

EVIDENCE TO STOP THE EXPANSION AT VULCAN DIXIELEE QUARRY

1. Failure to Demonstrate Consistency with the General Welfare

The applicant has not demonstrated that this proposal promotes the public health, safety, and welfare. While the application discusses benefits to Vulcan Materials, it does not adequately analyze the impacts on nearby residents, including increased blasting proximity, noise, dust, traffic redistribution, and loss of an existing public roadway.

2. Failure to Demonstrate Compatibility with Adjacent Uses

The proposal substantially expands industrial mining operations toward an established residential neighborhood. The application contains no independent compatibility analysis evaluating whether this expansion is compatible with surrounding residential development.

3. Applicant-Controlled Studies

Virtually every technical report submitted in support of this application was prepared by consultants retained by the applicant. Before approving this request, Knox County should obtain independent peer review of the blasting, traffic, drainage, and environmental analyses.

4. Inadequate Traffic Scope

The transportation study evaluates only vehicle delay at selected intersections. It does not evaluate emergency response, school transportation, pedestrian access, bicycle safety, evacuation routes, or future traffic growth. Accordingly, it cannot support the conclusion that closure of Graybeal Road serves the public interest.

5. Permanent Elimination of a Public Road

Graybeal Road is public infrastructure. The application does not demonstrate that permanently eliminating a public roadway primarily benefits the citizens of Knox County rather than a private corporation.

6. Failure to Analyze Alternatives

The application assumes closure of Graybeal Road is necessary but presents no meaningful evaluation of alternatives, including:

- maintaining the roadway,
- partial relocation,
- grade separation,
- bridge construction,
- tunnel construction,
- expanded setbacks,
- modified mine sequencing.

Approval should not occur until alternatives are evaluated.

7. Future Mining Phases

The application discusses current expansion but provides limited information regarding future mining phases. The County should understand the ultimate extent of mining before approving incremental requests.

8. No Independent Blasting Review

The application contains generalized statements regarding blasting safety but does not include an independent engineering review specific to this site's geology or the proximity of residences.

9. Increased Residential Exposure

Mining activities will occur substantially closer to homes than historical operations. The application does not quantify how vibration, air overpressure, dust, and noise exposure will change as excavation advances.

10. Property Value Impacts

The application contains no analysis of potential effects on nearby residential property values despite expanding industrial activity toward existing homes.

11. Groundwater

The application provides little discussion regarding groundwater flow, karst geology, sinkhole potential, or potential effects of blasting on groundwater systems.

12. Surface Water

The application does not adequately analyze downstream effects on Hickory Creek during the expanded mining operations.

13. Baseline Monitoring

Before expansion begins, independent baseline testing should be performed for:

- wells
- foundations
- groundwater
- vibration
- air quality
- noise

Without baseline data, future disputes become difficult to resolve.

14. Air Quality

The application generally references existing permits but provides no modeling regarding particulate emissions associated with mining activities occurring closer to nearby residences.

15. Cumulative Impacts

The application evaluates issues individually but does not analyze cumulative impacts from simultaneous increases in blasting, noise, truck traffic, dust, and visual impacts.

16. Buffer Adequacy

The application identifies buffer areas but does not adequately explain:

- minimum width
 - permanence
 - ownership
 - vegetation
 - future disturbance
 - enforceability
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17. Reclamation Timing

The reclamation discussion acknowledges completion may occur more than fifty years in the future. Current residents will experience impacts long before reclamation occurs.

18. Emergency Access

Closing Graybeal Road permanently reduces redundancy within the local road network. The application does not evaluate impacts on emergency response or disaster resilience.

19. Public Benefit

The principal benefit of the proposal appears to accrue to the applicant. The public benefits are less clearly demonstrated.

20. Burden of Proof

The burden rests upon the applicant—not neighboring property owners—to demonstrate that this proposal satisfies all applicable approval criteria.

Here are some general comments. Make them here.

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Traffic & Transportation

1. The traffic study measures only vehicle delay, not overall public safety.
2. Closing Graybeal Road permanently removes an existing public road from the county transportation network.
3. The study evaluates only current traffic, not long-term residential growth.
4. The report does not analyze emergency vehicle response times.
5. The report ignores the loss of alternate evacuation routes.
6. School bus routing impacts are not evaluated.
7. Bicycle traffic was not studied.
8. Pedestrian access was not studied.
9. The study evaluates only selected intersections rather than the entire affected road network.
10. No independent traffic study has been presented.

Public Roads

11. Public roads belong to the public, not private corporations.
12. Permanent road closures should occur only when clearly necessary.
13. The application does not demonstrate why Graybeal Road must be closed.
14. Closing this road reduces future transportation flexibility.
15. The county should not surrender public infrastructure for private industrial expansion.
16. Road closures create permanent consequences long after mining ends.

17. Future residents cannot recover a road once abandoned.
 18. The public investment in Graybeal Road should not be discarded lightly.
 19. Alternative alignments have not been explored.
 20. Maintaining public connectivity should remain a county priority.
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Blasting

21. Blasting will occur closer to homes than before.
 22. Residents deserve independent blasting impact analysis.
 23. Geological conditions vary across every quarry.
 24. Existing compliance does not guarantee future impacts.
 25. Ground vibration increases concern as mining approaches residences.
 26. Air overpressure impacts deserve independent review.
 27. The proposal does not include neighborhood-specific vibration modeling.
 28. Existing monitoring locations may no longer be appropriate.
 29. Residents should not bear the burden of proving blasting damage.
 30. A larger buffer should be required.
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Dust & Air Quality

31. Dust impacts deserve site-specific modeling.
32. Prevailing wind direction should be evaluated.
33. PM2.5 impacts are not discussed.
34. Silica exposure deserves independent review.
35. Dust affects outdoor recreation.
36. Dust affects children's health.
37. Dust accumulates on homes and vehicles.
38. Dust affects gardens and landscaping.

- 39. Dust affects nearby streams.
 - 40. Dust complaints should be anticipated before expansion.
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Water

- 41. The proposal deserves independent groundwater review.
 - 42. East Tennessee karst geology increases uncertainty.
 - 43. Sinkhole risks deserve additional study.
 - 44. Groundwater flow patterns should be modeled.
 - 45. Surface drainage changes require review.
 - 46. Stormwater impacts deserve cumulative analysis.
 - 47. Water quality monitoring should occur before expansion.
 - 48. Existing wells deserve baseline testing.
 - 49. Future groundwater contamination could be difficult to reverse.
 - 50. The public deserves long-term monitoring commitments.
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Noise

- 51. Noise increases as operations move closer.
- 52. Backup alarms affect nearby neighborhoods.
- 53. Heavy equipment noise should be modeled.
- 54. Early morning operations affect residents.
- 55. Evening operations reduce neighborhood enjoyment.
- 56. Construction noise differs from operational noise.
- 57. Cumulative industrial noise deserves evaluation.
- 58. Outdoor living becomes less enjoyable.
- 59. Property use is affected by persistent industrial noise.
- 60. Noise mitigation commitments should be enforceable.

Property Values

- 61. Property values deserve independent analysis.
- 62. Homebuyers consider quarry proximity.
- 63. Increased blasting can reduce marketability.
- 64. Visual impacts affect value.
- 65. Noise affects value.
- 66. Dust affects value.
- 67. Road closures affect value.
- 68. Future uncertainty affects value.
- 69. The county should consider homeowner investments.
- 70. Existing residents should not absorb uncompensated losses.

Planning

- 71. Industrial expansion should be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.
- 72. Residential growth deserves equal consideration.
- 73. The proposal appears driven by private benefit rather than public benefit.
- 74. Long-term land use compatibility deserves more analysis.
- 75. Alternative mining configurations should be evaluated.
- 76. Larger setbacks deserve consideration.
- 77. Existing buffers may be inadequate.
- 78. Future phases should be disclosed now.
- 79. Incremental approvals should not avoid cumulative review.
- 80. County planning should prioritize balanced development.

Environmental Review

81. Independent expert review should precede approval.
 82. Applicant-funded studies deserve independent verification.
 83. Baseline environmental monitoring should occur first.
 84. Long-term reclamation deserves more detail.
 85. Wildlife impacts deserve discussion.
 86. Tree removal affects runoff.
 87. Habitat fragmentation deserves evaluation.
 88. Climate resilience should be considered.
 89. Future environmental liabilities should be addressed.
 90. Public transparency should be improved.
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Governance

91. Residents deserve more public meetings.
92. More notice should be provided to nearby homeowners.
93. Public confidence requires independent analysis.
94. The county should err on the side of protecting residents.
95. Private economic benefits should not outweigh public interests without compelling evidence.
96. The burden should remain on the applicant to demonstrate minimal impacts.
97. Once mining advances, the decision cannot easily be reversed.
98. This proposal deserves a more comprehensive evidentiary record before approval.
99. Denial is appropriate until unresolved questions regarding traffic, blasting, water, and neighborhood impacts are independently evaluated.
100. The county should place the long-term health, safety, welfare, and quality of life of its residents ahead of the convenience of a private industrial expansion.