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B. R. PFEIFFER
147 BRATTLE STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

October 23, 1995

Cambridge City Council
City Hall
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Dear Councillors:

I am very pleased that you are seeking information about the increased truck traffic that plagues nearly all sections of the city. As a resident of Cambridge for twenty-one years, I have seen a steady increase in the volume of truck traffic, the size of trucks and the hours during which they drive through residential areas. I know from the experience of friends in other parts of the city and through my own observations that the truck problems experienced on my street are duplicated on River Street, Western Avenue, Kirkland Street and in many other locations throughout the city.

Over the past fifteen years, truck de-regulation has led to steadily increasing truck sizes and cargo weights. Although designed for interstate highways, these huge trucks are now used routinely for local deliveries at stores in Harvard and Central Squares where, after rumbling through residential neighborhoods, they unnecessarily clog the business traffic merely to deliver a few boxes. Others such as the regular fleets of eighteen-wheelers from United Parcel Service in Watertown use the Brattle/Kirkland Street route as a late-night shortcut to Charlestown and Everett. Since this company does not haul toxic or hazardous materials, I assume that this route is used to avoid tolls on the Turnpike. Star Market, Puglia Trucking and numerous other companies use Cambridge streets in a similar way.

Aside from depriving Cambridge residents of the peace and quiet of their own homes, this heavy truck traffic is accelerating the damage both to streets that were not designed for such heavy loads and to the buildings which line these streets. Since most of Cambridge's building stock is older un-reinforced masonry or wood-frame buildings set on un-reinforced masonry foundations, the steady shaking of buildings due to truck traffic acts as an earthquake in slow motion, cracking masonry walls, weakening foundations and loosening building fastenings with its constant repetition. Throughout the city residents report windows rattling, plaster cracking, floors shaking, objects falling off shelves and other symptoms of this on-going damage.

In past discussions of this subject with city officials, I have heard a great deal about the need for traffic studies that will take five years and are not yet funded. I have heard very little about simple actions that may be undertaken now to alleviate an

indisputable problem. While traffic studies may prove useful for long-term planning, they are no excuse for inaction now. The city must take tangible steps to begin to bring this problem under control in the present if it is to protect the well-being and safety of its residents. I urge you to consider the following measures:

- Implement a night-time truck ban throughout Cambridge from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. and enforce it.
- Increase enforcement of speeding violations for all vehicles on city streets; although heavy trucks are among the most frequent speeders on my street, I have never seen one ticketed for this violation.
- Implement trial truck bans on selected streets and monitor the flow of trucks on adjoining streets to determine the effects of new truck bans.
- Begin an immediate effort to take hazardous and/or explosive materials off Cambridge streets. It is inconceivable that trucks that are considered too dangerous to pass beneath the Prudential Center on the Massachusetts Turnpike should be permitted to pass at any time of day through River Street, Western Avenue or any other residential street of Cambridge.

With construction on Boston's Central Artery underway, Cambridge's traffic problems have already begun to grow worse. I urge you to act now to protect Cambridge and its residential neighborhoods from further damage.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Brian Pfeiffer". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "B" and a cursive "Pfeiffer".

Brian Pfeiffer

Non-Consent Communication #12

Communication was received from
B.R. Pfeiffer, 147 Brattle Street
regarding the problem of unrestricted
heavy truck traffic on Brattle,
River, Kirkland Streets and Western
Avenue.

S-330

In City Council October 23, 1995

*Referred to truck hearing
at 7:00 p.m.*