, separate to that of the study of this proposal. Please do not allow this reckless expansion of the airport to be given priority over the concerns of ordinary residents, and our desire to build a desirable, sustainable neighbourhood.

We look forward to your decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'William Molls', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William Molls

Chairperson
Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Association