

2020

Melissa Hale-Spencer

7:17 PM (4 minutes ago)

to me

Dear Don Reeb,

Thanks for writing.

I'll attach the edited version of your letter below so you can make whatever changes you want.

We'll have it in print in our next edition, on April 23, and post it on our website as well.

Sincerely,

Melissa

Melissa Hale-Spencer, editor
altamontenterprise.comletter

On Apr 18, 2020, at 4:05 PM, Donald Reeb <donreeb@gmail.com> wrote:

Concerning Bill Coons recent letter about Costco.

Undoubtedly Costco will generate sales tax revenue. But the sales tax it collects from its gasoline pumps will diminish the sales tax collections from the Mobil Station around the corner on Western (and other stations). And the sales tax Costco will collect from its hardware and paint sales will diminish the sales tax collected by Robinson Hardware (and other hardware stores) which is also in Guilderland on Western Avenue.

The people who shop at Costco will be the people who are presently shopping elsewhere in Guilderland and in the county. Since sales tax receipts are shared by law among the cities and towns in the county regardless of where the sales in the county occur, there is no net gain in sales tax receipts for the Town or for the County or any of the other local governments when the sales in one store in the county reduce the sales in another store in the county.

But what if the Costco customers come from Schenectady county? Yes there will be a net gain in Albany county sales tax receipts--but is it such a great thing to reduce the sales tax receipts of a neighboring county---does not Schenectady need tax receipts just as much as Guilderland does?

But what about shoppers from out of state? Well, are they also not in need of tax revenue?

Robbing Peter to enrich Paul---just how do you feel about Peter and Paul?

Nearly all employment at Costco will be matched by reduced employment at Walmart, Robinson Hardware and other stores as those stores see their sales being reduced.

What is the gain from having a Costco--well Costco has the reputation for paying its employees better and treating them better and having lower prices than its competitors. Those are surely gains.

That is great. But does that make up for the increase in traffic on the ramp coming from the Northway into the Pyramid/Crossgates site? The traffic there is backed up on many Saturdays and Sundays and it is overloaded on big shopping days--and people have been killed there. And what about the loss of habitat for the the PineBush nature preserve? And what about the increase in traffic through the nearby Historic Neighborhood for those traveling between Washington Avenue Extension and Costco?

Air pollution kills. Traffic accidents kill. You know that. And history counts for something, doesn't it?

Are you willing to trade a neighbor's death for lower prices, improved employee wages and the experience of shopping at Costco?

Well--it is your town and your neighbors and your neighborhood. And it is your choice to make. I am opposed and I hope you are also

One final note--I think what happened is that Pyramid bought a bunch of houses near Crossgates and destroyed them and then discovered that retail shopping has gone down the tube. Pyramid admitted such at Town meetings and said the future for Crossgates is as an entertainment venue. Costco today—but gone tomorrow—I don't know? Maybe building apartments at Crossgates is a better idea.

Don Reeb, Professor Emeritus, Department of Economics, the State University of New York At Albany
5 Norwood St.
Albany NY 12203
518-489-3909