



May 19, 2020

Leaders of Little Village,

I am reaching out today on behalf of the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization to ask for your support in demanding Hilco Redevelopment Partners (“HRP”) be held accountable for their actions in our community.

Holy Saturday, April 11th, was not the only act of Environmental Genocide on behalf of Hilco. Their acts started in January 2018, the day they ignored our community's cries against their 1 million square foot warehouse proposal. From the dust plumes of the demolition to the lack of ANY information as to timeline, hours, labor safety plan, or even emergency contact on site, Hilco engaged in their work with no regard to the impacts to neighbors off of the site or community members working on the site. Since Hilco took control of the site we have witnessed unions picketing the company for violating worker rights, community meetings with a heavy police presence, and a corrupt process that granted Hilco a \$19.7 tax subsidy.

Our belief that Hilco did not care about our community was confirmed when community member Reynaldo Grimaldo, 54, a worker on the site, fell to his death tragically before Christmas. Information on the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration investigation into this extreme labor violation was promised, and the City of Chicago claimed that no work would continue until the community and site were “safe.” However, a week later, work started and no information was shared. Local elected officials, who publicly proclaimed their support to our community and its workers, also remained silent when work at the site was restarted.

The genocide came full circle when the implosion was approved, and little-to-no community notification was given less than 24 hours before the completely reckless implosion, which was also then tragically botched, was planned to occur on Holy Saturday during a respiratory illness pandemic where 60623 is the hardest hit with positive cases zip code in all of Illinois. On Easter Sunday, Sr. Fernando Cantu lost his life. He was a community resident for 50 years with respiratory issues of asthma and COPD who went outside to his garden on Holy Saturday afternoon after the implosion and by 3 am on the morning the next day, passed away due to respiratory complications.



I got involved in the Crawford Campaign in 1998 when my three month old had his first asthma attack. I ask you, how many more people have to die? How many more need to be impacted before our community says enough?

Hilco Redevelopment Partners has been clear that they do not care about Little Village. From lying to the press and elected officials about the community's support, to lying about their commitment to not taking any tax breaks for the development, They are selling us on low-wage warehouse jobs with poor working conditions and safety risks and low-number truck counts to cover their belief that we are a community to be exploited and targeted with more air pollution. Now, after three years of demanding information, they want to hand out masks, clean cars and streets and offer their support through a \$250,000 donation to local clinics for historical injustices that skirts their responsibility for harming the community now. Too little too late. The impact of the implosion will leave a lifetime of health effects on our community. These acts are not enough, and the accountability does not stop there.

When Midwest Generation owned the power plants, it was \$5,000 to the Alderman and free turkeys for the Little Village Chamber of Commerce to buy the community's silence. Now, it doesn't even take that much to sell out Little Village. Alderman Mike Rodriguez has been clear since the Aldermanic debates for the 22nd Ward that he was on the fence with Hilco's development. The Alderman knew about the implosion for ten days, and did not let the community know. This is unacceptable.

It's not only the Alderman, but local leaders like Eve Rodriguez Montoya of Yogolandia and Rodriguez Media Communication, Inc. who names Hilco as a client and has represented them many times, and Jaime Di Paulo, formerly of the Little Village Chamber of Commerce, who leveraged the Chambers support in Hilco's permit hearings, as well as others, who willingly sold out our neighborhood to Hilco. From golfing events, to shoe giveaways, to backing their claims to tax breaks at city council meetings, to lining up public relations stunts that failed to address the risks to Little Village whatsoever, our community's health and environment was sacrificed by a few in the name of all.



As a community, we have been clear in our demand. HRP has no respect for our community and the lives of our people and environment. We ask that you join us in holding HRP & The City of Chicago accountable for their actions: by signing on to this letter to demand that:

1. The City of Chicago must do soil sampling of homes and public areas closest to the site and host ongoing air monitoring of particulate matter.
2. The City of Chicago and participating departments must share and post all documentation in relation to the site in a timely manner.
3. The City of Chicago and involved departments must meet regularly with the Little Village Science Advisory Board to review all technical material and data that will be shared with the public.
4. The City of Chicago must host continual Community Meetings to inform and update community members on plans and actions on the site.
5. Hilco Redevelopment Partners must fully remediate the soil and waterways at the Crawford & Fisk Coal Power Plant to the highest standard possible, instead of using quick “solutions” like a concrete slab and leaving the contamination in the ground.
6. Hilco Redevelopment Partners must forgo the \$19.7 million in tax incentives.
7. Target Corporation MUST break their lease with HRP.
8. The City of Chicago should exercise its rights under Eminent Domain to secure the Crawford & Fisk from Hilco Redevelopment Partners.
9. The City of Chicago must work with Little Village residents to develop the Crawford Site in a community approved plan.

UPDATE: On Thursday, May 14, 2020, both Senator Celina Villanueva, District 11 and Alderman Michael Rodriguez, 22nd Ward publicly stated that Hilco has acted in bad faith, this project should NOT continue, and that they need to vacate Little Village as soon as possible.

- https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=609492949909896&ref=watch_permalink

We ask that you sign on below and please return at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,
Kim Wasserman
Executive Director
Little Village Environmental Justice Organization



LITTLE VILLAGE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ORGANIZATION
LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE JUSTICIA AMBIENTAL DE LA VILLITA

Community Leader Signatures:

Katya Nuques, Executive Director, Enlace Chicago

Maria Cecilia Quiñones Peña, Project Manager, Elevate Energy

Maria Velazquez, Executive Director, Telpochcalli Community Education Project

Angel Rivera, Club Director, Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago

Moises Moreno, Executive Director, Pilsen Alliance

Maria Bergh, Member-Owner, Architect, JustDesign Cooperative

Roberto Clack, Associate Director, Warehouse Workers for Justice

Elio DeArrudah, Ed D, Executive Director, Universidad Popular