

Barbara Blakeley  
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To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Barbara Blakeley and I live in Soldotna. My husband Norm and I own a condominium in the Whittier Manor in Whittier. I sit on that condominium board. Whittier Manor is a 100 unit condo that sits on the Bay above the railroad yard. The land is owned by the railroad and is leased to Whittier Manor Condominium Association. Our current 40 year lease is due to expire at the end of next year.

Our real desire is to purchase the property from the railroad. We began communicating that to them around 2006, by some accounts, even earlier. They have been pretty adamant that they do not wish to sell us the property.

About six years ago, since our lease was set to expire soon, we began asking for a long term lease if they were not interested in selling.

One complication is that the Railroad is in a Master Lease Agreement with the City of Whittier whereby any railroad leases that expire will then be managed by the City.

So the Railroad says we need to talk to the City of Whittier. The City says we need to talk to the Railroad. Round and round!! A couple years ago the City finally began some communication about a lease. The problem with giving us a long-term lease is that their Master Lease Agreement is set to expire in 15 years or so.

To further complicate things, the City and the Railroad are in big negotiations for a property swap in Whittier. We have not been privy to any of their dealings. The City assures us we will be taken care of, but any time they discuss our lease or the other railroad dealings, the City Council goes in to executive session and we once again know nothing.

We want to make sure with this Senate Bill 86 that we are assured first right of refusal, should the railroad choose to sell or trade our property.

We feel like we are between a rock and a hard place. We have had no seat at the table regarding what is going on between the City of Whittier and the Railroad.

We are looking for our legislators to look out for us. Please consider our circumstances when looking at this bill.

You might also want to look at how the railroad deals with their lessees.

Thank you for your consideration.

Barb Blakeley  
Soldotna, AK