

Public Comment

I am a resident of the new Hickory Meadows subdivision, and I am submitting these comments because the proposed quarry expansion will directly affect me and hundreds of others in our community.

Shortly before closing on my home, a representative from Ball Homes informed me that there was a new disclosure I needed to sign regarding a nearby quarry. The Ball Homes representative, along with my Realtor, showed me a map indicating the location of the quarry in relation to our subdivision. The map showed an approximately 58-acre buffer between the quarry and our neighborhood, and I was told that this buffer would remain.

Because this disclosure came so late in the home-buying process, I was given the option to cancel my purchase and receive a full refund of my deposit. By that point, however, I had already packed my belongings, rented a storage unit, and was preparing to list my previous home, making it an extremely difficult decision.

I knew very little about quarries, so I spent considerable time researching the issue. I contacted Vulcan Materials with numerous questions, including whether there were any future plans to mine the vacant land adjacent to our subdivision. I was told they had approximately 30 years of reserves in their existing quarry and, therefore, had no need to mine that property. I also contacted Air Quality Control, Knox County officials, and spent considerable time researching the potential risks of living near a quarry.

Based on the information I received, along with the existence of the approximately 58-acre buffer, I moved forward with my purchase. Had I been told there were plans to reduce that buffer to approximately 300 feet, I would not have purchased my home.

Despite the current 58-acre buffer, I have already experienced the effects of quarry operations. I have filed multiple complaints this year because blasting has shaken my home like an earthquake, and quarry dust has caused breathing difficulties.

I was shocked to learn that Vulcan is now proposing to mine the vacant land, reducing the buffer from approximately 58 acres to just 300 feet. That is not a minor adjustment—it is a dramatic change that will directly affect hundreds of families. A 300-foot buffer is simply unacceptable.

Based on the information provided during the home-buying process, I believed the approximately 58-acre buffer would remain in place. Many of my neighbors have expressed that they understood it the same way. Vulcan has recently stated that this expansion has been in the planning stages for several years. If that is true, why was this property approved for residential development? Who knew this expansion was being considered, and why were prospective homeowners repeatedly assured that the buffer would remain?

Some of us have barely finished unpacking before facing the possibility of living only a few hundred feet from an active quarry.

Before this proposal is considered, comprehensive independent studies should be required to evaluate the impacts on air quality, noise, blasting vibrations, groundwater, sinkholes, traffic, and public health. These studies should be conducted by qualified experts with no financial interest in the outcome, and the results should be made publicly available with sufficient time for residents to review and understand them before any decision is made.

Our neighborhood is home to infants, young children, pregnant women, seniors, and families who are deeply concerned about their health and safety. They deserve transparency, credible scientific evidence, and a meaningful opportunity to understand the long-term consequences before any irreversible decision is made.

The primary beneficiary of this proposal appears to be Vulcan Materials. The costs, however, will be borne by the families who live here through diminished quality of life, potential health risks, impacts on property values, and the loss of the community we believed we were investing in.

I want to be clear that I am not asking for the existing quarry to be closed. I am asking that this proposal to move quarry operations dramatically closer to an established residential neighborhood be rejected.

I respectfully urge decision-makers to require thorough, independent studies and allow residents adequate time to review the findings before taking any action. Once the trees are cleared and berms are constructed, the impacts begin immediately, and those changes cannot simply be undone.

The thought of having to move again so soon after purchasing my home is overwhelming. I chose this community based on information I believed to be truthful and reliable, and I will continue to advocate for myself, my neighbors, and every resident whose life will be affected by this proposal.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that this proposal be rejected and that the families who call this community home be protected.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna
Resident, Hickory Meadows Subdivision