

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

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Residents Request Comprehensive Review of Three Asphalt Permits Fear Fatal Flaw in the Future of Caswell County

Today, residents of Caswell County made a formal request to the Board of Commissioners for a comprehensive review of existing and proposed paving industry permits in the Prospect Hill and Anderson communities. The request echoed one made Thursday to the Division of Air Quality by the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League.

Kristin Newnam, speaking on behalf of Protect Caswell, said, "We submit to you this request for a multiple source review. We believe the draft permits are fatally flawed because they fail to protect public health." She concluded, "We just want all these smokestacks looked at together because they all emit toxic air pollution."

Protect Caswell members revealed that Carolina Sunrock, LLC is planning to run three large hot mix asphalt plants producing over two and a half million tons of asphalt per year, plus three truck mix cement plants, two stone crushers, and three power generators at three separate sites within 10 miles of each other.

Louis Zeller, Executive Director of Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League said, "The draft permits are unenforceable because they fail to require hourly or daily limits on asphalt production. This would create a huge burden on public health." Zeller cited state regulations at 15A NCAC 2D .1104 in support of the request for a review of the combined impact of all three plants.

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Carolina Sunrock has a permit for a hot mix asphalt plant at the corner of Wrenn Road and NC 49. Two miles down the Wrenn Road, they are requesting an air quality permit for a mining operation that has yet to be approved. At the mining site there would be another hot mix asphalt plant, a cement plant, fossil-fueled power plants, stone crushers and more. Just nine miles from that site at 12971 HWY 62s, Anderson, they are requesting an air quality permit for a third hot mix asphalt plant, a cement plant, stone crushers and more.

Protect Caswell's membership has over 200 concerned citizens that have been fighting the permitting of Carolina Sunrock's operations since September 11, 2019. They report that their community has been taken by surprise each time, with no signage and no public announcements. The group has attended Soil and Water and Health Department meetings, made comments at every Board of Commissioners and Planning Board Meeting. On January 6, 2020, the Caswell County Board of Commissioners passed a one-year moratorium against polluting industries.

The public comments period for the North Carolina Division of Air Quality to accept comments regarding the two new permits in the southeastern corner of Caswell was extended till June 15, 2020 at 5:00 pm.

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League was founded in North Carolina in 1984 and has worked to reduce asphalt plant pollution since 1996. Protect Caswell became a chapter of BREDL in March 2020.