

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF BIG BOX STORES

“The Last Green Valley” and “The Quiet Corner” are more than mere captions to capture the fancy of tourists. These labels encompass an enduring feeling, charm and spirit to which many find comfort and peace in this all too noisy, busy and complicated world. It is this special brand of beauty to which many have been drawn, have settled, and natives have stayed. Northeastern Connecticut is unlike any other quarter of our state.

Big box stores, as in this case the proposed Super Walmart in east Brooklyn, impact the quality of the environment on several fronts. The numbers of vehicles, both shoppers and the trailer trucks supplying commodities, will create not only a greater volume of air pollutants but a greater intensity of noise, too. Couple this with compounded idling traffic due to as many as eleven traffic lights, even if they are timed, along a relatively short span of route 6 and the air pollution quotient increases substantially.

Enormous paved surfaces of parking lots and access roads plus residue from the clot of vehicles that use them create a toxic build up. The rains change these relatively static pollutants into toxic soup. This run-off affects ground water and possibly drinking water in nearby wells. If this nasty stew seeps into aquifers the water quality from these sources can be tainted. Toxic soup will flow into east Brooklyn sewers which will directly pour into the Town of Killingly and may affect the Quinebaug River. Constructed wildlife buffers and retention ponds aside, these modest barriers afford only some remediation, a proverbial sandbag thrown at flood every time we experience soaking rains.

The mix of wildlife alters. Unable to adapt to concrete and pavement displaced natives, composed of bird, insect, amphibian, mammalian and plant populations, will be replaced with English house sparrows, pigeons, sea gulls and flies – all following the garbage food train made by man.

This proposed 24-hour Super Walmart will create much light pollution, not only from the lighting in and around the huge parking lot but also the adjacent lighting along its access roads. The night skies will have fewer visible stars, dulling them. Our skies will be less magical, less beautiful.

When polled, Brooklyn residents overwhelmingly and repeatedly indicate the desire to retain rural and historic character. Big box stores only water down the individual qualities fomenting ugly sprawl. The end result will make Brooklyn look increasingly like “Everywhere Else U.S.A.”, diminishing our distinct local charm.

Finally I implore all the residents of Brooklyn and nearby towns to consider this: quality of life issues are often intangible – not measured by commodities or the alleged tricky and questionable math with which the Walmart Corporation attempts to cast itself in a positive light. Pollution, noise, less charm, more harshness, decreased wildlife and fewer trees make the Last Green Valley less green, the Quiet Corner less quiet.

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