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# That Infernal Beeping *Neighbors of DOT Yard Petition for Quieter Life*

By Jesse J. Smith



Ulster County Legislator Abe Uchitelle and Kingston Common Council Ward 1 Alderman Jeffrey Morrell with Ward 1 residents Lisa Darling and Chas Gritman. Courtesy



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KINGSTON - Neighbors of a state Department of Transportation facility in Kingston are asking officials to do something about the noise at the site, in response to a surge in activity related to the construction of the Broadway roundabout.

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Residents around the salt barn and staging area on Quarry Street want DOT officials to consider alternatives to piercing “backup beepers” that they say harm their health and well-being.

The campaign is the brainchild of Lisa Darling, who moved into a house near the DOT facility at 11 Quarry St. in 2018. Her first winter, Darling said, trucks staging there for plowing operations caused her sleepless nights. Darling added that longtime residents of the neighborhood had become accustomed to the noise.

“The people who live on the block have endured it, though it has not been a pleasant experience,” said Darling. “It’s just something they’ve had to live with.”

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But Darling said the disturbance grew intolerable over the spring and summer as the site was made a staging area for construction of the roundabout at the intersection of I-587 and Albany Avenue, and with neighbors spending more time at home because of the pandemic.

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“I thought, ‘Oh my God, I’m not going to be able to live here anymore,’” said Darling.

Darling said she and some other newer residents of the neighborhood came up with the idea of petitioning DOT to look at alternatives to the piercing alarms, which can be heard two miles away.

Darling said she researched the issue and discovered that OSHA regulations offer a variety of options to ensure safety around large trucks, including human safety monitors and less-intrusive white noise alarms. Darling said back-up beepers have become the default at most job sites simply because they come pre-installed on heavy

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equipment. 45 of her neighbors signed a petition asking the DOT to address the situation. The group also reached out to Ward 1 Alderman Jeffrey Ventura Morrell and Ulster County Legislator Abe Uchitelle.

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“That facility has always been there, the neighbors understand that. They don’t want to shut it down,” said Ventura Morrell. “They just want to see if something can be done to address the noise.”

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In the petition, signed by over 40 Ward 1 residents, neighbors of the DOT facility posed the noise complaints as a health issue. “Sleep deprivation and an increase in stress hormones that erode psychological, emotional and physical wellbeing are serious health hazards,” the statement reads. “After several unaddressed complaints to the NYSDOT, some neighboring residents have reached a breaking point.”

In response to an email from the Kingston Wire, DOT officials responded that the

agency's protocols were in line with best practices for workplace safety.

“There is no higher priority for NYSDOT than the safety of our employees, which is why we have among the most stringent safety protocols in the country,” the statement reads. “Our practices in the field adhere to federal, state, and internal guidelines, and are designed to keep our workers in the field as safe as possible.”

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