



North Carolina General Assembly
House of Representatives

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COMMITTEES:

APPROPRIATIONS

GEN. GOVERNMENT, V. CHAIR
CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES
EDUCATION

SUBCOMMITTEE ON K-12, CHAIR
ELECTION LAWS & CAMPAIGN FIN. REFORM
ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY
JUDICIARY III
LOCAL GOVERNMENT II, V. CHAIR

March 10, 2008

Re: Proposed Murphy Hill Road Concrete Plant

Dear Members of the Buncombe County Board of Adjustment:

As a North Carolina House Member representing District 114, Buncombe County, including the area in question, and as Chairman of the Education Subcommittee on Pre-School, Elementary and Secondary Education, being an advocate for children and families, and an owner of property in this area, I am very concerned about the impact of the concrete plant you are proposing.

Over 3,000 students attend North Buncombe Elementary, North Buncombe Middle, Windy Ridge, and North Buncombe High. These four regional schools, as well as the North Buncombe Baptist Church School, are all less than two miles from the proposed site of the concrete plant. There are 12 school busses traveling the road where concrete trucks would be exiting on any given school day, in addition to, families driving their children to school, teenagers driving to school, and normal work traffic. Also many commercial busses transporting youth to and from the Young Life Camp on Upper Flat Creek Road use Murphy Hill Road. At peak times the bumper-to-bumper traffic congestion at the Murphy Hill intersection and old Mars Hill Highway, where the proposed site is located, can result in a ten-minute wait. There have already been many traffic accidents along this strip.

Murphy Hill Road, in the best of conditions, is narrow, curving, steep, and immediately prior to the proposed concrete truck driveway, has a sharp blind curve. There are virtually no shoulders. A car trying to pass a concrete truck pulling out onto the road risks going over an embankment which is roughly a 50-foot drop to I-26 below. Add ice and snow to the equation, with concrete trucks weighing over 33 tons pulling out from a blind spot, and you have a disaster waiting to happen.

Over the past several months, many people who live in the area around the proposed concrete plant site have contacted me. One woman in particular wrote that she is 70 years old and closed on a home to spend her "golden years" only to learn fourteen days later about the proposed site. Furthermore, she referred me to the Buncombe County Construction and Land Use website which states that the planning and zoning guidelines in Buncombe County, "... provide direction to citizens of Buncombe County, and to those whose actions may directly impact citizens, in maintaining orderly and responsible growth by developing and enforcing ordinances, policies, and procedures relating to the use of land." Another important section of the County Zoning regulations reads as follows.



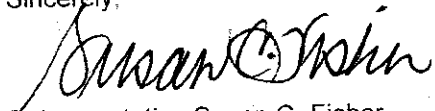
"Open Use, or OU, is zoning usually found in rural areas. The uses restricted in Open Use land include incinerators, **concrete plants** (emphasis added), landfills, asphalt plants, chip mills, mining operations and motor sports facilities.

These types of businesses have a large impact on the community as a whole...."

Above all, please consider the safety of our children, the many health and environmental issues, including the likelihood of lowering the water table and the impact on uphill wells in an already documented dry ridge. Moreover, Murphy Hill is clearly a residential road. Allowing a concrete plant on this site would be entirely inconsistent with the character of the neighborhood as well as a blot on the landscape to the entrance to our community. Allowing a concrete plant to be the gateway to our community strips away property values, decreases county property tax revenues, and prevents future development which would be in character with the residential nature of this community. Given these considerations, it is apparent this is not the optimal site for a concrete plant.

To each member of the Board, I ask you to consider the many very serious health, safety, and financial issues being raised. Please weigh these facts alongside your responsibility to ensure the safety and protection of the families and children of this community. I implore you to vote NO immediately, saving the citizens involved much time, effort, and money and ultimately preserve a longstanding community in Buncombe County.

Sincerely,



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