

NEWS

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Shipping by rail, not the Expressway

Every day on the Long Island Expressway, you see rumbling 18-wheel evidence for the need to get trucks off our roads. The trucks bang up pavement, spew fumes and contribute to traffic congestion. But we've been slow to use rail instead. So the opening of a new rail freight terminal in Yaphank is a small but hopeful step on the way to road sanity.


The \$40-million project started with controversy: a rail company clearing 18 acres of trees without a permit from the Town of Brookhaven or

Suffolk County. The facility's backers said no permit was needed, because federal law exempts interstate railroads and related facilities from local regulation.

Ultimately, the Brookhaven Rail Terminal cleared all the legal hurdles, and now it will be receiving hundreds of thousands of tons of construction material a year. With expansion — from its current 28 acres to an additional 80 — that annual haul could reach a million tons and include other kinds of shipments.

Those are tons that would

have been riding on the LIE. Instead, they'll get to Yaphank by rail, and then be loaded onto smaller trucks for shorter trips.

In the search for a major intermodal facility to get trucks off the road, the state had identified Brentwood as the site. But that option has long been off the table. So a string of smaller rail-to-truck facilities seems like a good alternative. If nothing else, the Yaphank terminal should give us an idea of how well intermodal transfer facilities can really work here. 

October 4, 2011
Editorial