



TO	<i>City of Hudson Mayor &amp; Common Council</i>
ON	<i>14 July 2022</i>
VIA	<i>Email</i>
RE	<i>Urgent need to move the State Truck Route</i>

Dear Mayor Johnson and Members of the Common Council:

I am writing to submit the following comments about the State Truck Route which currently passes through Hudson, but which is long overdue to be removed from City streets.

In an effort to be brief, I will keep these five points short. However, I do have extensive documentation to back up each point, and will be happy to provide that upon request.

- 1) **The State Truck Route was going to be removed from Hudson in the 1950s** after the creation of the highway connecting the Rip Van Winkle Bridge and Bell's Pond, which didn't exist before then. However, due to an irrational fear by then-City leaders that the change could somehow hurt Hudson business, this was opposed, and Hudson residents have suffered an estimated 100 million truck trips in the ensuing seven decades. *You as the leaders of today have a chance to correct your predecessors' grievous error.*
- 2) **The State Truck Route was again slated to be removed at the end of the 1990s**, after the Truck Route Task Force convened by the Columbia-Hudson Partnership (a combination of HDC and CEDC) identified alternate routes. The Task Force, of which I was a member, met with the State DOT and was told that they would like to move the route, and that doing so would be relatively simple—just changing some signs and sending out a bulletin. It could be done almost overnight, they told us. However, this major step forward was thwarted by the then-Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Chair Gerry Simons and several other County Republicans, who disbanded the Truck Route Task Force and ended the effort. *Again, you as the leaders of today have a chance to reverse the mistakes of the past.*
- 3) **For the State Truck Route, the role of Hudson elected officials is to represent Hudson's interests strongly to the D.O.T. as a urgent public safety issue.** It should never be the role of Hudson officials to take the side of reactionary Republicans from Claverack, Stockport or Greenport, whose towns already play host to major highways which could easily absorb this additional traffic. The State needs to hear Hudson's point of view expressed forcefully; it can then entertain the NIMBY concerns of neighboring towns, and weigh them against the urgent public safety issues posed by the current, outdated route.
- 4) **Both truckers and residents of Hudson would prefer that the route be moved.** An eye-opening discovery by the previous Task Force was that truckers themselves do not like driving through Hudson and would prefer to go around the City for non-local deliveries (which would be unaffected). By stopping and interviewing random truckers who were passing through Hudson, Assemblyman Patrick Manning and I discovered that none of them wanted to drive through Hudson—unless they absolutely had to to make a local delivery. Without exception, they would prefer a route around Hudson, even if it were longer in terms of miles, since such a route would be faster and easier. They cited the slow stop/start nature of urban traffic and

the difficulty making tight radius turns as key reasons a non-urban route would be far preferable. Acting to remove the truck route is a win-win for both those in the trucking industry and Hudson residents.

**5) Local elected officials can play a key role in removing the State Truck Route, but have no role in the Colarusso review, which is the sole purview of the Hudson Planning Board.**

Specious argument has been advanced by certain County officials that they will not discuss the State Truck Route unless Colarusso—a Greenport business which has repeatedly sued the City—gets its way on the Hudson Waterfront. This is a nonsensical and offensive form of hostage-taking, which ignores the basic mechanisms of review. Colarusso is required by City Code to obtain permits from the Planning Board. A full and proper review is underway. No elected officials have the legal right to compel an independent (quasi-judicial) agency like the Planning Board to rule one way or another on such applications. Such agencies are insulated from electoral politics, and its members must act as judges of the applicability of local and State laws. If the Planning Board were to make a decision based on political pressure, they would be acting arbitrarily and capriciously—and any decision (positive or negative) would be overturned. In short, the position advanced by certain County officials is both infeasible and illegal. Lastly, for the record: *It must be noted that some of those who have most loudly and stridently supported the Colarusso applications over the past few years are the very same people who made foolish or even craven deals between 2006-2010 to make sure the Waterfront truck traffic was imposed on downtown as a form of environmental blackmail.*

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Per above, I would be happy to provide additional background and documentation of each point above upon request.

Sincerely,



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