

PROCEEDINGS OF THE PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON 09.09.2026 AT 10.00 A.M. FOR THE PROPOSED MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT OF KARAIKAL PORT FOR EXPANSION OF CARGO HANDLING CAPACITY FROM 21.5 MMTPA TO 100.3 MMTPA BY M/S. KARAIKAL PORT PRIVATE LIMITED (KPPL), LOCATED AT KEEZHAVANJORE VILLAGE, THIRUMALAIRAYANPATTINAM COMMUNE PANCHAYAT, KARAIKAL.

The Public Hearing for the proposed Master Plan Development of Karaikal Port for expansion of cargo handling capacity from 21.5 MMTPA to 100.3 MMTPA by M/s. Karaikal Port Private Limited (KPPL), Karaikal, was conducted on 09.09.2026 from 10.00 A.M. onwards at the Community Hall, Polagam Village, T.R. Pattinam Commune Panchayat, Karaikal District, in accordance with the provisions of Appendix-IV of the EIA Notification, 2006 and amendments thereto.

2. Ms. Ishita Rathi, I.A.S, the District Collector-cum-District Magistrate, Karaikal, chaired the Public Hearing, which was organised and conducted by the Puducherry Pollution Control Committee (PPCC). Officials of the District Administration and concerned Government Departments, representatives of fishing communities and fishermen's organisations, farmers and agricultural interests, village-level community groups, non-governmental organisations, political and social organisations, local residents and other stakeholders, representatives of M/s. Karaikal Port Private Limited (KPPL) and M/s. Falcon Resilient Infra Consultants, a NABET accredited EIA Consultant attended the Public Hearing.
3. At the commencement of the Public Hearing, Dr. N. Ramesh, Member Secretary, Puducherry Pollution Control Committee, welcomed the Chairperson, Government officials, representatives of all participating organisations and stakeholder groups, members of the public, the Project Proponent and its EIA Consultant and other participants. He stated that the Public Hearing was being conducted to provide an opportunity to the public and other stakeholders to place their views, concerns, objections and suggestions regarding the proposed project on record. He assured the participants that the views expressed during the Public Hearing would be duly recorded and forwarded through the prescribed procedure.
4. During the Opening Remarks, the District Collector, Karaikal welcomed the participants and stated that the Public Hearing was a statutory component of the environmental clearance process for the proposed Master Plan Development and expansion of Karaikal Port. The project is a Category 'A' project under Schedule 7(e) of the EIA Notification, 2006, and that the proposal is subject to appraisal by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India.
5. The District Collector informed the participants that the MoEFCC had issued the Terms of Reference dated 16.12.2024 for the proposed development with a cargo handling capacity

of 100.3 MMTPA and that the Project Proponent had submitted the draft comprehensive EIA/EMP Report for public consultation process.

6. The statutory public notice for the Public Hearing had been issued in accordance with the prescribed procedure and within the stipulated notice period. The notice was published on 08.08.2026 in *Dinamalar*, a Regional Tamil Daily, and *The New Indian Express*, a National Daily in English. In addition to the statutory newspaper publication, wide publicity was given through television, All India Radio, official Government websites, social media platforms and public announcements through auto-mounted public address systems in the project-affected villages and surrounding areas. Further copies of the Draft EIA Report and Summary of EIA Report in English and Tamil were made available for public perusal during office hours at designated Government offices, including the Office of the District Collector, Karaikal, and the Regional Office of DSTE/PPCC, Karaikal, as well as other identified offices, and were also hosted on the PPCC website. These arrangements were made to facilitate access to the project information and enable the public and other stakeholders to make informed submissions before or during the Public Hearing.
7. The District Collector emphasized that every participant would be given a fair opportunity to express support, disagreement, objections, concerns and suggestions relating to the project. She requested the participants to maintain peace and order and to allow others to exercise their right to be heard. She also stated that the proceedings, views expressed, responses and commitments, if any, would be compiled and forwarded through the prescribed procedure to the MoEFCC. She stated that the issues raised during the Public Hearing would be appropriately addressed by the Project Proponent in the Final EIA Report to be submitted to the Ministry for further environmental appraisal.
8. Thereafter, representatives of M/s. Karaikal Port Private Limited (KPPL) made a detailed presentation in Tamil on the proposed Master Plan Development of Karaikal Port. The presentation covered the enhancement of cargo handling capacity from 21.5 MMTPA to 100.3 MMTPA, augmentation of the existing facilities and development of nine additional berths, breakwaters, cargo handling and storage facilities and associated infrastructure. The proposed capital dredging and reclamation works, 50 MLD desalination plant, water and wastewater management facilities, Single Point Mooring and sub-sea pipeline, and diversion/re-alignment of the Puravadaianar River/Creek were also explained. The Project Proponent further presented the findings of the terrestrial and marine baseline environmental studies, CRZ assessment, hydrodynamic and coastal modelling studies, and the proposed measures for air and water pollution control, dust suppression, marine and coastal protection, environmental monitoring and implementation of the Environmental Management Plan. The presentation also covered risk assessment, disaster and emergency preparedness, oil-spill response measures, greenbelt development, social development/CSR initiatives and the anticipated socio-economic benefits of the project.

9. After the presentation, the participants were called one by one and were given an opportunity to present their views. The issues raised during the Public Hearing are recorded below.

1. Thiru. Abdul Rahim, Karaikal

Shri Abdul Rahim, Karaikal, opposed the proposed expansion, stating that the existing port operations, particularly coal handling and transportation, had adversely affected the surrounding population and environment. He referred to an order of the National Green Tribunal which, according to him, he had personally obtained about 13 years ago, requiring coal to be handled and transported in covered condition, and stated that the requirements were not being adequately followed. He expressed concern that expansion of the port would further aggravate pollution and health impacts in Karaikal and neighbouring areas, including Nagore and T.R. Pattinam and urged the authorities not to permit the proposed expansion.

2. Thiru. G. Nizamudeen, Ex. MLA, Nagapattinam

Shri G. Nizamudeen, Ex. MLA, Nagapattinam, opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port and questioned the absence of the owner Port at the Public Hearing, stating that the presence of the Owner of the port would enable him to directly hear and understand the concerns of the affected public. He reiterated his opposition to the proposed expansion and requested that the views, objections and concerns of the affected people be given due weight and consideration before any decision is taken on the proposal.

3. Dr. S. Anandkumar, President, India Against Corruption

Dr. S. Anandkumar, President, India Against Corruption questioned the credibility of the Draft EIA/EMP Report, stating that the affected population had not been adequately consulted and that the existing environmental and other impacts of the port on the surrounding locality had not been properly assessed. He stated that the preparation of the EIA Report was arbitrary and discriminatory and contended that it violated Articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution of India, stating that the concerns of the affected persons had been ignored. He further referred to an FIR, stated by him to have been registered under the NDPS Act in connection with the stated recovery of methamphetamine from the sea and the arrest of two fishermen, and requested that the circumstances relating to the source and movement of the contraband be investigated, including the possibility of any connection with the port. He opposed the proposed expansion and requested that the concerns of the affected population be duly examined before proceeding further.

4. Thiru. A. Abdul Rahman, Keezhavanjore Village

Shri A. Abdul Rahman, Keezhavanjore Village, stated that the establishment and operation of the port had adversely affected the village, stating an increase in health problems and deterioration of agricultural lands and livelihoods. He attributed respiratory and other health problems among the local population to coal dust from the port operations and expressed concern over stated premature deaths in the locality. He further stated that the actual coal handling was higher than the quantity stated by the Project Proponent. He therefore opposed

the proposed expansion and requested that coal handling at the port be restricted and that appropriate action be taken to address the stated impacts on the residents of Keezhavanjore.

5. Thiru. Sakthivel, District Secretary, Tamil Nadu Farmers' Protection Association, Nagapattinam District

Thiru. Sakthivel, District Secretary, Tamil Nadu Farmers Protection Association, Nagapattinam District, stated that while the port was important for economic development, the potential impacts of the proposed expansion on the public and environment should be comprehensively assessed. He stated that coal handling at the existing port had adversely affected vegetation, particularly palmyra and coconut trees, in the surrounding area. He objected to the proposed diversion/re-alignment of the Puravadaianar River, expressing concern that it could adversely affect drainage and increase the risk of flooding in Panangudi, Narimanam, Gopurajapuram, Nagore and other neighbouring areas, and requested that the proposed diversion be dropped. He further requested that the environmental impacts on the Nagapattinam district side, including the impacts of dredging and deepening of the sea, be comprehensively assessed and disclosed in writing, and sought that the concerns of the people of Nagapattinam district be duly considered.

6. Shri Mohamed Bilal, Revolutionary Socialist Party

Thiru. Mohamed Bilal, Revolutionary Socialist Party, questioned whether adequate information regarding the proposed project and its environmental implications had been made available to the public in Tamil. He referred to the IIT and NCCR studies relating to coastal erosion in the Karaikal–Nagapattinam region and requested that such technical reports and relevant Government reports be made available in Tamil for public understanding. He expressed concern regarding the proposed reclamation, dredging and deepening of the port area and apprehended adverse impacts on coastal processes, fisheries and the livelihood of fishing communities, including displacement of fishing activities to deeper waters. He contended that adequate information had not been provided to the affected public and requested that the relevant government reports and technical reports be disclosed in Tamil, adequate public awareness be created and a fresh Public Hearing be conducted.

7. Thiru. Anandharaj, Karaikalmedu

Thiru. Anandharaj, representing the fishing community of Karaikalmedu, stated that the port had adversely affected the livelihood of the fishing community and expressed opposition to the proposed expansion. He expressed concern that increased handling and transportation of coal would result in the spread of coal dust in the surrounding areas and apprehended adverse health impacts on the local population. He further expressed concern over the potential impacts of the expansion on the fishing livelihood and stated that the proposed expansion was not acceptable to the fishing community

8. Thiru. S. Venkatesaperumal, President, Meenavar Viduthalai Vengai, Puducherry

Thiru. S. Venkatesaperumal, President, Meenavar Viduthalai Vengai, Puducherry, expressed opposition to the proposed expansion, stating that coastal development activities should be

regulated in accordance with the CRZ regulations and other applicable environmental laws. He stated that fishermen faced difficulties in obtaining permissions for activities such as boat-building facilities, ice plants, salt pans and construction of houses, while large-scale coastal projects were being permitted. He expressed concern over widespread coastal erosion and the consequent impacts on fishing communities and fishery resources across the country. He stated that the proposed expansion could adversely affect the fishing community and fishery resources and urged that the concerns of fishermen be duly considered.

9. Thiru. Mariyappan, T.R. Pattinam

Thiru. Mariyappan, T.R. Pattinam, stated that he was born and brought up in T.R. Pattinam and had served in the Border Security Force for over 34 years. Referring to his familiarity with the locality and its earlier coastal environment, he expressed concern that the development of the port had adversely affected traditional fishing activities and the coastal environment. He opposed the proposed expansion, stating that further expansion of the port could adversely affect the fishing community and fishery resources. He further stated that dust pollution from the port operations was being experienced in the residential areas, including at his residence in T.R. Pattinam, and invited the concerned authorities to visit his residence and observe the extent of pollution from the rooftop, particularly in the area extending from Vanjoor towards T.R. Pattinam. He also stated that local youth, have not been provided adequate employment opportunities in the port. He expressed concern over the prevailing situation and requested that effective measures be taken to address the pollution and that adequate employment opportunities be provided to local youth.

10. Thiru. R. Kalmalakannan, Former Minister

Thiru. R. Kalmalakannan, Former Minister and representative of the Indian National Congress Party, stated that the large gathering of people at the Public Hearing and the extent of opposition expressed by them to the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port should be duly taken into consideration. He stated that even at the existing cargo handling capacity of 21.5 MMTPA, the livelihood of the people of Karaikal was being adversely affected and that health-related concerns were being experienced by the local population. He questioned the need for further expansion when, according to him, the existing operations were affecting the livelihood and health of the people. He requested that the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port should not be permitted. He further requested that, under the existing port operations, employment opportunities should be provided to persons from Puducherry Union Territory, particularly the people of Karaikal. He stated that the proposed expansion would significantly affect the livelihood of the people of Karaikal, particularly the fishing community, and conveyed the opposition of the Indian National Congress Party to the proposed expansion.

11. Thiru. P. T. Murali, Niravi

Thiru. P. T. Murali, Niravi, opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port and stated that the concerns expressed by the large number of people opposing the project should be duly considered by the Administration. He questioned the need for expansion when, according to him, the existing port operations were already causing difficulties to the local population. He

particularly raised concerns regarding coal transportation and frequent movement of trains, stating that road blockages were caused several times a day, resulting in difficulties to the public, including access to hospitals during emergencies. He apprehended that expansion to 100.3 MMTPA would further aggravate these impacts.

He further stated that the port operations were adversely affecting farmers and fishing communities, while adequate employment opportunities were not being provided to educated local youth. He also expressed concern regarding health impacts, referring to respiratory ailments and skin allergies reportedly experienced by local residents. He questioned the benefits of the existing port to the local population and requested that adequate employment opportunities be provided to local residents and, on behalf of the Indian National Congress, reiterated his opposition to the proposed expansion and demanded that the port expansion be stopped.

12. Thirumathi. Kaliyammal, Thirumalarayanpattinam

Thirumathi. Kaliyammal, Thirumalarayanpattinam, opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port. She questioned the adequacy of the Public Hearing arrangements, including the venue, publicity, public announcements and availability of information in Tamil, and requested that the relevant provisions of the EIA Notification be made available to the public.

She stated that the Project Proponent had not adequately provided employment to local people and requested disclosure of the details of employment provided to persons from the surrounding villages. She raised concerns regarding the proposed 16 m dredging, reclamation and impacts on coastal ecology, fisheries and fishing activities, particularly in ecologically sensitive and intertidal areas. She also expressed concern over coal-related pollution, decline in fishery resources and impacts on agriculture and groundwater. She further stated that the proposed expansion could adversely affect the traditional livelihood of the coastal community and requested that the expansion proposal be rejected and the interests of the local people and coastal environment be protected.

13. Thiru. Venkatesh Anandakrishna, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam

Thiru. Venkatesh Anandakrishna, representing the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam, opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port. He stated that the concerns of the public had not been adequately considered and described the Public Hearing arrangements as inadequate, particularly referring to the non-availability of drinking water for the participants.

He expressed concern over the increased movement of goods trains associated with the port and apprehended that the proposed expansion would substantially increase rail traffic and consequently affect the people of Karaikal. He further stated that the existing port operations had adversely affected the overall development and environment of Karaikal and expressed concern regarding impacts on places of cultural and religious importance in and around Nagore and T.R. Pattinam. He stated that the District Administration and the Government were not adequately addressing these concerns. On behalf of the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam, he opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port.

14. Thiru. Viduthalai Kanal, Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi

Thiru. Viduthalai Kanal, representing the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi, opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port and questioned whether the concerns of the local population were being adequately considered in the decision-making process. He expressed concern that Karaikal was being disproportionately subjected to development-related impacts and stated that the existing port had already caused difficulties to the local population.

He particularly raised concerns regarding employment opportunities for local youth, stating that despite the stated objective of providing employment to local people, educated youth from Karaikal were not being provided suitable higher-level employment and were largely engaged in low-skilled and low-paid activities. He also expressed concern regarding increased rail traffic associated with the proposed expansion, apprehending that the movement of a large number of trains would further divide and disrupt connectivity within Karaikal and cause difficulties to school students, patients and the general public.

He emphasised that the views of the affected people, who would continue to live with the consequences of the project, should be given due weight. He urged the Administration to hear and consider the concerns of the local population and, on behalf of the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi, opposed the proposed port expansion and requested that the proposal not be permitted.

15. Thiru. Raghuvaran, District Committee Member, Communist Party of India

Thiru. Raghuvaran, District Committee Member, Communist Party of India, opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port. He raised serious concerns regarding the stated movement of narcotics through the port and its purported association with incidents such as accidents and other law-and-order issues. He requested that the authorities first undertake a thorough investigation of the port operations and examine the movement of goods through the port and sought that the details of the activities and materials handled through the port be disclosed to the public.

He further stated that the existing ownership and management of the port had contributed to the deterioration of Karaikal. He expressed concern that the fishing community was being adversely affected and stated that their livelihood concerns had not been adequately addressed. He therefore requested that the proposed expansion be reconsidered and opposed. He also warned that, if the expansion was proceeded with, it could lead to large-scale public protests in Karaikal.

16. Thiru. Jayabal, Thirumalarayanpattinam

Thiru. Jayabal, Thirumalarayanpattinam, opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port. He stated that coal dust from the existing port operations was settling on vegetation and agricultural areas in Keezhavanjore, Melavanjore, North Vanjoor and T.R. Pattinam, affecting the use of locally grown produce and grazing resources, and stated that this had also contributed to a decline in milk production. He further stated that fish availability in the local fishing grounds had declined since the commencement of port operations, compelling fishermen to travel to distant waters in search of fish.

Referring to his agricultural land of about 10 acres near the port, he stated that the deepening of the port had, according to him, altered the water levels and condition of the land, making cultivation difficult. He apprehended that the proposed further deepening and handling of larger vessels could aggravate seawater ingress and its impact on agricultural lands. He therefore requested that the likely impacts of the proposed expansion on agriculture, fisheries, salinity and the livelihood of the local population be carefully examined and that permission for the proposed expansion not be granted.

17. Thiru. Vasu, Keezhavanjore

Thiru. Vasu, Keezhavanjore, stated that his residence is located approximately 50 m from the main gate of the port and expressed concern over continuous exposure to coal dust from the existing port operations. He stated that about 200 families residing in the vicinity of the port were directly affected and questioned whether their views had been adequately sought before considering further expansion. He further stated that employment opportunities for local youths were inadequate. He also raised concerns regarding women workers who, according to him, had been engaged in coal-related cleaning work for several years without adequate improvement in wages. He stated that the existing level of coal handling was already causing difficulties to the local residents and apprehended that increasing the capacity would further aggravate the impacts on their health and living environment.

He requested that, before proceeding with further development of the port, the concerns and views of the approximately 200 families residing in its immediate vicinity be specifically considered and their views be obtained, including with regard to their relocation. He opposed any further increase in coal-handling activities and the proposed expansion, stating that the existing conditions were already adversely affecting the affected families.

18. Representative of Rural People's Protection Movement

The representative of the Rural People's Protection Movement raised concerns regarding the acquisition of agricultural land for port development and the consequent impacts on farmers, agricultural livelihoods and agricultural labourers. He questioned the proposed increase in port capacity from 21.5 MMTPA to 100.3 MMTPA and expressed concern over the adequacy of the existing infrastructure to accommodate the proposed scale of expansion.

He further raised concerns regarding the impacts on fishing communities and marine livelihoods, particularly due to increased dredging and port-related activities. He questioned the risks associated with the proposed handling of hazardous and liquid cargo and sought clarification regarding the likely consequences in the event of an accident involving such cargo, as well as the adequacy of safety, emergency preparedness and response measures.

He also expressed concern regarding the potential impacts of the proposed expansion on the wider population of Karaikal and Nagapattinam Districts. He opposed the proposed expansion and requested that the livelihood, environmental and safety concerns of the affected population be duly addressed before proceeding with the project.

19. Representative, Karaikal District Fisherwomen Federation

The representative of the Karaikal District Fisherwomen Federation expressed opposition to the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port and stated that the existing port operations had already adversely affected the traditional fishing livelihood and coastal settlements. She stated that small-scale fishing activities had been significantly affected, as fishermen were reportedly restricted from accessing certain areas near the port, compelling them to shift towards deep-sea fishing. She explained that small-scale fishing supports several families and that deep-sea fishing also provides livelihood to a larger number of families, and expressed concern that such livelihood opportunities would be adversely affected by further expansion.

She emphasised that the sea is the primary source of livelihood for the fishing community and requested that fishing villages and their traditional livelihood should not be adversely affected or displaced for port development. Referring to the community's efforts to protect marine life, including rescuing and releasing a stranded whale back into the sea in coordination with the Forest Department, she highlighted the community's dependence on and commitment to the marine ecosystem. She therefore urged that the marine environment, fishery resources and traditional livelihood of fishing communities be adequately protected and stated that the proposed expansion should not be permitted at the cost of their livelihood.

20. Thirumathi. M. Raniyammal, Pattinacherry Village

Thirumathi. M. Raniyammal, Pattinacherry Village, representing the fishing community, opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port, stating that the existing port development had adversely affected the coastal environment and the traditional livelihood of fishing communities. She emphasised that the fishing community has historically depended on the sea and coastal areas for its livelihood and expressed concern that further port development and associated activities would restrict access to their traditional fishing areas and adversely affect their means of livelihood.

She further expressed concern over the expansion of port-related activities towards the coastal villages, including Vanjoor, T.R. Pattinam and Pattinacherry, and apprehended further loss of coastal space and fishing livelihood. She stated that the fishing community was not seeking employment in the port at the cost of its traditional livelihood and requested that the sea, coastal areas and fishing livelihood be protected for present and future generations. She opposed the proposed expansion and requested that the project not be permitted.

21. Thirumathi. P. Padmavathi, Keezhaiyur, Thiruppattinam

Thirumathi. P. Padmavathi, Keezhaiyur, Thiruppattinam, stated that more than 200 families comprising over 1,000 persons were residing in the village and expressed concern over the adverse impacts of the existing port-related activities on the local population. She stated occurrence of skin ailment, including psoriasis, respiratory problems and breathing difficulties, and stated that such health concerns had reportedly increased during the past year. She further stated that the livelihood of the local population, which depends primarily on agriculture and employment under 100 days rural employment schemes, was being adversely affected. She expressed concern that the proposed port expansion could further affect their livelihood and

stated that the local community preferred to continue with agriculture and coastal-based livelihood activities rather than depend on benefits or employment from the port. She opposed the proposed expansion and requested the District Administration to consider the concerns of the affected residents, protect their health and traditional livelihoods, and not permit further expansion of the port.

22. Thiru. Gajendran, Kilinjalmedu, Karaikal

Thiru. Gajendran, Kilinjalmedu, Karaikal, stated that he was placing his views on behalf of the 11 fishing villages and referred to the concerns already expressed by representatives of the fishing community and women's organisation. He stated that the local fishing community was opposed to the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port. He expressed apprehension regarding the adverse impacts of the proposed port development on the people and livelihood of Karaikal and characterized the proposed expansion as being comparable to a tsunami in terms of its perceived impact on the local community. He therefore requested that the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port shall not be permitted.

23. Representative, SC/ST People's Welfare Federation

The representative of the SC/ST People's Welfare Federation raised concerns regarding the potential medical and agricultural impacts of the existing and proposed port activities on the people of Karaikal District. Referring to the coastal region between Karaikal and Tharangambadi, he stated that, according to expert opinions referred to by him, the geological conditions of the area were relatively vulnerable and expressed apprehension that deepening/dredging for accommodating large vessels could affect the stability of the underlying soil and potentially result in adverse impacts. He further expressed concern regarding the possible impacts of large-scale port and cargo operations on the agricultural areas and the wider environment of the Delta region. He opposed the proposed expansion as well as the continuation of the existing port.

24. Thiru. Kambur Selvaraj

Thiru. Kambur Selvaraj, stating that he was placing his views from Tamil Nadu, opposed the proposed expansion, expressing concern over its potential environmental and livelihood impacts on the adjoining Nagapattinam District. He stated that adequate consultation with the concerned authorities and Pollution Control Board of Nagapattinam District had not taken place. He raised concerns regarding the proposed increase in port capacity, additional berths, capital and maintenance dredging and reclamation of about 137.14 ha, and apprehended adverse impacts on coastal processes, marine ecology, fisheries, drainage and agricultural areas.

He further expressed apprehension regarding the potential impacts of the proposed 1.30 km river/creek diversion on drainage and saline-water intrusion and sought clarification regarding certain inconsistencies in the EIA data, including the land requirement figures. He also referred to the proposed 50 MLD desalination plant and the water requirement of the expansion. Referring to the EIA assessment concerning 15 fishing villages, 8,889 fishing families and 32,632 people, he expressed concern over the potential impacts on fishing communities. He

requested that the concerns of the people of Karaikal and adjoining areas of Tamil Nadu, particularly Nagapattinam District, and the potential cumulative impacts on coastal and marine resources be duly examined before a decision is taken on the proposed expansion. He reiterated his opposition to the proposal.

25. Thirumathi. Kamar Nisha, Melavanjore

Thirumathi. Kamar Nisha, Melavanjore, expressed opposition to the proposed expansion and stated that coal dust, heavy vehicle movement and associated environmental concerns had not been fully addressed. She expressed concern over the conditions prevailing in Keezhavanjore and stated that the impacts were also being experienced in Melavanjore, Nagore, Pattinam and Oulgaret areas. She stated that increasing the cargo handling capacity to 100.3 MMTPA under such circumstances would adversely affect the local population and requested that the concerns of the affected people be addressed. She reiterated her opposition to the proposed expansion and stated that the Government should ensure the basic needs and welfare of the local people.

26. Thiru. Sakthivel, Thirupattinam–Pattinacherry Fishermen Panchayat

Thiru. Sakthivel, representing the fishermen panchayat of Thirupattinam–Pattinacherry, opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port. He expressed concern over the existing port operations and stated that even at the present cargo handling capacity of 21.5 MMTPA, the environmental conditions in Karaikal and Nagapattinam Districts had deteriorated. He further stated that dredged material deposited in the sea had buried and damaged the artificial coral reefs established in association with the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation and the Fisheries Department, and stated that this was observed during a scuba-diving exercise conducted about three months earlier.

He also expressed concern that anchoring of several vessels within about 10 km of the coast was restricting fishing activities. He stated that coal dust reaching the coast during the North-East Monsoon was causing health problems among women, including gynecological ailments, menstrual disorders and cancer, and requested that the health and environmental impacts be duly examined. He opposed the proposed expansion and stated that the fishermen community of Pattinacherry would continue to resist the project.

27. Thiru. Siddharth

Thiru. Siddharth opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port and stated that, in his view, the benefits arising from the port were accruing more to the Project Proponent than to the local community. He stated that development should not be pursued at the cost of the livelihood and well-being of the local population and suggested that, if the Project Proponent's activities were considered necessary for national development, alternative investments such as wind or solar power could be considered without adversely affecting the local community.

He further stated that the expressions made by some participants during the Public Hearing reflected their deep dissatisfaction and grievances regarding the project. He requested the District Collector to ascertain the level of public support or opposition to the proposed expansion by seeking a show of hands from the participants and stated that the extent of

opposition would become evident within a short time. He therefore reiterated his opposition to the proposed expansion and requested that the views of the public be duly considered before taking a decision on the proposal.

28. Thiru. L.I.C. I. Khader Mohideen, Niravi–Thirupattinam Constituency

Thiru. L.I.C. I. Khader Mohideen, Niravi–Thirupattinam Constituency, stated that the port had been in operation for about 17 years and expressed concern that the environmental implications of the existing and proposed coal handling had not been adequately explained to the public. He stated that his objections were not directed against the Project Proponent or any particular industrial group, but were based on concerns regarding environmental protection. He expressed apprehension that the existing level of coal handling was already causing environmental stress and that the proposed increase in capacity could further aggravate impacts on air, water and land resources.

He requested the concerned environmental authorities to clearly explain to the public the likely impacts of the proposed expansion on the environment, water resources, land resources and air quality. He further stated that the people of Karaikal, particularly the Thirupattinam area, had already experienced environmental concerns associated with industrial and port activities. He opposed the proposed expansion and requested the Government to consider the livelihood and environmental concerns of the local population and not permit the proposed expansion.

29. Thiru. Prakash, Pattinacherry Fishermen Village

Thiru. Prakash, Pattinacherry Fishermen Village, stated that the port had been in operation since 2009 and that the fishing community had been facing difficulties for several years. He stated that fishing activities were being affected by the movement of vessels, resulting in damage to fishing nets and boats, and reported that more than 400 fishing nets had been damaged and about 10 boats had been damaged or lost.

He stated that a large number of people had attended the Public Hearing and expressed the view that there was opposition to the proposed expansion. He expressed concern that the existing cargo handling capacity of 21.5 MMTPA was already causing difficulties to the local population and apprehended that increasing the capacity to 100.3 MMTPA would further aggravate health and environmental impacts, including respiratory problems. He further raised concerns regarding the transportation of coal, stating that the movement of loaded and empty vehicles resulted in frequent closure of the access gate and waiting periods of about 20–30 minutes, affecting school and college students, fish vendors and the general public. He apprehended that the proposed expansion would substantially increase such difficulties and opposed the proposed expansion.

30. Thirumathi. Mary Anthuvan, Karaikal

Thirumathi. Mary Anthuvan, Karaikal, expressed concern over the vulnerability of the local population to disasters and raised concerns regarding the frequent movement of trains associated with port operations. She stated that the railway gate was reportedly closed several times a day, causing people to wait for about 15 minutes on each occasion and, according to

her, resulting in significant inconvenience to the public. She apprehended that the proposed increase in port capacity would further increase rail traffic and aggravate these difficulties.

She further raised concerns regarding the health impacts stated associated with coal handling, including respiratory and skin-related problems and cancer. She also stated that *Conocarpus*, which she stated was banned in several States, including Tamil Nadu, had been planted extensively within the port premises and expressed concern regarding its stated health impacts, including infertility. She requested that the planting of *Conocarpus*, coal handling and port activities be stopped and opposed the proposed expansion.

31. Elderly Woman, Keezhavanjore Village

An elderly woman from Keezhavanjore Village stated that the residents of the village had been experiencing difficulties for several years following the development of the port, particularly in the vicinity of Pillaiyar Koil Street in Keezhavanjore, where the port is located close to the residential area. She stated that coal dust had affected the residents. She stated that the port had been in operation for about 17 years and expressed concern over the conditions prevailing in the village. She further stated that many families in the village were dependent on Government assistance for their livelihood and stated that adequate employment opportunities were not being provided to educated youth born and brought up in Keezhavanjore, while persons from other areas were being employed.

32. Thiru. Sultan Ghouse, State General Secretary, Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI)

Thiru. Sultan Ghouse, State General Secretary, SDPI and a native of Thirumalairayanpattinam, expressed concern over the potential impacts of port activities on the marine environment, fishing communities, groundwater resources and agricultural livelihoods. He stated that adequate employment opportunities were not being provided to local youth and stated that persons from other States were being employed.

He referred to the participation of people from Nagapattinam and Nagore and stated that the concerns of the adjoining areas should also be taken into consideration. He opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port and requested the District Collector to consider the representations of the affected people and ensure that development does not adversely affect their livelihood.

33. Selvi. Mariyammal, Keezhaiyur

Selvi. Mariyammal, Keezhaiyur, questioned the present opposition to the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port after its operation for about 17 years. She stated that the port was established at a time following the tsunami when there were limited employment and agricultural opportunities and questioned how many local youth had obtained employment through the port. She stated that if the establishment of the port was considered undesirable, it should have been opposed and prevented at that time itself. She further questioned why, after the port had been allowed to operate and the people had experienced it for so many years, its expansion was now being opposed, and whether the impacts of the port were not known earlier.

34. Selvi. Vijayalakshmi, Keezhaiyur

Selvi. Vijayalakshmi, Keezhaiyur, a nursing graduate, raised concerns regarding the availability of medical facilities in the village. She stated that the existing Primary Health Centre (PHC) did not have adequate emergency facilities and that timely access to medical care was difficult in cases such as snake bites and accidents. She requested that the PHC be expanded and provided with adequate facilities and questioned whether the Project Proponent could support such improvements. She further stated that, being educated and not engaged in fishing or agriculture, local youth like her required employment opportunities commensurate with their educational qualifications. She stated that if suitable employment opportunities were provided through the port project, she would extend support to the Project.

35. Selvi. Sangeetha, Keezhaiyur

Selvi. Sangeetha, Keezhaiyur, stated that while several participants had expressed opposition to the proposed expansion, the people of Keezhaiyur were facing a lack of employment opportunities. She sought employment opportunities for the local people through the Project Proponent. *Her statement could not be completed due to interruptions from the gathering.*

36. Thirumathi. Chitra, Indian People's Rights, Justice and Public Welfare Association, Thirumalairayanpattinam

Thirumathi. Chitra, representing the Indian People's Rights, Justice and Public Welfare Association, Thirumalairayanpattinam, stated that the people had been facing considerable difficulties since the establishment of the port in 2009. She stated that coal dust had settled on trees and vegetation and affected residential areas in Keezhavanjore and Melavanjore and stated that people travelling from Vanjoor towards T.R. Pattinam were experiencing difficulty due to the stated coal dust pollution. She further raised concerns regarding the health impacts stated by associated with the port activities and referred to more than 140 persons reportedly affected by cancer. She stated that the people did not seek any free benefits but wanted to live peacefully and opposed the proposed expansion.

37. Thiru. A. S. Singaravel, T.R. Pattinam

Thiru. A. S. Singaravel, T.R. Pattinam, associated with the Communist movement, expressed opposition to the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port. He raised concerns regarding the limited land availability in T.R. Pattinam and stated that a substantial portion of the available area had already been utilised for the port and other developments. He questioned the availability of land for further port expansion and expressed concern over the consequent impacts on agricultural land, water resources and fishing livelihoods.

He further expressed concern regarding the impacts of dredging and deepening of the sea on fishery resources and the coastal environment and stated that the proposed expansion could adversely affect the coastal areas and beaches of T.R. Pattinam and Pattinacherry, which are also used for important local festivals. He also raised concerns regarding the health of the local population and referred to medical and welfare measures reportedly provided by the port, seeking examination of the underlying causes of such health concerns.

He stressed that the concerns of the local population, particularly farmers, agricultural labourers and fishing communities, be duly considered and opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port.

38. Thiru. S. T. Sugandh, State Secretary, Desa Makkal Munnani Kazhagam

Thiru. S. T. Sugandh, State Secretary, Desa Makkal Munnani Kazhagam, stated that the existing port was already causing difficulties to the local population and questioned the need for further expansion. He further stated that the existing port should first be regulated and controlled through appropriate conditions and opposed the proposed expansion. He also expressed concern over the movement of coal and increased railway traffic associated with the port, stating that such activities were causing difficulties to the public. On behalf of his organisation, he opposed the proposed expansion and the handling of coal through the port.

39. Thiru. Suyambu, Fishermen Livelihood Rights Movement, Karaikalmedu

Thiru. Suyambu, Fishermen Livelihood Rights Movement, Karaikalmedu, aged 63 years and engaged in fishing since the age of 12, stated that the fishing community was facing severe livelihood difficulties due to the decline in fish availability following the commencement of port operations. He stated that coal-related runoff during rainfall entered the sea and adversely affected fishery resources. He stated that he was no longer able to support his family through fishing and that even his wife and elderly mother had been compelled to undertake fish-related work to support the family.

He further stated that artificial coral reefs established to improve fishery resources had been affected by the deposition of dredged material from port activities. He requested that the concerns of the fishing community be duly considered. He also sought employment opportunities for educated youth from the fishing community and raised concerns regarding delays at railway crossings due to coal transportation, affecting school students and persons travelling for education and employment.

He expressed concern that the proposed expansion could further adversely affect fishing communities in Karaikal and Nagapattinam Districts due to changes in coastal and marine conditions. He opposed the proposed expansion and requested that necessary action be taken to prevent further expansion, stating that the livelihood of the fishing community was entirely dependent on the sea.

40. Thiru. Manikandan, Pudukottai, Tamil Nadu

Thiru. Manikandan, Secretary, Tamilar Kazhagam, stated that he was not opposed to development but questioned the environmental and social cost of the proposed expansion. He opposed the proposed expansion from 21.5 MMTPA to 100.3 MMTPA and raised concerns regarding its potential cumulative impacts on the coastline, marine environment, rivers, fisheries, agriculture and local communities.

He particularly raised concerns regarding the proposed 137.14 ha sea reclamation, 42 million cubic meters of capital dredging and 4.2 million cubic meters of annual maintenance dredging, and sought a long-term assessment of their cumulative impacts on coastal processes and

fisheries. He also questioned the adequacy of the proposed 1.30 km diversion of the Puravadaianar River under combined conditions of heavy rainfall, high tide, cyclone, storm surge and sea-level rise, and requested a compound flood assessment.

He raised concerns regarding the proposed handling of hazardous cargo, including LNG, LPG, petroleum and petrochemical products, and sought village-wise risk mapping, evacuation plans and worst-case disaster simulations covering simultaneous cyclone, flood and chemical accident scenarios. He also sought worst-case oil-spill modelling under severe weather conditions.

He questioned the proposed 50 MLD desalination plant against the stated operational requirement of 10 MLD and sought clarification regarding the proposed 125 MLD seawater intake and 75 MLD brine discharge and their long-term ecological impacts. He also sought clarification regarding the difference between the project area figures stated in the ToR and EIA.

He expressed concern regarding the adequacy of the baseline environmental studies, particularly the need to assess North-East Monsoon and cyclone-season conditions, and sought independent assessment of the cumulative impacts on the 8,859 fishing families identified in the EIA. He also raised concerns regarding Olive Ridley turtle nesting areas and requested long-term turtle monitoring and assessment of impacts from dredging, reclamation, breakwaters, vessel traffic and artificial lighting.

He further questioned the environmental compliance status of the existing port and sought the latest compliance report, valid NABET accreditation details of the EIA consultant, and supporting raw monitoring data and modelling information. He emphasised that development should not be pursued at the cost of the sea, river, fisheries, coastal ecology and livelihoods and requested that the proposed expansion not be permitted unless the above environmental, safety and livelihood concerns were satisfactorily addressed.

41. Thiru. A. S. Kumar, District Secretary, Communist Party of India

Thiru. A. S. Kumar, District Secretary, Communist Party of India, stated that his party had been opposing the establishment and operation of the port from the initial stage and had continuously raised concerns regarding its impacts on the local population. He expressed concern over the stated health and environmental impacts of the existing port operations, including respiratory and other health problems, deterioration of roads and vegetation, and difficulties caused by frequent railway-gate closures due to port-related train movements, affecting students, advocates, workers, traders and the general public.

He further raised concerns regarding the stated working conditions and employment practices at the existing port and referred to issues relating to working hours and payment of wages. He also raised a concern regarding payment of taxes to the Government and requested that the existing compliance and regulatory issues be examined.

He opposed the proposed expansion and expressed apprehension that further expansion could adversely affect Karaikal and adjoining areas of Tamil Nadu. He requested the District

Collector and concerned authorities to faithfully record and forward the concerns expressed by the public to the Central Government and urged that the proposed expansion should not be permitted.

42. Thiru. Santhakumar, North Vanjoor Panchayatar

Thiru. Santhakumar, North Vanjoor Panchayatar, stated that when the port was established near their village, the local people had expected employment opportunities. He stated that, instead, the residents had been adversely affected by coal dust and related pollution. He stated that about 10 persons from the village had reportedly died of cancer and that respiratory problems and traffic-related difficulties were also being experienced by the local population. He stated that the concerns had been brought to the attention of the Government but that no adequate action had been taken so far.

He further questioned the need for the proposed expansion when the existing port operations were already causing difficulties. He expressed concern over the impacts of coal dust and stated that the port was located approximately 100 meters from North Vanjoor. He also referred to the proposal to relocate the village and stated that the residents would be willing to remain in the village if coal handling and associated impacts were stopped. He opposed the proposed expansion.

43. Thiru. Shahjahan, State General Secretary, AIMIM, Karaikal

Thiru. Shahjahan, State General Secretary, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM), Karaikal, opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port. He stated that the large participation of fishermen, political and social organisations, traders, business interests and members of the public from Karaikal, Nagore and surrounding areas reflected wide spread opposition to the proposed expansion. He stated that, according to the views expressed by the participants, the proposed expansion should not be permitted and that even the existing port should, if possible, be relocated.

He expressed concern that the existing coal-handling activities had already resulted in serious environmental and health impacts in the surrounding areas. He stated that residents were experiencing various health problems, including cancer-related symptoms and kidney and other ailments, and requested that the health condition of the affected population be medically assessed.

He further expressed concern that the proposed expansion and increased coal handling would adversely affect the fishing community, their future generations and the wider population of Karaikal. He stated that coal transportation, including movement by rail, was causing coal dust to spread across surrounding areas and stated that the associated environmental and health impacts would be further aggravated by the proposed expansion.

He therefore stated that, on behalf of the fishing community, traders, business community, social organisations, political parties and people of Karaikal, Nagore and surrounding villages, AIMIM opposed the proposed expansion and requested that the project should not be permitted.

44. Thiru. Ambalavanan, District Secretary, Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK)

Thiru. Ambalavanan, District Secretary, Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK), opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port. He stated that his organisation had opposed the establishment of the port from its initial stage, expressing concern that the port activities would adversely affect the people, environment and livelihood of Karaikal. He referred to the concerns expressed by residents of Keezhavanjore, Nagore and North Vanjoor regarding coal dust, respiratory problems and other stated health impacts and stated that adequate remedial measures had not been taken.

He further expressed concern that the proposed expansion and increased coal handling would aggravate environmental and livelihood impacts on the people of Karaikal, particularly the fishing community. He also raised concerns regarding employment opportunities for local people and stated that persons from outside the region were being employed in preference to local residents.

He opposed the proposed expansion and requested that the project should not be permitted. He stated that, if the expansion were proceeded with despite the concerns of the public, it could result in large-scale public protests.

45. Thiru. Sundaravadivel, Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist) / SEC

Thiru. Sundaravadivel, representing the Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist) / SEC, opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port. He stated that his organisation had examined the impacts of the existing port and stated that residents in the surrounding areas were experiencing various health problems, including cancer, breast cancer and skin ailments, which he attributed to the port activities.

He raised concerns regarding the frequent stoppage of trains carrying coal, stating that railway crossings were reportedly blocked for prolonged periods, affecting ambulances, school students and the general public. He further apprehended that the proposed increase in port-related road transportation, including movement of large numbers of trucks, would aggravate traffic and air-pollution impacts. He referred to the experience of a cargo-handling facility at Ambalamedu in Kerala and expressed apprehension that coal dust from the proposed activities could similarly affect air, water and surrounding areas in Karaikal.

He expressed concern regarding the impact of the proposed diversion/re-alignment of the Puravadaianar River/Creek on drainage and flooding, particularly during heavy rainfall and other extreme events. He apprehended that alteration of the existing drainage path could adversely affect people in the upstream areas.

He further raised concerns regarding the potential impacts of increased dredging and deepening of the port on water quality and surrounding water resources. He stated that the people of Karaikal were already facing difficulties relating to availability of drinking water and expressed concern over the adequacy of water resources in the context of the proposed expansion.

He also expressed concern regarding the possible health impacts of port-related pollution on pregnant women and children and referred to studies which, according to him, indicated possible risks to unborn children. He requested that such health and environmental concerns be properly examined before any decision is taken.

He opposed the proposed expansion and requested that the livelihood, health and environmental concerns of the people, particularly fishing and farming communities, be duly considered and that the proposed expansion should not be permitted.

46. Thiru. Praveen Birla, Advocate

Thiru. Praveen Birla, Advocate, opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port and stated that a large number of people from Karaikal had expressed their opposition to the proposal during the Public Hearing. He emphasised that environmental conditions, including land, water and air quality, were fundamental to the health and development of the people and expressed concern that the proposed expansion could adversely affect the well-being of the local population.

He particularly raised concerns regarding the impact of increased port-related railway traffic on students and the general public, stating that prolonged waiting at railway crossings was already causing difficulties and apprehending that such problems would increase substantially with the proposed expansion.

He further questioned the employment opportunities provided to educated youth from Karaikal, stating that the port had earlier indicated that local people would be provided direct and indirect employment. He stated that persons from outside the region, including North India, were being employed in significant numbers and requested that adequate employment opportunities be ensured for local youth.

He also questioned the role of the elected representatives in addressing the concerns of the people of Karaikal and stated that the public expected their representatives to take a clear position on issues affecting the livelihood and future of the local population. He emphasised that the people were seeking protection of their livelihood and the educational prospects of future generations rather than welfare assistance.

47. Thiru. Krishnakumar, Vaiko Pasarai, Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK)

Thiru. Krishnakumar, Vaiko Pasarai, Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK), opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port. He questioned whether the existing pollution and environmental impacts of the port had been adequately assessed and addressed by the concerned authorities. He stated that coal dust from port activities was affecting the surrounding areas and stated that residents were experiencing various health problems, including respiratory ailments and other illnesses.

He also raised concerns regarding the arrangements made by the Project Proponent to provide assistance and various benefits to residents and questioned the purpose of such activities in the context of the proposed expansion. He expressed concern that the proposed increase in port

activities would further affect the people of Vanjoor, Nagore, T.R. Pattinam, Polagam, Neravy, Akkaravattam, Nandalarampettai, Karukalacherry and other coastal areas.

He opposed the proposed expansion and requested that the environmental and livelihood concerns of the affected people be duly considered and that the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port should not be permitted.

48. Thiru. R. Saravanaperumal, Melavanjore Village

Thiru. R. Saravanaperumal, Melavanjore Village, stated that he was placing the views of the residents of Melavanjore. Referring to an X-ray of his wife, which he produced before the Public Hearing, he stated that the X-ray showed infection in the lungs and stated that similar health problems were being experienced by several persons in the village. He further stated that health screening, including X-ray examinations, had earlier been conducted by the Project Proponent for residents but that the reports had not subsequently been provided to them. He requested that the health-related concerns and the results of such medical examinations be transparently disclosed.

He stated that residents had been reporting coal-dust pollution but were unclear regarding the mechanism through which their complaints could be formally submitted and addressed. He requested the District Administration to establish a clear and accessible mechanism for receiving and recording complaints from residents and ensuring appropriate follow-up action.

He further expressed concern regarding the stated health impacts of coal dust on his family and other residents of Melavanjore and apprehended that expansion of the port would extend such impacts to neighboring villages. He stated that he did not wish to leave his native village and expressed concern over the emotional and social consequences of any displacement from the place where he had been born and brought up. He opposed the proposed expansion and requested that it should not be permitted.

49. Thiru. Saurirajan, Organiser, Tamil Meenavar Viduthalai Iyakkam, Karaikal District

Thiru. Saurirajan, Organiser, Tamil Meenavar Viduthalai Iyakkam, Karaikal District, opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port. He stated that the fishing community had been living in the coastal area for generations and depended on the sea for its livelihood, and expressed concern that further port development would adversely affect their traditional livelihood and future generations.

He raised concerns regarding the environmental and health impacts associated with the existing port activities, particularly coal handling, and stated that the concerns expressed by the affected people should be duly considered by the concerned authorities. He also questioned the employment opportunities being provided to the local population and stated that the fishing community itself provided livelihood to a large number of persons in the region.

He further stated that the port was initially presented to the local people as a facility for berthing ships and stated that its activities had subsequently expanded beyond what had originally been represented to them. He expressed concern that the proposed expansion would further affect

the fishing community and surrounding population. He stated that the fishing community and residents of Pattinacherry and surrounding areas would not accept further expansion of the port and requested that the proposal be stopped.

50. Thiru. Saurirajan, District President, Manithaneya Makkal Katchi, Karaikal

Thiru. Saurirajan, District President, Manithaneya Makkal Katchi, Karaikal, opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port. He requested that a survey be undertaken under the supervision of the District Administration and the Puducherry Pollution Control Committee to assess the stated health impacts associated with coal handling and transportation from the port on the population of Karaikal and adjoining areas of Nagapattinam District. He also referred to health problems such as cancer, liver-related ailments and the need for dialysis being experienced by some persons and requested that the health concerns of the affected population be scientifically examined.

He further raised concerns regarding coal transportation by road and rail, stating that coal dust was accumulating along railway routes and was affecting surrounding areas. He expressed concern over the impacts of port activities on livestock, fisheries and the livelihood of fishing communities, including the increasing need for fishermen to travel farther into the sea for fishing.

He questioned the proposed increase in cargo handling capacity to 100.3 MMTPA in view of the stated impacts of the existing operations. He also expressed concern that the people of Keezhavanjore, Melavanjore, Pattinam, North Vanjoor and other surrounding areas could be increasingly affected by the expansion.

He stated that his organisation had previously opposed the establishment and operation of the port and had undertaken protests in this regard. He requested that the concerns of the affected population be considered with due weight and that the proposed expansion should not be permitted.

He further stated that, if the expansion were proceeded with despite the concerns expressed by the public, his organisation and the affected people would undertake further democratic protests, including a prolonged hunger strike. He reiterated his opposition to the proposed expansion.

51. Thiru. R. Murugesan, Keezhavanjore Village

Thiru. R. Murugesan, Keezhavanjore Village, opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port and stated that he was placing the views of the residents of Keezhavanjore. He questioned the manner in which the port had been established and expanded over the years and raised concerns regarding the adequacy of earlier public consultation and the action taken on representations made by the residents.

He referred to earlier inspections and proceedings concerning the difficulties stated by caused by the port to the residents and stated that the concerns raised by the people had not been adequately addressed. He also referred to an earlier medical assessment of residents of Keezhavanjore and North Vanjoor, stating that health problems including wheezing, asthma

and skin rashes had reportedly been observed among children, and requested that the present health status of the affected persons be examined.

He further raised concerns regarding groundwater extraction, rainwater harvesting and environmental management measures associated with the port and questioned whether adequate measures had been implemented. He also referred to the utilisation of CSR funds and requested greater transparency and accountability in the implementation of CSR activities.

He stated that the residents of Keezhavanjore were continuing to experience health and livelihood concerns and questioned whether the existing environmental conditions had been adequately assessed through reliable data. He referred to stated instances of cancer and other illnesses among residents and requested that the health and environmental status of the village be scientifically assessed.

He also raised concerns regarding the availability of drinking water and the potential impacts of further dredging and deepening of the port on groundwater and surrounding water resources. He expressed apprehension that further expansion could adversely affect the village and future generations.

52. Thirumathi. Tamilarasi, Women's Wing, SUCI, Yesu Nagar, T.R. Pattinam

Thirumathi. Tamilarasi, speaking on behalf of the Women's Wing of the SUCI, T.R. Pattinam, opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port. He stated that coal dust and port-related activities were causing health problems among local residents, including children, and expressed concern over the difficulties and financial burden involved in obtaining medical treatment.

He further raised concerns regarding prolonged stoppage of coal-carrying trains and their impact on the public. He stated that the port activities were adversely affecting agricultural land and coastal resources and requested that the proposed expansion should not be permitted.

53. Thiru. Mohamed Yasin, SUCI (C), Karaikal

Thiru. Mohamed Yasin, Karaikal, opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port. He raised concerns regarding the adequacy of the Public Hearing arrangements and publicity and questioned whether adequate importance was being given to the views of the public.

He referred to the recent incident at Chemplast and expressed concern regarding the safety of people in the surrounding villages. He also raised concerns regarding coal transportation by road and rail, stating that coal dust was affecting residential and agricultural areas and that prolonged stoppage of coal-carrying trains was causing inconvenience to the public.

He questioned the employment opportunities provided to local people despite the earlier assurance of employment and expressed concern regarding the reported health and livelihood impacts on residents of Keezhavanjore, Melavanjore and North Vanjoor. He further raised concerns regarding the impacts of the proposed expansion on fishing, agriculture and social conditions in Karaikal.

He opposed the proposed expansion and requested that the livelihood, health, safety and environmental concerns of the people, particularly fishermen, farmers and local residents, be duly considered and that the proposed expansion should not be permitted.

54. Representative, Kaliyamman Koil Street Village Panchayat

The representative of the Kaliyamman Koil Street Village Panchayat stated that the Panchayat would oppose any activity or project that could adversely affect natural resources and human resources. Referring to the protest reportedly organised by the villagers against the proposed expansion of the Chemplast industry during the previous year, he stated that the villagers had participated in the protest and received support from social activists.

He further stated that pollution of water resources would subsequently affect land, soil and ultimately human resources. He requested the authorities to ensure that projects having adverse impacts on natural resources and human well-being were not permitted. He also stated that, if such projects were permitted and the livelihood and well-being of the people were adversely affected, large-scale public protests could arise. He therefore expressed opposition to the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port.

55. Thiru. R. K. Baskaran, Keezhavanjore Village

Thiru. R. K. Baskaran, Keezhavanjore Village, stated that the port was established in 2007 and that coal handling operations had commenced from 2009, following which the residents had been facing various difficulties. He stated that a substantial portion of the area surrounding the port was agricultural land and that agricultural lands had been acquired for port development. He expressed concern regarding the impacts of port-related dredging and associated activities on water resources, groundwater and agricultural lands, and stated that the affected farmers had been facing difficulties in continuing their agricultural activities for several years.

He questioned the basis for acquiring further land for the proposed expansion and requested that the concerns of small and marginal landholders be specifically considered. He also raised concerns regarding employment opportunities for local people and questioned whether adequate employment was being provided to educated youth from Karaikal. He requested that details of employment provided by industries and other establishments to local and non-local persons be maintained and disclosed, and suggested that a specific proportion of employment opportunities be ensured for local residents.

He further raised concerns regarding the adequacy of Government healthcare facilities in Karaikal and requested improvement of emergency and diagnostic facilities in Government hospitals in view of the increasing industrial and port activities in the region. He also referred to difficulties faced by traders and residents due to delays in implementation of proposed road infrastructure and requested timely action and appropriate relief to affected persons.

He raised concerns regarding the administration of industrial establishments and requested regulatory oversight and greater accountability by the concerned authorities. He also sought measures to improve employment opportunities, particularly for educated local youth, and to ensure better implementation of labour-related requirements.

He urged the authorities to consider the environmental, agricultural, livelihood, employment and public-infrastructure concerns of the local population and opposed the expansion of Karaikal Port.

56. Thiru. Sivashankar, Keezhavanjore Village Panchayat

Thiru. Sivashankar, stating that he was speaking on behalf of the Keezhavanjore Village Panchayat, stated that the village had been experiencing the impacts of the port since its establishment and that the residents had been raising their concerns since 2009. He stated that the residents had repeatedly submitted their grievances, including through CSR-related interactions, but that the issues raised were not adequately resolved as the concerned officials were subsequently changed. He stated that, due to the repeated changes and lack of resolution of their grievances, the residents had become reluctant to repeatedly raise their concerns.

He therefore made a specific request that, irrespective of the proposed cargo handling capacity, the District Administration, Sub-Divisional Administration, Police Department and Pollution Control authorities should function from Keezhavanjore Village for a period of three months. He stated that the villagers were willing to provide premises for this purpose and suggested that functioning from the village would enable the authorities to directly experience the prevailing conditions and assess whether further expansion should be permitted or whether the existing port operations themselves required reconsideration.

57. Thiru. Kalaignar, District Committee Member, Communist Party of India (Marxist) and District President, Untouchability Eradication Front

Thiru. Kalaignar, District Committee Member, Communist Party of India (Marxist), District President, Untouchability Eradication Front, and District Secretary, Tamil Nadu–Puducherry Progressive Writers and Artists Association, stated that he was also an artist involved in conducting awareness programmes through drama and music. Referring to the historical importance of the region and its temples and water bodies, he stated that his ancestors had made significant efforts to create and protect the local irrigation and water resources, including the Thirumalairajan River and associated channels.

He stated that the existing water resources and irrigation systems were important to the people and that they would not be willing to give them up. He also referred to his organisation's earlier opposition to liquor shops and stated that similar collective action had been undertaken by them in the past.

He further expressed concern that continued development and industrial activities could adversely affect the historical, environmental and water resources of the region. He stated that, if the proposed development was proceeded with, various forms of democratic protest, including demonstrations, cultural programmes, music and drama, could be undertaken in accordance with the constitutional rights of the people. He therefore expressed opposition to the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port.

58. A participant from Pattinacherry Village (name was not mentioned)

A participant from Pattinacherry Village stated that the Public Hearing had been conducted for the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port and observed that, despite the large number of persons who had expressed their views, there had been very limited support for the proposed expansion. He questioned whether the concerns of the local people were being adequately considered by the Administration and requested that the views expressed during the Public Hearing be given due importance.

He referred to the availability of fishing and marine resources in the Pattinacherry coastal area and stated that the region had historically supported substantial fishing activity and agricultural livelihoods. He stated that the tsunami had severely affected the local community and that the subsequent development of the port had further affected their livelihood.

He raised concerns regarding the large-scale handling and transportation of coal and apprehended associated health and livelihood impacts on the local population. He also questioned the adequacy of inspection and security checks of cargo entering the port and sought clarification regarding the measures being taken by the concerned authorities, including Customs and security agencies, to prevent the movement of prohibited or narcotic substances through the port.

He further expressed concern that the affected people were facing difficulties in meeting educational, healthcare and livelihood-related expenses. He requested the District Administration to consider the concerns of the local population and take an appropriate decision regarding the proposed expansion.

59. Dr. S. Anandkumar, President, India Against Corruption

Dr. S. Anandkumar, President, India against Corruption, opposed the proposed expansion of Karaikal Port and urged the District Collector to consider the concerns and sentiments expressed by the people of Karaikal. He questioned whether the Public Hearing represented meaningful participatory development and stated that groundwater in his area had an electrical conductivity (EC) of more than 2, nearly 3, rendering it unsuitable for drinking. He attributed this to seawater intrusion associated with dredging and excavation and expressed concern over desertification of the area.

He stated that two buses of persons had been brought to the Public Hearing to support the project and requested that the circumstances be examined. He claimed that 99.99% of the participants had opposed the proposed expansion, except three women, and requested that the stated mobilisation of supporters be examined.

He stated that he was not opposed to development but sought development addressing basic needs such as water, electricity and roads. He requested that the concerns expressed during the Public Hearing be conveyed to the Government of India and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and opposed the proposed expansion.

The District Collector-cum-District Magistrate, Karaikal, stated that the views and concerns expressed by all stakeholders were being recorded neutrally, transparently and fairly and would

be forwarded to the competent authorities. She stated that all views expressed during the Public Hearing would form part of the statutory proceedings.

10. Thereafter, the District Collector-cum-District Magistrate, Karaikal, invited any other members of the public who wished to express their views, opinions, objections or suggestions to come forward and place the same on record. As no further members of the public came forward to offer their views, the public consultation was concluded.
11. The Member Secretary, Puducherry Pollution Control Committee, summarized the proceedings of the Public Hearing and informed the participants that the views, suggestions, representations and responses expressed during the hearing had been recorded through videography and would be duly forwarded to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India, along with the proceedings, for consideration in accordance with the prescribed procedure. The proceedings of the Public Hearing, along with the Tamil translation thereof, will be made available for public perusal during office hours at Office of the District Collector, Karaikal, and Office of the Commissioner, T.R. Pattinam Commune Panchayat, Karaikal and Regional Office of the Puducherry Pollution Control Committee, Karaikal. The proceedings will also be uploaded on the official website of the Puducherry Pollution Control Committee, so as to ensure transparency and facilitate verification by the public of the accuracy and completeness of the proceedings.
12. Thereafter, the District Collector-cum-District Magistrate, Karaikal, formally concluded the Public Hearing. She expressed appreciation to all members of the public, representatives of fishing communities, farmers, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders for their participation and for placing their views, concerns, objections and suggestions on record. She also acknowledged the cooperation extended by the concerned Government Departments and officials in providing necessary clarifications and, in particular, appreciated the Police Department for effectively managing the gathering and ensuring the peaceful conduct and conclusion of the Public Hearing.
13. She reiterated that all views expressed during the Public Hearing, including the concerns, objections and suggestions received both orally and in writing, would be duly recorded as part of the Public Hearing proceedings. She stated that the proceedings would be compiled and forwarded, through the prescribed procedure, to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India, for consideration as part of the statutory environmental clearance process. She assured the participants that the views expressed during the Public Hearing would form part of the official record and would be dealt with in accordance with the applicable statutory procedures. She thanked all participants for maintaining peace and discipline and for extending their cooperation throughout the proceedings. With this, she formally declared the Public Hearing concluded.

14. The following documents are attached with public hearing proceedings.

- i. List of participants who attended the public hearing (Annexure-I).
- ii. Written representations received from public (Annexure – II).
- iii. Statement of issues raised by the public and the comments of the project proponent (Annexure-III).



Ms. Ishita Rath I.A.S.
District Collector-cum-District Magistrate
Karaikal District

(ISHITA RATHI, I.A.S.)
DISTRICT COLLECTOR
KARAİKAL