

February 24, 2006

The Honorable Tim Kaine, Governor of Virginia
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: Public Comment, Draft Air Permit for Columbia Forest Products - Chatham.

Dear Governor Kaine:

Enclosed is a copy of the cover letter accompanying our comments regarding the proposed new air permit for Columbia Forest Products - Chatham. You will note that we have very serious concerns. Although the permit is a result of plans to reduce the heavy smoke from the facility, it appears to us that, as currently construed, it has insufficient safeguards to prevent the problem from actually becoming worse and more dangerous. Among our concerns is the burning of a significant amount of plastic resins that the Virginia DEQ is regulating as though it were clean wood.

We have been communicating with Virginia DEQ for almost three years now regarding this situation. Our discussions have included many contacts with the Lynchburg office; a written appeal to former DEQ director Mr. Robert Burnley; and two meetings with Mr. Burnley. In the meantime, the conditions of smoke, odor, and noise have continued to deteriorate (for example, to the point that in January the Mitchell family found it necessary to close their bed-and-breakfast business of 20+ years). Please note that the prior to recent conditions, the factory and community enjoyed a pleasant coexistence for decades.

You may obtain further background from Mary Catherine Plaster, legislative assistant to Sen. Charles Hawkins. Thank you very much for your attention and assistance.

Yours truly,

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