

In a conservative, pro-military, and pro-law enforcement area like East Tennessee, the absolute last thing a Knox County Commissioner wants is to be branded as the politician who voted to subject disabled combat veterans and retired cops to daily, traumatic blast zones to pad a corporation's profit margins. While property values and utility lines are financial arguments, the PTSD angle elevates this to an immediate, severe public health and civil rights issue.

1. The Optics of Trauma When an industrial mining company blasts rock, it generates two specific triggers for PTSD sufferers: a sudden, high-decibel concussive shockwave (air overpressure) and a physical ground vibration (seismic energy). For a combat veteran or a police officer who has survived shootings or explosions, these aren't just loud noises—they are autonomic, neurological triggers that cause hyperarousal, panic attacks, and severe physiological distress.

2. The Fair Housing Act (FHA)

Under the federal Fair Housing Act (FHA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), local zoning boards are legally prohibited from making land-use decisions that have a discriminatory effect on individuals with disabilities. PTSD is a federally recognized, protected disability. A zoning board has a legal duty to make "reasonable accommodations" to ensure disabled residents can enjoy their housing equally. Approving a heavy industrial expansion that emits concussive blasts mere yards from residential neighborhoods creates a medically hostile environment that disproportionately harms disabled residents.

We are notifying that approving this expansion could constitute a violation of the Fair Housing Act by creating a "constructive eviction" of disabled veterans—meaning the county's zoning action intentionally made their homes medically uninhabitable.

3. The "Medical Affidavit"

We are capable of submitting copies of signed medical affidavits directly to the Planning Commission for a resident. This resident is not a veteran or police officer but suffers from PTSD, just the same. If the commission would allow more time, we are sure we have a neighbor who fits either or both. It is absolutely probable and very likely that our group will have one or both.