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May 13, 2025

Detroit Historic District Commission  
Coleman A. Young Municipal Center  
2 Woodward Ave, Suite 808  
Detroit, MI 48226

Dear Members of the Detroit Historic District Commission,

I urge you to reject Detroit Thermal's request for permission to install infrastructure for high-pressure steam vents on property owned by the Joliet Cooperative in Lafayette Park.

To date, Detroit Thermal, a private, for-profit utility company, made no effort to engage with residents before breaking ground on construction for the installation of a high-pressure steam vents in the Coop's playground. They have not held public meetings, sought community input, or provided any meaningful assurances about the safety of their proposed project.

This lack of transparency regarding the project is especially troubling given Detroit Thermal's history of safety violations. Between 2012 and 2019, the company has faced multiple lawsuits in Michigan and Ohio for negligence that resulted in many people suffering serious burn injuries. How can residents trust a company with such a record when it refuses even to address basic safety concerns?

Detroit Thermal has already excavated a large section of the cooperative's playground and posted warning signs, creating both disruption and fear among residents. If the project truly poses no safety risks, why has the company avoided direct dialogue and accountability?

Of course, the potential destruction of a site of international architectural and cultural significance is also a concern. As you well know, the townhouses and surrounding landscape of Lafayette Park were designed by the architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, in collaboration with renowned landscape architect Alfred Caldwell. This area is not only an irreplaceable piece of Detroit's heritage, but it is one of the most important examples of modernist urban planning in the world. The proposed infrastructure would irreversibly damage the landscape by removing old-growth trees and disrupting the open space that is central to the district's original vision and an integral part of the site's historic architectural distinction.

Residents of Lafayette Park invest considerable resources in maintaining and protecting this internationally recognized landmark. While we sympathize with the residents of 1300 Lafayette

in their struggle to secure reliable utility services, that issue cannot be resolved at the expense of a neighboring community or by permanently damaging an historic site, especially through a project that has not undergone meaningful scrutiny or public dialogue.

My family has been part of the Joliet Cooperative since 1961. We call on you to uphold your mandate to preserve Detroit's historic legacy by rejecting Detroit Thermal's application. The safety, integrity, and architectural significance of Lafayette Park must be protected for future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Beverly Brown Ruggia". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Beverly" being the most prominent.

Beverly Brown Ruggia  
Member of the Joliet Cooperative since 1961