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11/21/24
EXHIBIT

I am Mary Larson, known to most in this town as Mobby, living at 53 Harvard Ter. We bought our house as a young Navy couple in 1969 (when its address was RR3 #151). We are still in this house, after raising three sons here, pre-school through graduation. Now we have grandchildren at Juliet Long and the Middle School.

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Before I read this letter, I will share my background.

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I studied sociology, where I learned how to do research, and studied how societal groups are organized and what their internal dynamics are. Eventually, I went into ministry. I served a total of 20 years of ministry in this town, during which time I organized and facilitated many ecumenical activities. In 2000 I founded a 501(c)(3) group for townspeople and tribal members to come together to discuss common concerns. What I became an expert at was listening to people's hopes and fears, absorbing them, expressing them, and then addressing them.

Land Use Department

Over the years, I found across the board that our highest hopes are for our children and grandchildren, our most vulnerable residents, to grow up in a safe and healthy environment.

Now I would like to share a letter endorsed by 41 residents of Harvard Terrace, which reflects those same hopes.

To the Members of the Ledyard CT Planning and Zoning Commission
November 2024 Re: PZ#24-8SUP & PZ#24-9CAM

We appreciate the work you all are doing, especially in these times of making difficult decisions about the town we all love. Maintaining a balance of economic responsibility while preserving the residential nature of the town cannot be easy.

We do need to speak in opposition to the quarry “excavation” proposed by Gales Ferry Intermodel. We have been told that in the Town of Ledyard Zoning Regulations, “Major Excavation” could be permitted in a “Heavy Industrial Zone” with a Special Use Permit. But our town regulations specify that applicants for Special Use Permits shall have the burden to prove: that the application is materially in conformance with all applicable provisions of these Regulations, that transportation services would not cause traffic congestion or undue traffic generation that would have a deleterious effect on the welfare or the safety of the motoring public; 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; and that no adverse effect would result to the property values or historic features of the immediate neighborhood.¹

Our Ledyard regulations also are in place to ensure that “the landscape is not needlessly marred...and that the site will not be generally characterized by unsightliness as evidenced by open pits, rubble or other indications of completed digging operations which would have a deteriorating influence on nearby property values.”²

Ledyard is a special community appreciated for its natural beauty, unique places and its demographic as a family-oriented community. Obviously, the threat to historic Mt. Decator is of great concern to many of us, and we worry that the conditional promises to carve around a small portion of the historic site do not answer the concerns addressed by the American Battlefield Trust.³

But we are mostly concerned about the short- and long-term effects of a mining operation and how it would disturb our town and endanger residents, particularly our children.

An article reporting on the “Impact of Silica Mining on the Environment” said: “SPM (Suspended Particulate Matter) generated by silica mining and from the rubble heaped on the side of mines, is posing a threat to local environment. These [airborne] particles get accumulated on leaves and thus they disturb the photosynthesis and respiration process...Vegetation loss has promoted erosion, land degradation and loss in biodiversity...[And] increasing truck haulage, blasting at the sites and high increase in the SPM is reducing the air quality of the region.”⁴

Silica is a well-known carcinogen, as we have been hearing; and it is found in all granite. Besides harmful effects on the environment, there are known to be strong links between silica and pulmonary disease, heart disease, and kidney disease.⁵ The “suspended dust particles

may cause various skin, ocular and respiratory diseases and decrease average human life expectancy residing within the vicinity.”⁶ Resources from OSHA and NIH have made it quite clear over the years, since Francis Perkins’ Department of Labor report in 1938, that breathing any amount of silica dust is extremely harmful.⁷

The US EPA report in 1996 on ambient levels of inhaled crystalline silica states that “Fugitive dust emissions arise from manipulation of outdoor storage piles...[and] tend to be generated after the product has been acquired or produced.”⁸ There will be dust from not only from blasting, but from rock crushing, transporting on site, storing in piles, and transporting on the roads and the river. We understand misting is intended to keep the dust down during some stages of the process. It would be impossible, however, to eliminate all dust. And what happens to the now contaminated water used in the misting? It has nowhere to go but down to the river, creating new ecological concerns.

Blasted and crushed rock cannot help but leak dust into the environment—the surrounding air, the roads, buildings, vegetation, and the river itself. According to the Institute for Tribal Environment Professionals, “Fugitive dust is an inevitable problem for almost all forms of mining. $PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10} are invisible to the naked eye, and are easily carried in wind currents. They can remain airborne for long periods of time, and can be carried up to 30 miles (PM_{10}) or hundreds of miles ($PM_{2.5}$) from the source.”⁹ We question whether monitors placed 6 feet high around the perimeter of the lot can possibly measure dust carried for miles by the wind.

Engineers with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (part of the CDC) did an extensive study proving the detrimental effects of breathing silica dust by the truck drivers as they follow each other with their full loads. A driver following a loaded truck within 20 seconds can be potentially exposed to dust concentrations exceeding the 2.75 mg/m^3 maximum exposure recommendation.¹⁰ And these are the trucks driving their full loads past our schools and playgrounds!

We are deeply concerned about this dust created, not only in blasting and crushing of rock, but while being transported by these trucks --50 round trips per day! That is one truck every few minutes driving through our community (at a reduced speed to minimize fugitive dust, but that is guaranteed to upset local traffic, as well!) Within two miles from the proposed quarry are three public schools with ballfields and playgrounds, two pre-schools, five churches, a town park and a state park. That fugitive dust will settle on playground equipment and playing fields, getting stirred up again every time children slide down the slides or run on the grass. The town would not even be getting any real tax benefits until the children who were kindergarteners at the time when the project started become graduating seniors,¹¹ after spending many of those years breathing in silica dust as they were playing on these local fields.

Lastly, we are all concerned about property values for the homes we live in and have loved for years, or even decades. We have heard conflicting reports about whether property values located near a quarry could lose a substantial amount of their value. But we all know that no

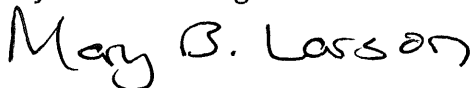
one wants to live close to an unsightly, noisy operation that is endangering the environment and the very air we breathe. We also wonder how the town can ensure compliance with regulations while such a project went on for years. We read last week of the quarry/excavation project in Old Lyme that continued work on the property for a year after their permit expired, and still took almost another year before applying for a new permit.¹²

As an international environmental NGO has said:

*Quarries are temporary, but their environmental impacts are forever. Every stage of a quarry's life cycle comes at an enormous environmental cost: loss of natural carbon sinks, eradication of biodiversity, noise and air pollution, and disruption of natural streams and springs. And these losses can never be reversed.*¹³

In responding to an application for a Special Permit, you, as Planning and Zoning Commission members, have the critical responsibility to "protect the public health, safety, welfare, property values, and natural resources of the state."¹⁴ We have all been inundated with hours and hours, and pages and pages of data; but we cannot ignore common sense. The project will create noise, vibrations, traffic concerns, and dust dangerous to the environment and our health, and to the health and well-being of our children. And once it starts, there would be no going back. This proposed project should not be in anybody's back yard. A residential neighborhood with homes, schools, daycares, places of worship and outdoor recreation areas is no place for a quarry in its midst!

Thank you for listening to our concerns.



Rev. Dr. Mary B. Larson

53 Harvard Terrace, Gales Ferry

The following residents of Harvard Terrace have endorsed this letter:

Paul & Cecile Magwood--48	Wayne Marshall—5	Allison & Tyler Knigge--35
Elayne Tortorigi Pons--57	Linda & Richard Levesque--33	John Michaud—44
Stacy & Jon Alfield--56	Keila Raymond—52R	Ric & Phyllis Lunato—42
Leslie & Lee Traver—10	Larry Rucker—12	Ellen & Norman Atwood—8
Jacob & Julianne Monk—46*	Doug & Ann Monaghan—49	Dave Larson--53
Brenna Dillner Hass & Aaron Hass—51	Craig Mateyov & Colleen Moneypenny—7	
April & Kevin Martindale—54	Connor Slack & Vivian Phelan--47	
Charlie & Mary Duzy—4	Kevin Cassidy & Heather Hollis—55	Andrea Cassara--36
Jonathan Willis & Tiffany O'Dell, Jasmine Willis, Caroline Willis —50		

*owners of the home, but temporarily stationed out of the area

Sources cited in the letter

1. Town of Ledyard Zoning Regulations, 11.3.4 A-D
2. Town of Ledyard Zoning Regulations, 8.16. D.1-3
3. Ex. #124-8SUP-9 AmericanBattlefieldTrustLetter.
4. Misha, Ashutosh, Geography Department, University of Allahabad, India. 27 May 2015.
Reviewed in Academic Journals.
5. "Silica, Crystalline: Overview" OSHA, US Department of Labor.
6. Zafar, Muhammed Saeed, et al., "Sustainable Incorporation of Waste Granite Dust as Partial Replacement of Sand in Autoclave Aerated Concrete."
Construction and Building Materials, ScienceDirect, 30 July 2020.
7. "Stop Silicosis," video by Francis Scott Perkins, Secretary of Labor.
8. U.S. EPA, "Ambient Levels and Noncancer Health Effects of Inhaled Crystalline and Amorphous Silica: Health Issue Assessment. Triangle Park, 1996.
9. "Health Effects of Quarry Dust," Institute for Tribal Environment Professionals, Nevada.
10. Reed, W.R. and Organiscak, J.A. , mining engineers with NIOSH, Pittsburgh Research Laboratory. CDC, January 2006.
11. "Fiscal and Economic Impact Study, 1737-1761 Route 12, Gales Ferry," Goman & York Advisory Services, October 2024.
12. The Day, November 14, 2024.
13. Newsletter, 03 October 2023, Environmental Coalition on Standards, Brussels, Belgium.
14. Town of Ledyard Zoning Regulations, 11.3.5 D