

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Citizens Group Says Readington's Actions Trash Taxpayer Rights as Well as Property Rights

### *Taxpayers' Alliance Responds to Township's Eminent Domain Action Against Solberg-Hunterdon Airport*

**Readington, N.J.** --The Taxpayers' Alliance of Readington (T.A.R.), a government watchdog group comprised of local residents and businesses dedicated to working for fiscal responsibility in Readington Township, New Jersey, today expressed concerns about the Township's plans to use eminent domain to acquire development rights to Solberg-Hunterdon Airport. The Township is pursuing eminent domain through a legal action filed September 15 in state Superior Court.

"Readington Township's eminent domain action is an imminent disaster for anyone hoping to stop the excessive drain of taxpayer dollars being spent on this acquisition," said concerned taxpayer Kevin Devine. "As the founder of T.A.R., I'm committed to representing the best interests of Readington taxpayers. By taking this extreme measure, the Township Committee has unilaterally committed Readington residents to upwards of millions of dollars in acquisition and legal fees. This is not a good step for anyone, particularly Readington residents, who will bear the financial burden of the Township's irresponsible actions."

T.A.R first took up the issue in May to educate voters about the related bond referendum when Devine was called to action by outraged citizens who would be paying off this debt for decades to come.

Earlier this month, T.A.R. filed a complaint against the Township claiming voters were misled by ballot language into believing that the Township would not spend more than \$22,000,000 to acquire development rights at the airport, when in actuality the cost could potentially skyrocket to over \$40 million, exceeding what voters authorized the Township to spend.

The lawsuit also contends that the Township Committee did not act to acquire the airport for a "legitimate public purpose, but have sought to prevent any further development or modernization of the property."

"This abrupt abandonment of negotiation for litigation will mean a lengthy and costly eminent domain battle that will not end anytime soon and has no guarantee of a satisfactory outcome," said Devine. "As the majority of eminent domain abuses occur at the local level, taxpayers have a significant interest not only in maintaining individual property rights, but in protecting themselves against the often misguided and expensive plans of government officials. Once a government entity -- whether it is a city, county, or

state -- gets away with taking advantage of taxpayers, it is likely to continue to do so unless a massive effort is undertaken to stop the pattern of abuse.”

### **ABOUT T.A.R.**

The Taxpayers’ Alliance of Readington (T.A.R.) is a group of resident and businesses dedicated to working for effective and efficient fiscal responsibility in Readington Township, New Jersey. If you are interested in joining T.A.R., or are interested in helping educate area residents about the issue, please e-mail us at [StopWastingMyMoney@readingontax.org](mailto:StopWastingMyMoney@readingontax.org) or visit us online at [www.readingtontax.org](http://www.readingtontax.org)

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