BEFORE THE
GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In Re: Sandersville Railroad Company's Petition For Approval to Acquire Real Estate by Condemnation	**Docket No.: 45045**

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF RANDOLPH CLAYTON

to be presented as a panel consisting of
Members of the No Railroad in Our Community Coalition
& Others

August 25, 2023

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No Railroad in Our Community
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Q. PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, OCCUPATION, AND BACKGROUND.

A. My name is Randolph Clayton. My home address is 1501 Anna Poole Road, Sparta, Georgia, 31087. I am a Hancock County Commissioner, but I also do grounds maintenance work at Shoulderbone Plantation. I previously worked as a builder with my own company for about 20 years. I mostly built houses and churches.

Q. HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY TESTIFIED BEFORE THE COMMISSION?

A. No, I have not previously testified before the Commission.

Q. WHAT IS YOUR CONNECTION TO HANCOCK COUNTY?

A. I am from Hancock County. I've lived here my entire life. I live in Sparta, and I was raised on Shoals Road in Sparta. I have been a Hancock County Commissioner for almost seven years. I represent District 4 – the community where I was raised and where I call home.

Q. **HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE RESIDENTS WHO LIVE IN DISTRICT 4?**

A. District 4 is a community with a lot of older people. A lot of the people who live here are retired.

Q. WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE NO RAILROAD IN OUR COMMUNITY COALITION?

A. Several of the members live in District 4. Some of the members regularly attend county commission meetings and have voiced their concerns and opposition to

the rail spur.

Q. WHAT IS YOUR OPINION REGARDING THE PROPOSED RAILROAD SPUR?

A. I do not agree with it. The spur would negatively impact my district. Residents I spoke with about the spur do not want it in our community. The predominately Black homeowners in the Shoals Road area do not want the rail. Most of the people here are older and retired. They will have to suffer the effects of a train. The historic graveyards, churches, wetlands, farms, air and water will be negatively impacted. The needs of the 50-acre Hanson Quarry do not justify a rail line which will negatively impact the historic St. Galilee Community and Shoals Road environment. The environmental and property damage of a train exceeds the benefit of reducing trucks commuting to the Hanson Quarry. The prosperity of the Sandersville Railroad does not outweigh the quality of life of these community members. They deserve their peace and quiet, uncontaminated air, land, and water.

Q. IN YOUR OPINION, DO YOU THINK THE SPUR WILL PROVIDE A POSITIVE ECONOMIC IMPACT TO YOUR CONSTITUENTS?

A. I don't see how it will benefit the community. Where is the labor force? It may need labor to build it, but that's a short period of time. I don't see it bringing in any jobs for my constituents. No one in this community will drive the train. We need development, but a railroad spur is not suitable for this community. It's not like the railroad will stop at stores or move people. I don't see how it will help the county.

Q. DOES THIS CONCLUDE YOUR TESTIMONY?

A. Yes.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I have served a true and correct copy of the foregoing Direct Testimony via electronic mail and United States Mail with sufficient postage thereon to the following, pursuant to Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 515-16-16-.02 and 515-2-1-.04(4)(b), (3), addressed as follows:

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/s/ Jamie B. Rush

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