



Residents located near an under-construction rail yard are unrelenting in their opposition to it.

Battle continues against rail yard

News

By Michael Di Massa News Staff

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Rural Strathcona County residents aren't letting up in their battle against a rail yard being built adjacent to their property and a nature reserve.

Last week John Kristensen sent a 21-page letter to the federal government's ministers of transport, infrastructure and communities; transport; and environment.

The letter claims federal policies were not followed when the site was picked for a rail yard and requests the ministers stop its construction. It also calls for a federal inquiry into the situation.

Kristensen and his wife, along with their neighbours, the Trelenbergs, are upset not only with the fact that a 5.2-acre rail yard — planned to hold up to 225 empty petroleum tanker cars — is being built within a stone's throw of their properties and a nature reserve, but they're also upset they weren't notified or given any information about objecting to the project.

The land is owned by Canadian National Railway, but is being leased to Imperial Oil, who has hired Cando Contracting to build the yard.

Imperial Oil would be storing cars for use with its Baseline Road refinery in Strathcona County.

Bob Feeney, Cando Contracting director of business development, previously told the News the site of the rail yard was designated as such by the federal government in the early 1900s. The ordinary railway right-of-way is 100 feet, but every seven or eight miles, the right of way expands to 350 feet to allow for rail yards.

"That's why we chose this location. It's where the property exists that's designated for railway use," Feeney said. The location is also seven miles from the Baseline refinery.

But the Trelenbergs and Kristensens aren't satisfied that all measures were taken before the property was selected. "Much to our surprise, after reviewing many federal acts and regulations, railway operating guidelines and rules, CN's policies, and many other studies, we are certain that the proponents are in violation of all kinds of laws, policies, guidelines and operating rules," Kristensen alleged in a press release.

"Our objections include: no notice given to neighbouring landowners, negative impacts on nearby protected natural areas, noise and vibration, negative visual impacts, proximity to our homes, proximity to two natural areas, air and ground pollution, health problems, impacts on local drainage, disturbance to farming activities, property devaluation, additional fire risks, motorist and railway personnel safety hazards, construction standards, and no overall approvals.

"This is not the same as the single-track CN mainline with a few trains running by a couple of times a day. This is a huge industrial rail yard that will have locomotives and 225 petroleum tanker cars moving in and out."