



June 12, 2015

Dear City of Minneapolis Council Members:

We are writing today to request that you vote against the staff recommendation to authorize the City of Minneapolis' Property Services division to begin negotiations with the owners of Roof Depot at 1860 28th Street East and 2717 Longfellow Avenue South for municipal acquisition and operations. This proposal will be before the Ways and Means Committee on June 15, 2015 and the full City Council on June 19, 2015.

People's Movement Center is a collective of healing justice practitioners that centers the work and lives of People of Color, Indigenous, queer, and trans communities. Located in South Minneapolis we work with clients who have experienced various traumas and are looking to heal, which we believe is a process rather than an end point. One trauma that we continuously see is the negative impact that environmental racism has on the body and spirit. Advancements in science have shown us that living in poverty can change the molecular makeup of our bodies. These changes may then be passed along to future generations. Put another way, cumulative health inequities, for example breathing poor quality air over many years, has the potential to change our cellular blueprint. Some Indigenous and Chinese medicine knowledges inform us that this is an energetic shift that cannot always be reversed. **We believe, and the research indicates, that adding the addition of a Water Yard to an overwhelmingly burdened area would be detrimental not only for its residents, but for future generations in Phillips.**

We believe that the City acquisition of Roof Depot does not align with the City's own racial equity work and expressed commitment to supporting environmental justice. The Phillips area is designated by the Met Council as a Racially Concentrated Area of Poverty – it is a majority low-income, Indigenous and People of Color community with more children (a vulnerable population) than any other neighborhood in Minneapolis. East Phillips is a Residential Arsenic Superfund site, and one of two areas in Hennepin County with the highest incidences of elevated blood lead levels and asthma hospitalizations in small children (the other being the near Northside of Minneapolis). It is the site of a foundry, an open air hot asphalt plant, and already carries the burden of two industrially-zoned City of Minneapolis facilities – a garbage transfer station and a Public Works facility.

The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth states that “Through promoting and protecting the civil rights of the citizens of Minneapolis, sources of environmental pollution will not be concentrated in neighborhoods of one race or ethnicity, near sensitive populations, or in economically disadvantaged areas.” By putting the water distribution function in East Phillips, the City would be further concentrating air pollution and negatively impacting air quality by adding more heavy truck traffic and welding emissions to this already environmentally overburdened community. **We hope we can count on you to stand with the Phillips community by voting against the staff recommendation to begin negotiating for the purchase of the Roof Depot site.**

Respectfully,

Malia Burkhart
Kristy Clemons
Beth Ellsworth
Fen Jeffries
David Kim
Olivia Levins Holden
Jessica Lopez Lyman
Tiffany Macklin

Sally Nixon
Rebeka Ndosi
Martha Ockenfels-Martinez
Susan Raffo
Alejandra Tobar Alatriz
Chitra Vairavan
Taja Will