





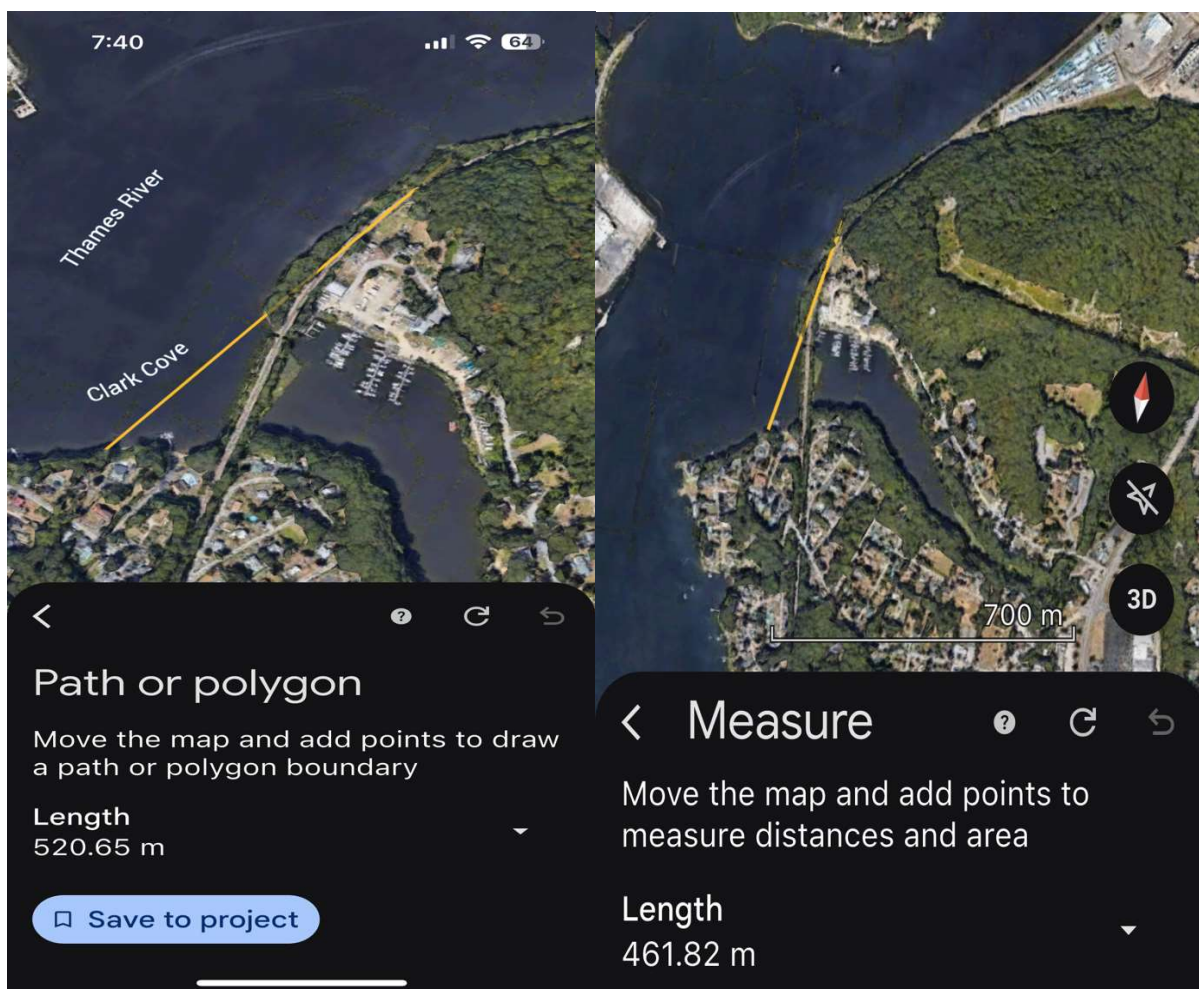
12/16/24

Dear Commissioners,

Welcome to my home! #62 Hurlbutt Road, which falls in the Gales Ferry Historic District (although our home is not historic), in Ledyard, Connecticut. Why does this application affect me? Our home is approximately 1400-1600 feet away from Mt. Decatur. The following maps and pictures show our relationship and proximity to the mountain. Mount Decatur is to the right.

Google Earth:

Distance Between GFI Property and 62 Hurlbutt Road and Surrounding neighbors.





When we learned of the quarry application, my first thoughts were about the safety of my daughters. This picture above is taken from inside my home. Our house and several others on my block are very close to Mt. Decatur (seen on the right). We are approximately 1400-1600 feet away on the south side. Visually, we should not be impacted much. We can hear everything on that mountain (dogs barking, voices of kids, ships or boats docking, etc.). Our house shakes with the trains going by. Researching the usual issues: excessive constant noise from trucks, rock crushers, and blasting as well as vibration, air pollution, river pollution, river traffic, highway traffic and shutdowns would all be issues for us.

For our family, we would have other considerations.

My husband suffered a brain tumor a few years back during Covid (he is ok, but now deaf on one side and some permanent facial paralysis or bell's palsy) and now I am challenged with keeping my kids safe.

My eldest daughter and I both have an immunity disorder (we do not produce IGA) and hence she has severe asthma that turns critical fast. We have had countless hospital visits, scares, and long hours of waiting to see if she would respond to the drugs given to her to stop her lungs from ceasing. Currently, this happens only about once a year.



This is too close for comfort! We live in a neighborhood with so much character it was written up in The New London Day for our relationships that have changed and grown over the years. Our residents sometimes change but the historic village is always here with its vibrant stories and beautiful architecture. Unfortunately, our building codes (even my newer home) were not built to withstand blasting.

Also of note, are the 40-50 foot cliffs along both the northern bluff (Hurlbutt Rd) and the western bluff (Bluff Rd. West). My house and many others are within 10-15 feet of the dirt-based, unretained cliff by the water. Any type of disruption to these bluffs could be catastrophic.

To protect both of my daughters, I wanted more information on the proposed quarry. My questions were simple, “What is it like living day to day, next to a quarry?” “What are the hazards and risks to us, our neighbors, and the environment?” and lastly “What are the benefits to us, and our community?” I started gathering information from experts and did research on other quarries especially locally, although they are smaller than the proposed quarry. I quickly came across some articles on the Bozrah Quarry. Below are some summaries and quotes from some information I found. I noticed a woman, Lara Staunning that had been through much of what we were dealing with. I reached out and contacted her to get more information

The Norwich Bulletin, *Company Shelving Bozrah Quarry Plan*, 8/23/2011 by Francesca Kefalas

In Summary:

Jeff Rawson, president of Rawson Materials, announced the withdrawal of their application to establish a quarry in a location between Brush Hill and Stockhouse roads after discussions with local officials. The proposal faced significant opposition due to its potential negative impact on local businesses and community resources, including nearby schools and fire departments. Although the company cited potential tax and job benefits, local leaders emphasized that the quarry would adversely affect existing businesses in the area. The site is surrounded by important local institutions, prompting concerns about safety, noise, and environmental disruption. The first application was pulled by the applicant, “to be a good neighbor” per Harry Heller.

These quotes highlight the community's concerns regarding the quarry's location and its potential negative impact on local businesses and the environment.

1. *Concern for Local Businesses***:**

- State Rep. Kevin Ryan: “...it would have adversely affected the businesses already here.”

2. *Visual Impact of Logging***:**

- State Rep. Kevin Ryan: “You can see just from all the logging that’s been done what it might have been like to have a huge hole there.”

3. **Company's Responsiveness:**

- State Rep. Kevin Ryan: "They listened to the concerns of the people and they responded to them. That says a lot about the kind of company they are."

This quarry was fought by the people, withdrawn and yet still appeared. I worry about the processes being used to allow this and hope DEEP will step in if necessary. Laura Stauning appeared in another article as one of the organizers of the large group of citizens fighting it. Eventually, the quarry went in under another company and possibly under excavation, it was not clear. I reached out to Lara, and she in turn was kind enough to answer all of my questions and has warned me of the difficulties of the day-to-day operations of the quarry. Not only has it created noise, dust, and constant frustration but it has also damaged her home and Maine Blasting refuses to cover any of the damage and denies fault. I am submitting a copy of Lara Stauning's letter to the Ledyard Planning and Zoning Commission, as well as the first reply to Ms. Stauning's complaints, and a recent reply (per her text and submitted) once again, denying culpability and stating her letter is "unsubstantiated."

I was given permission to share this text to me from her on 12/17:

"They have started blasting again and called me this morning to tell me that they will not do another assessment of my home, pay for water test or water flow test. My insurance company won't defend claims because I don't have earthquake coverage, so I'm on my own. Next step is to contact fire Marshal who regulates their activity. Anyway, I'd love for you to stop by some midweek day to hear what it's like to live next to a quarry! All I can do now is hope for the best! Good luck!"

And Another:

"If officials in Ledyard want to visit my home and get a first hand idea of the impact, they are welcome to visit. I wouldn't announce this, but a little first hand observation might help."

Ms. Stauning has been kind enough to invite you over at a time when there is blasting, unannounced to Maine Blasting to hear and experience what that is like if you would like to experience what it is like to live near a quarry. Her information can be found in her letter, and I can also help you contact her if you so choose.

Thank you to all of you commissioners putting in long hard hours on this huge application. We do appreciate you and ask that you deny this application. I have attached the Maine Blasting reply letter to substantiate their denials. I have also attached a list of a few of the many regulations they are unable to meet.

Angela Cassidy
860-271-1749



ground vibrations were well below the levels that would be required to cause the type of damage that has been claimed. These levels are very conservative and reflect caution used by the industry as well as public safety officials. Studies have shown that a peak particle velocity as low as 0.03 inches per second can be felt and that peak air overpressure readings of 115 decibels can be bothersome. I do not doubt that these two variables were experienced at your home. The levels were nonetheless well below levels known to cause damage, and the damage claimed is not the type of damage that would be a result of blasting. Based on the nature of the damage, the seismograph and blasting data, we must conclude that the damage you have observed was not the result of our blasting operations.

Thank you for your time to meet with me. If you are not satisfied with this conclusion we recommend that you contact your insurance company so that they may conduct an investigation using an independent engineer who is trained in vibration analysis. We will be glad to share our records with them so they may conduct a proper investigation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Barbara Barclay'.

Barbara Barclay
Pre-Blast/Claims Department

YOUR TRUSTED BREED
making it happen



August 18, 2023

Laura Stauning
41 Brush Hill Rd.
Bozrah, CT. 06334

Re: Damaged Claim Job # 106-06-00128/ 23-GL-089

Dear Laura,

This letter is in response to your concerns of the blasting that has taken place in the vicinity of your home and the Blasting Damage Complaint that you filed with us on July 23, 2023. Our claim investigation has consisted of a complete review of our project blasting data and pre-blast survey. After a complete review of that data available to us, we have determined that blasting is not the cause of your claim.

Seismographs are used during blasting operations to record ground vibration and air overpressure (air blast) propagation. The peak particle velocity of the ground vibration is used to determine the probability of vibration-induced damage to a structure. Peak particle velocity is the velocity of particles of earth oscillating around their equilibrium point as the blast induced ground vibrations pass; this velocity is measured in inches per second. The industry standard for safe blasting is 2.0 inches per second peak particle velocity and is based on a study by the US Bureau of Mines (report RI 8507). Two inches per second peak particle velocity is the criteria used to protect weaker building materials in a typical home such as sheet rock or plaster. This criteria very conservative and reflects caution used by the industry as well as public safety officials. Other materials such as concrete, brick, block and tile can withstand much greater ground vibrations (4.0 in/sec to 10.0 in/sec). To put this in perspective, studies have shown that a person jumping produces up to 1.8 inches per second and slamming a door can produce up to 1.3 inches per second. The intensity of the ground vibrations and air blast decreases with distance from the blast site.

The highest ground vibration recorded was on March 28, 2023 was measured at 0.910 inches per second peak particle velocity. This recording was measured 220ft. from the blast zone. Your home is approximately 750 ft. from the blast zone. When considering the additional distance to your property presents peak particle velocity of 0.128 inches per second at your home. The

P.O. Box 1140
542 Brunswick Avenue
Gardiner, ME 04345
207.582.2338
207.582.8794 Fax

88 Gold Ledge Avenue, Suite
2
Auburn, NH 03032
603.647.5863
603.647.9770 FAX

296 West Street
Milford, MA 01757
508.478.0273
508.478.9239 FAX

1275 Cromwell Avenue
Unit F-5
Rocky Hill, CT 06067
860.242.7419
860.242.9375 FAX

Setting Earth-Shattering Standards Since 1966 • An Equal Opportunity Employer

A few regulations out of many they cannot meet:

- **11.3.4.B** ... that transportation services would be adequate and that the uses would not cause **traffic congestion or undue traffic generation** that would have a deleterious effect on the **welfare or safety of the motoring public**.

There is no way the shut downs of Rt 12 will not impede the traffic, safety of our schools, and ability for the fire staff/volunteers to get out to emergencies.

- **11.3.4.C** ... that the use(s) would not be noxious, offensive, or detrimental to the area by reason of **odors, fumes, dust, noise, vibrations, appearance, or other similar reasons**.

The blasting has been described as offensive and detrimental to the emotional state of those close to quarries. Day in and day out rock crushing noise, truck noise, transfer of aggregate, and of course the blasting. I do not feel appearance will affect us as much. However, the vibration could very much be detrimental to the cliffs/bluffs so close to Mt. Decatur and only a few feet from our homes.

- **11.3.4.D** ... that no adverse effect would result to the **property values or historic features of the immediate neighborhood**.



State Representative | Bozrah, Franklin, Lebanon and Montville

KEVIN RYAN

WHY BOZRAH AS THE FOCAL POINT?
 Imagine 100 scenic acres of Brush Hill spoiled by a quarry churning out millions of cubic yards of rock over the next 20-30 years. Imagine Town Hall, town firehouse, Fields Memorial Elementary school and several homes covered in dust with the noise of rock crushers a constant reminder of a bad decision. State Rep. Ryan and 370 residents signed a petition against the idea, determined to protect homes and farmland.

THE STATE STEPS IN
 Since there were no municipal regulations regarding a quarry in Bozrah, this state regulation will now allow the permitting process to move forward with some uniformity. The new permitting process will also assist other Connecticut towns if faced with similar situations.

NOT JUST ANYONE MAKING THE FINAL DECISIONS
 The Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection will have final say on any quarry application filed statewide based on the potential for adverse affects on the quantity or quality of any surface water or groundwater.

Return the attached card to me or save a stamp & reply at my website or call my office:

www.housedems.ct.gov/Ryan | 800.842.8267



HOUSE DEMOCRATS OF CONNECTICUT

- **11.3.4.E** ... that the character of the immediate neighborhood would be preserved in terms of **scale, density, intensity of use, existing historic/natural assets/features** and architectural design.

Our neighborhood which is practically an abutter to Mt. Decature, has been written up in the New London Day due to the character and nature of our unique neighborhood. The relationships among neighbors, the architecture makes you fell as if you stepped back in time. Blasting, dust, constant excavation noise which we can hear everything as it basically reverberates off the other side. We hear machinery, dogs, boats, the train (miles away from the north) etc.

- **113.4.F** ... that the proposed uses would not cause any unreasonable **pollution, impairment or destruction of the air, water, and other natural resources** of the state.

I think enough people have covered this, but we will be greatly affected due to proximity. I am concerned for my family's health and safety.

9.1 Site Design Requirements are intended to:

- protect public **health, safety, welfare, property values, and natural resources**.
- encourage site design and development that is efficient, effective and in keeping with the general architecture, rhythm, aesthetics, and existing development pattern/layout in the immediate neighborhood.

A number of people have sold their homes with even the notion or possibility of this monstrosity coming in. I think any reasonable person understands this would change over this entire area (not just the GFI property) to an industrial feel vs residential as it will affect so much beyond its borders.

- **9.2.C.1** No **dust, dirt, fly ash or smoke** shall be emitted into the air so as to endanger the **public health, safety, or general welfare, or to decrease the value or enjoyment of other property or to constitute an objectionable source of air pollution**.

Lara Stauning states she no longer enjoys having people over due to the constant noise surrounding her home.

- **9.2.C.3** With the exception of time signals and emergency signals and noise necessarily involved in the construction or demolition of buildings or other structures, no **noise which is unreasonable in volume, intermittence, frequency, or shrillness** shall be transmitted beyond the boundaries of the lot on which it originates.

I am very worried about volume, frequency and shrill of rock crushing. We also have a dog who would be greatly inhibited, so on top of all the noise, we will hear him barking too. I do not see how the applicant can possibly meet this regulation based on this geography. This is why quarries are typically away from people in more desolate areas. Yes, they will make and save money due to the river and train but at what expense to us?

I have also included a copy of Ms. Stauning's letter for ease of use (however, her letter was submitted separately)

October 22, 2024

Ledyard Planning and Zoning Commission
741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, CT 06339
VIA Email

RE: Mount Decatur Project Application

My name is Lara Stauning, my address is 41 Brush Hill Road, Bozrah, CT. Last winter I was made aware of the proposed excavation site being proposed on Mt. Decatur and was asked to speak to the Commission about my personal experience as a property owner whose land abuts the active Bozrah "excavation site" located on Stockhouse Road in Bozrah. Unfortunately, due to another obligation I cannot attend tonight's meeting and submit this written statement for consideration in my absence.

For full transparency, I want the commission to know the I have no ties with the village of Gales Ferry nor town of Ledyard. I have no interest in whether this goes forward or not. I do, however, understand first-hand the importance of this Commission's decision on the application submitted and the potential impact on the residents' quality of life and enjoyment of their small town. That is why I have offered to provide my experience and support, because I have experienced similar circumstances myself and understand the frustration.

I can empathize with the with the concerns that I have heard residents raise in prior public hearings regard the application before the Commission. I also acknowledge that during difficult economic times, development of industry is often look to by small towns to defray the increased costs of providing the services in a town to its residents. It is a fact, if economic development is not permitted, then the taxpayer will likely need to shoulder that cost. **However, the question is what type of economic development should be permitted and how will the municipality ensure that the applicant will be held to their professed commitment to be a good community partner.**

What I offer for your consideration is only my experience as it relates to living next to a "excavation site". For your reference, my home can be seen in the upper right-hand corner of slide #24 of the applicants PowerPoint presentation (provided in the earlier application in February 2024). My home, built in 2003-2004, is 750 feet from the blast site and at the time it was built it was surrounded by woodlands. Currently, my home is next to the active excavation site that is owned Coit Excavating, who is utilizing the services of

Maine Drilling and Blasting to conducting the blasting necessary to remove the materials from the site.

The applicant uses the Bozrah site, involving Mid-City Steel and Coit Excavation, as an example of a “sizable excavation conducted without adverse impact on the community.” However, I must respectfully disagree.

What is it like to live next to an active blasting site? Again, I am here to give share my experience, not to dispute the applications approved in Bozrah for these sites. That has been done and I did not oppose those applications for reasons I will touch upon later. However, as an individual that works from home a majority of the time, during the course of the Mid-City Steel and Coit Excavation, projects I have been present to make the following observations on the impact that having a quarry outside my back door.

Noise:

While Maine Drilling and Blasting typically provides 3 warning horn blasts before any blast and will offer to call your cell and let you know when blasting will occur, and the noise from the blast itself is momentary. The noise and vibration of a blast, however, never ceases to startle me. During the height of the blasting activity in the Spring and Summer of 2023, I estimate that blasting took place 3-4 time per week. Additionally, my husband who works nights would be startled awake as he slept during the day several times per week.

The noise that is more disturbing is the processing of the rock that takes place in between blasts to remove the blasted materials. In the summer and warm weather, I am unable to open my windows to enjoy the fresh air because of the constant noise of rock crushing and sorting equipment and the always present beeping of trucks and equipment as they work to remove the materials and process it. This typically takes place from 7 AM to 5 PM Monday through Saturday. In 2013, prior to these projects, we spend several thousand dollars to install a patio. However, as a result of the constant noise from the processing, we no longer entertain at our home in the summer and we rarely use our patio or back porch due to the incessant sound of rock being processed and trucks beeping. This activity continues as I write this letter to you today.

Traffic:

Coit Excavation has installed an access road to the quarry site that is approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ from my driveway. Brush Hill, however, is a

narrow rural secondary road and due to the increased traffic and large trucks I no longer feel safe taking walks on the street that I grew up on. To be fair, Coit is not the only industry that uses Brush Hill as an access point, but the activity of the quarry does contribute to the overall unsafe conditions that prohibit those residents from walking on what was once a rural back road. Many of the residents living on Brush Hill have lived there their entire lives and can no longer walk there without being fearful that they will be hit by a passing vehicle.

Wildlife:

Since the woodlands below us have been slowly cleared and the blasting has taken place, we have seen a significant increase in the number of wildlife that now need to travel through our property close to our house. It is not uncommon to see bobcats and deer at all hours in our front and back yard. While I do not mind getting an opportunity to see the wildlife up close, I realize that this is not normal. Deer now come into your yard and either landscaping that we have put up to buffer noise and cover up the view of the industry growing around us. I am no longer feel safe putting my dogs out without going out with them due to the frequent siting of bobcats and coyotes that are being forced out of their natural habitat.

Property Damages:

I want to preface this discussion by disclosing that around 2011, Rawson Materials, applied to run a quarry in the same area highlighted in slide #24 of the Applicant's presentation. At that time, I decided to oppose the application, I did what all of the residents here are doing; organizing groups to oppose the quarry, encouraging people to testify at the public hearing, spreading information by going door-to-door, I hired my own land use attorney to represent me, I hire a geologist to do a study of the effect on the well water, contacted my legislators, and spoke with the press. Eventually the application was withdrawn. However, the experience left me physically and emotionally exhausted and disenchanted with my community leaders. In my perspective, community leaders were exchanging our small town feel for a quick and short-term financial gain that would leave a permanent physical scar on the landscape of our community.

A few years later I heard about the Mid-City Steele and Coit Excavation projects and I consciously decided not to get involved, it was too time consuming, stressful and expensive. I decided to put my faith in "the system" and if I did have damages, if these entities were the good neighbors and community members they professed to be, they would make things right.

In the early Spring of 2023, I took advantage of Maine Drilling and Blasting's offer to do a property assessment. They came out to my home and video-taped the entire interior and exterior of my home, including the basement and foundation. I also asked them to conduct a water test to get a baseline of the water quality and flow of my well. (As an aside, I recommend that anyone else here also take advantage of this, but also do their own property assessment and water tests, independent of Maine Drilling and Blasting).

By June of 2023 I became to notice cracks in my walls and ceiling and that they were getting larger. I also noticed dozens of sheetrock screws were beginning to pop out of the wall and pieces of sheet rock were falling out. Because this coincided with the repeated blasting that took place over the prior months, I decided to submit a claim to Maine Drilling and Blasting. I took photographs of every crack and screw that was popping out of the walls and included details on each photo of the date and location. There is damage to every single room in my home. Taking the photos was very time consuming, but because I was hopeful that I could trust in the process and that if I submitted a well-documented claim, that Maine Drilling and Blasting would repair the damage to my home upon completion of the blasting activity, I was willing to put in the time and effort. I also copied our First Selectman on this communication and received no acknowledgement.

In July 2023, in response to my claim submission, Barbara Barclay, from Maine Drilling and Blasting came out to do an assessment of the damage. In fact, she helped me identify additional areas of damage that I had not included in my previous claim. Shortly thereafter, on August 18, I received a letter from Maine Drilling and Blasting that summarily denied my claim stating that "blasting is not the cause of your claim" and provided a highly scientific explanation for their conclusion (which I am not qualified to refute) and recommended that if I was not satisfied to, "contact [my] insurance company so that they may conduct an investigation using an independent engineer who is trained in vibration analysis." They did not, however, provide any reasonable explanation that could explain the damage if it was not due to the blasting. (See, Attachment B, *Letter To: L. Stauning, From: B. Barclay, MDB, dated 8/18/23*). Based on my experience, it is my opinion that they likely had no intention of covering the claim.

(1) The analysis was done by Maine Drilling and Blasting *themselves*, not their insurer nor an independent engineer. I was naïve to think that they would review this information themselves and admit fault and cover the damages simply to be a "good partner" of the community when the decision was

entirely up to their discretion. I found this to be an empty solution offered on their part. After all, why would they approve a claim?

(2)Based on the prior testimony provided by resident of Ledyard, in the prior meeting, he had discovered that Maine Drilling and Blasting routinely refuses to pay for damages. Based on my experience, I believe that if I do decide to pursue a claim, it will be a long-drawn-out process in which I will end up paying higher insurance premiums, potentially be dropped by my insurer, and not be made whole in the end. I suspect it is the hope of Maine Drilling and Blasting, the Town of Bozrah, and Stephen Coit that I will give up. Unless your residents are committed to battling their insurance company or Maine Drilling and Blasting, I would not rely on any assurances provided by Maine Drilling and Blasting.

(2) If this application is approved, there must be some assurances to residents that if they have damages as a result, they have a *meaningful* method to get the cost of repairs covered. The town should be prepared to assist residents as they too are taxpayers. Additionally, the town must evaluate their own ability and determine if they have the necessary resources to monitor and respond to such claims made by your resident taxpayers, the people who live in this town.

Currently, some of the cracks in my ceilings and walls now span the entire length of the ceiling or the height of the walls. Chunks of sheet rock have begun to fall from the walls and ceiling. At some juncture the entire interior of my home will need to be repaired in order to be sold. To date, I have not decided whether I want to explore this with my insurance company.

Loss of Participation

Finally, I want to point out the effect that this has had on my and my husband's civic engagement. When I moved back to Bozrah (this is the town that I grew up in and wanted to return to) we volunteered to give back to our community. We are both individuals with time, knowledge, and skills to offer to the town to contribute in various ways, more importantly because we live in Bozrah we cared. My husband served on the Planning and Zoning Board of Appeals for several years and I served on Inland Wetlands Commission and the Maples Farm Park Commission helping to establish the Bozrah Farmer's Market.

After our experience with the quarry and the more recent "excavation" projects that continues to impact the value of our home, we decided to finish out our respective terms and opted out of participating. We still do some things, like town clean up day, where we pick up the garbage from the side of our own road,

but we have withdrawn ourselves from all civic involvement. I don't feel good about that. I am a civic minded person and the path that the leaders of the community have chosen to take is incredibly disappointing. We have contemplated moving out of town on several occasions, but are not confident that anyone would want to buy a home surrounded by a quarry, with rocks being processed 6 days a week. We do, however, know that we will not stay in Bozrah when we retire and we will move and it is because the Town has made choices that have impacted our quality of life that cannot be undone. Gales Ferry should carefully consider the loss of invested members of their community that may result due to the approval of this application.

Thank you for allowing me to provide my experience for your consideration. Best of luck with this process, it is not an easy decision to make.

Lara Stauning