

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF FLORENCE

In Re:)
) TRANSCRIPT OF
)
EFFINGHAM PELLETS, LLC) PUBLIC HEARING
Draft Air Quality)
Construction Permit)
)

DATE: Thursday, June 17th, 2021

TIME: 6:33 p.m.

LOCATION: Via Remote Videoconference - All Parties

REPORTED BY:

Cara-Leigh V. Richardson

A P P E A R A N C E S

ON BEHALF OF SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL:

Monica Taylor, HEARING OFFICER
Kristen Tucker, PRESENTER
Donna Moye, TECH HOST
Katherine Yon, TECH TEAM
Steve McCaslin

SPEAKERS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Robby Phillips, DOGWOOD ALLIANCE
David White
David Quick
Taylor Fitts, U.S. INDUSTRIAL PELLET ASSOCIATION
Loretta Slater, WHITNEY M. SLATER FOUNDATION
Carolyn Witherspoon, WHITNEY M. SLATER FOUNDATION
Rashad Cade, NEW ALPHA COMMUNITY DEV. CORP
Estrella Sainburg, NEW ALPHA COMMUNITY DEV. CORP
Chief Pete Parr, PEE DEE INDIAN TRIBE
Rev. Leo Woodberry, NEW ALPHA COMMUNITY DEV. CORP
Anthony Hall, FLORENCE DEMOCRACY CENTER
Dr. Virginia Singleton, DIVINE CHURCH OF DELIVERANCE
Buquilla Ervin-Cannon, PEE DEE MINORITY HEALTH
Suzanne LaRoche
Virginia Sanders
Danna Smith, DOGWOOD ALLIANCE
Freeda Cathcart
Suzanna Ellison
Dr. Florence Anoruo

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1 P R O C E E D I N G

2 MS. MOYE: Hello, and welcome. You have joined
3 DHEC's Virtual Public Hearing on the Draft Air
4 Quality Construction Permit for Effingham
5 Pellets.

6 My name is Donna Moye. I am part of
7 DHEC's Community Engagement Team for
8 Environmental Affairs, and I will be serving
9 as the Tech Host for tonight's hearing. It is
10 a pleasure to be here with you and on behalf
11 of DHEC, I would like to thank you for taking
12 the time to join us remotely.

13 We also have assistance from a
14 member of our Tech Team tonight. I'll ask
15 Katherine to introduce herself now.

16 MS. YON: Good evening, everyone. This is
17 Katherine Yon.

18 MS. MOYE: Thank you, Katherine.
19 In just a few minutes, you'll be introduced to
20 other DHEC staff who are also involved in
21 tonight's virtual public hearing.

22 We are using this technology to
23 provide opportunities for continued
24 participation in our decision-making processes
25 while we all do our part to reduce the spread

1 of Coronavirus. It is so important that we
2 hear from all who are interested, and doing so
3 in a safe and effective manner remains our top
4 priority.

5 We encourage you to join us in
6 preventing the spread of COVID-19. Let's
7 fight this virus by rolling up our sleeves.
8 Everyone ages 12 and older is now eligible for
9 the vaccine. It's safe, it's quick, it's
10 easy, and best of all, it's free. No ID and
11 no insurance are needed. For information on
12 COVID-19 and finding a vaccine near you, call
13 1-866-365-8110, or visit our website at
14 scdhec.gov/vaxfacts, and that web address and
15 number are on your screen now.

16 For tonight, we will be doing a few
17 things to help prevent distractions and ensure
18 that everyone is heard at the appropriate
19 time. All cameras have been turned off and
20 all lines have been muted in order to minimize
21 background noise and echoing so that everyone
22 can hear the presentation.

23 After the presentation, we will
24 unmute lines and share further instructions so
25 that all who would like to provide comments

1 tonight are able to do so. This virtual
2 hearing is being recorded and the recording
3 will be placed on our webpage within the next
4 several days. That recording has started.

5 We do have a full agenda tonight, so
6 I will turn things over to Monica Taylor, who
7 will be serving as our Hearing Officer.

8 Monica, are you ready?

9 MS. TAYLOR: Yes, thank you, Donna.

10 Hello, the time now is 6:33 on Thursday, June
11 17th, 2021, and this public hearing will begin
12 now.

13 My name is Monica Taylor. I will
14 serve as your Hearing Officer tonight. It is
15 my pleasure to have you with us. We thank you
16 all for joining us remotely.

17 This public hearing is being held by
18 South Carolina Department of Health and
19 Environmental Control, also known as DHEC.
20 The purpose of this hearing is to accept oral
21 comments and supporting information on the
22 Draft Air Quality Permit for Effingham Pellets
23 LLC, located at 4905 Ingram Bypass, Effingham,
24 South Carolina, Florence County.

25 The permitting process at DHEC

1 begins when an application is received for one
2 or more environmental permit. During the
3 permitting process, an applicant must show
4 that the process operation can comply with
5 state and federal regulations. These
6 regulations are developed to ensure human
7 health and the environment are protected. In
8 addition to reviewing the application, DHEC's
9 role is to write and, if issued, enforce
10 permits that meet the requirements of the
11 regulations.

12 You also have a role in the DHEC
13 permitting process. Your comments are
14 important to us and may provide DHEC staff
15 with additional things to consider when making
16 a final decision regarding the Draft Air
17 Quality Permit. It is important for you to
18 know that a final decision has not yet been
19 made and will not be made tonight. The
20 purpose of this hearing is for you to provide
21 comments before a final decision is made.

22 Continuing to provide safe and
23 effective opportunities for public involvement
24 in our permitting process remains a top
25 priority for DHEC in the wake of the COVID-19

1 pandemic. This public hearing is being held
2 virtually because it allows for you to provide
3 verbal comments in real-time from the comfort
4 of your home. The virtual aspect does
5 sometimes have its own unique challenges. We
6 appreciate your patience and understanding as
7 we work through any technical issues that may
8 arise.

9 Comments made tonight are being
10 recorded and will be included in a written
11 transcript prepared by a certified court
12 reporter. DHEC welcomes and encourage all
13 comments made tonight, as well as those
14 submitted in writing through the end of the
15 public comment period, which is on Thursday,
16 July 1st, by 5:00 p.m.

17 DHEC has created a webpage for
18 access to information about the Draft Air
19 Permit. The webpage address, as Donna
20 mentioned, again is [www.scdhec.gov/Effingham-](http://www.scdhec.gov/Effingham-Pellets)
21 [Pellets](http://www.scdhec.gov/Effingham-Pellets). A recording of this public hearing
22 will be posted on the webpage prior to the end
23 of the public comment period.

24 If you have not already done so, I
25 encourage you to go to our webpage and

1 complete the registration form for this
2 hearing. This will let us know how to notify
3 you of our final decision regarding the Draft
4 Air Permit.

5 We will now move on to the agenda
6 and the order in which we proceed for this
7 hearing. An overview of the proposed Draft
8 Air Permit and the DHEC air permitting process
9 will be provided by Kristen Tucker.

10 Following the presentation, we will
11 begin the public-comment portion by calling on
12 those who have indicated, during, during
13 registration that they would like to comment.
14 If you decide you no longer wish to speak when
15 you're called on, you may decline at that
16 time.

17 Once we have finished hearing from
18 all pre-registered speakers, those who did not
19 pre-register to speak will be given an
20 opportunity to make their comments. At the,
21 at that time, our Tech Host will give
22 instructions on how you can indicate that you
23 would like to comment.

24 After all comments have been made, I
25 will make our closing remarks and the public

1 hearing will be adjourned.

2 In order for everyone to have a fair
3 and equal opportunity to participate tonight,
4 and to ensure that we proceed in a timely and,
5 and effective manner, the following guidelines
6 have been established.

7 There will be no questions or
8 answers during or after the presentation or
9 comments.

10 Your comments should not go over
11 three minutes. At the end of the allotted
12 three minutes, you will hear this sound (timer
13 sound demonstrated). At the end of that three
14 minutes, I may interrupt to let you know to
15 please conclude your thought. If you have not
16 been able to complete your comments within the
17 allotted time, you may also still submit them
18 in writing before the end of the comment
19 period. Please keep in mind the final
20 decisions are not made based on a vote or how
21 many people say the same things.

22 Please be respectful towards all who
23 are presenting information or making comments
24 here tonight. You each have a unique and
25 valuable perspective. No one comment is

1 considered more than another.

2 Please do not interrupt or ask other
3 participants to respond during your comments.
4 You should not comment or you -- I'm sorry.
5 Should any comments or action begin to
6 interrupt the proceedings of this hearing, the
7 speaker will be placed on mute and possibly
8 removed from the online platform.

9 I will now call on Kristen Tucker to
10 give the DHEC presentation. Kristen.

11 MS. TUCKER: Thank you, Monica.

12 Good evening, everyone. My name is Kristen
13 Tucker. I am a permit writer for DHEC's
14 Bureau of Air Quality, and I was assigned to
15 review the application and draft the permit
16 for Effingham Pellets, LLC.

17 I'll start with a quick overview of
18 the permitting process. It begins when an
19 application is received and reviewed for
20 technical completeness to ensure the project
21 will be in compliance with all applicable
22 regulations.

23 Once the application has been
24 reviewed for technical completeness, the
25 Department determines which type of permit is

1 required, for example a minor, major, or
2 synthetic minor permit.

3 If the applicant demonstrates the
4 project can meet all applicable air
5 regulations, a permit is drafted. The draft
6 permit will contain all applicable
7 requirements.

8 There is an opportunity for public
9 input to ensure that all interested persons
10 have an opportunity to provide input on the
11 project. We are currently at this stage in
12 the process. Once all of these steps are
13 complete, a final permit decision is made.

14 Effingham Pellets submitted an air
15 construction permit application on December
16 10, 2020, to construct a brand-new wood pellet
17 manufacturing facility with a production
18 capacity of 45,625 oven-dried short tons of
19 wood pellets per year. It will be located at
20 4905 Ingram Bypass, Effingham, South Carolina
21 29541.

22 Here is a map of the site of the new
23 facility and the surrounding area. The
24 property outlined in blue indicates where the
25 proposed facility will be constructed. This

1 land will be leased from the Charles Ingram
2 Lumber Company, Inc., outlined in white.

3 The lumbermill operates at 4930
4 Planer Road and owns several parcels of land
5 in the area. The closest residences are
6 approximately a quarter mile west of
7 Effingham's property line, along Ingram
8 Bypass.

9 Based on the proximity of the two
10 facilities, the Department considered whether
11 Effingham Pellets and Charles Ingram Lumber
12 Company should be permitted as a single source
13 or two separate sources. The Department bases
14 collocation on three criteria. The facilities
15 must meet all three of the following criteria
16 to be considered collocated.

17 First, they must be located on
18 contiguous or adjacent sites. The address for
19 the two facilities are approximately one mile
20 apart; however, Charles Ingram owns the land
21 on which Effingham Pellet will operate.
22 Therefore, they will meet the criteria of
23 being contiguous properties.

24 Second, they must be in the same
25 major industrial grouping. Both lumbermills

1 and pellet mills fall under the same Standard
2 Industrial Classification, Major Group 24:
3 Lumber and Wood Products, not including
4 furniture. Therefore, they also meet this
5 criterion.

6 Third, they must be under common
7 control. While this aspect is very nuanced,
8 it focuses on who has decision-making power
9 over the facilities. Based on provided
10 operation agreements, Charles Ingram will be a
11 partial owner of Effingham Pellets.

12 Fifty percent of Effingham Pellets
13 will be owned by CMB Effingham, LLC, a
14 subsidiary of CM Biomass, a Danish company.
15 The other 50 percent will be owned by
16 Effingham Bio Fuels, LLC. Effingham Bio Fuels
17 will be 40 percent owned by Charles Ingram,
18 and 60 percent owned by three high-level
19 Charles Ingram employees, each owning 20
20 percent. Therefore, Charles Ingram will
21 effectively have 20 percent ownership of
22 Effingham Pellets.

23 Because CMB Effingham and Effingham
24 Bio Fuels will have equal say in all major
25 decisions and given that Charles Ingram is

1 only a partial owner of Effingham Bio Fuels,
2 there is no clear majority owner so the
3 facilities are not under common control.

4 Based on these criteria, the
5 Department has determined that Effingham
6 Pellets shall be permitted as a single source,
7 independent from Charles Ingram.

8 Here is a process flow diagram of
9 pellet production at the proposed facility.
10 The facility will not have any planers,
11 sawmills, dryers, or other equipment necessary
12 to process raw trees or greenwood, so it will
13 only use dried wood shavings as its raw
14 material. These will mainly be supplied by
15 Charles Ingram Lumber, which already processes
16 Southern Yellow Pine logs into lumber and
17 produces dried shavings as a byproduct.

18 The shavings will arrive pre-dried
19 with a moisture content of 10 to 12 percent.
20 These shavings will be delivered via trucks,
21 which will unload into the shavings storage
22 building, an enclosed building on the site,
23 then loaded with mobile equipment onto a
24 hydraulically-operated feed system and
25 enclosed conveyor. The conveyor system feeds

1 the shavings into the pellet box, which
2 contains all of the pelletizing operations.

3 First, the shavings are processed in
4 the dry hammermill to reduce the size of the
5 wood fibers. Once the fibers reach the
6 appropriate size, they'll be compressed in the
7 pellet mill. The compression process produces
8 heat, so the newly formed pellets are then
9 cooled in a direct-contact heat exchanger
10 using ambient air. Finally, the cooled
11 pellets are conveyed from the pellet cooler to
12 a 310 cubic meter storage silo.

13 The pellet box is a containerized
14 process unit. The hammermill, pellet mill,
15 and pellet cooler are all housed inside the
16 single unit. The unit also includes a bag
17 filter and a cyclone separator, which are used
18 to capture raw material and return it to the
19 process.

20 These devices do reduce particulate
21 emissions, but their main purpose is to
22 increase yield and improve worker hygiene and
23 housekeeping, so they will not be considered
24 air pollution control devices. Shavings and
25 finished pellets enter and exit the unit via

1 enclosed conveyor systems.

2 As a part of the air permitting
3 process, the facility is required to
4 demonstrate that they will not cause or
5 contribute to a violation of the National
6 Ambient Air Quality Standards for regulated
7 pollutants, established to be protective of
8 public health and welfare. Effingham Pellets
9 will only emit three pollutants subject to
10 these standards: particulate matter, less than
11 10 microns in diameter, PM10; particulate
12 matter, less than 2.5 microns in diameter,
13 PM2.5; and carbon monoxide, CO. Emission
14 rates for each pollutant will be below the
15 exemption rate for these standards.

16 Compliance was also demonstrated for
17 Standard 8 Toxic Air Pollutants. Effingham
18 demonstrated compliance with the standards for
19 acrolein and formaldehyde using the SCREEN3
20 model. Acetaldehyde, methanol, and
21 propionaldehyde have emission rates less than
22 the exemption threshold for modeling, which
23 also demonstrates compliance with this
24 standard.

25 State and federal regulations have

1 established standards that are protective of
2 the environment and public health. The permit
3 contains the applicable limits and regulations
4 from all federal and state air regulations.

5 Based on proposed operations and
6 calculated emissions, Effingham Pellets will
7 be subject to the listed regulations. Note
8 that fugitive dust regulation includes dust
9 emissions from onsite truck traffic.

10 The Draft Construction Permit
11 includes requirements for periodic source
12 tests to verify emission factors of all
13 expected pollutants emitted from the dry
14 hammermill, the pellet mill, and the pellet
15 cooler. The Draft Construction Permit also
16 requires the facility to create and follow a
17 Best Management Practices Plan in order to
18 better control dust generated onsite and an
19 Operation and Maintenance Plan. These plans
20 will be reviewed, reassessed, and updated as
21 needed.

22 The next steps in the permitting
23 process will be to continue receiving comments
24 through the 5 p.m. deadline on Thursday, July
25 1, 2021. After the deadline, DHEC will review

1 all the comments received and provide a
2 written summary response before making a final
3 decision. Once the final decision is made, a
4 15-day appeal period begins.

5 Again, comments can be submitted by
6 mail or email through the 5 p.m. deadline on
7 July 1st, 2021. Mail should be addressed to:
8 BAQ Public Notice Coordinator, DHEC/BAQ, 2600
9 Bull Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201.
10 Emails should be sent to
11 AirPNcomments@dhec.sc.gov.

12 The application and draft permit can
13 be found at www.scdhec.gov/Effingham-Pellets.

14 Finally, if you have any questions
15 about the proposed project, please let me
16 know. You can reach me by phone at (803) 898-
17 0968, or by email at TuckerKD@dhec.sc.gov.

18 Thank you for your time.

19 MS. TAYLOR: Thank you, Kristen.

20 Now, we will now transition into the comment
21 portion of tonight's public hearing. I would
22 like to reiterate that DHEC staff are here to
23 listen to your comments about the Effingham
24 Pellets LLC, Draft Air Quality Permit;
25 however, answers or responses to questions

1 will not be provided tonight.

2 Please take note of Kristen Tucker's
3 contact information. You can contact her
4 directly, if there are any questions.

5 Donna will now call on those who
6 have indicated during pre-registration that
7 they would like to make comments. After your
8 name is called, you may then unmute your line.
9 Please then state your -- state and spell your
10 name for the court reporter prior to speaking.

11 Donna, who is first on our list?

12 MS. MOYE: Thank you, Monica. Can you hear me
13 okay?

14 MS. TAYLOR: We can hear you, maybe just a tad
15 bit low.

16 MS. MOYE: Okay. I might need to make a little
17 bit of an adjustment here, but first on the
18 list is ---

19 MS. YON: Donna, you're very faint. I think
20 if, if you could maybe switch back to your
21 other device, and I can go ahead and say the
22 first name on the list.

23 That is Estrella Sainburg. I
24 apologize if I'm mispronouncing that, but if
25 you are with us, please go ahead and unmute

1 your mic. (Pause for response.)

2 If you're calling in, you're going
3 to want to hit *6 to unmute. (Pause for
4 response.) Estrella Sainburg. (Pause for
5 response.)

6 MS. MOYE: Katherine, can you hear me okay now?

7 MS. YON: Yes.

8 MS. MOYE: Okay.

9 MS. YON: Donna, it doesn't look like Estrella
10 is with us or is able to unmute, so maybe we
11 can come back to her in a few minutes.

12 MS. MOYE: Okay, we'll be glad to do that.

13 Next on the list is Robby Phillips with
14 Dogwood Alliance.

15 It looks like you are joining us by
16 computer, Robby, so you can unmute your line
17 now to begin your comments.

18 MR. PHILLIPS: Can you hear me okay?

19 MS. MOYE: Yes, we can; go ahead.

20 MR. PHILLIPS: Great, thank you. Hi, my name is
21 Robby Phillips. I'm 20 years old. I'm a
22 student of environmental science and policy,
23 and I'm deeply concerned about the air permit
24 submitted by Effingham Pellets, LLC, and the
25 proposed wood pellet mill in Florence County.

1 I'm asking you to please deny this air permit
2 and prevent the expansion of the wood pellet
3 industry throughout South Carolina.

4 My teenage years have been defined
5 by natural disasters, crises of air and water
6 quality, and dire warnings about the future of
7 our climate and our planet. I've seen
8 friends' homes in California put in peril by
9 wildfires, and floodwaters surrounding my
10 grandparent's home after extraordinary
11 hurricanes. I've learned extensively about
12 the devastation that will come if we do not
13 act swiftly to curb greenhouse gas emissions
14 worldwide.

15 The proposed mill in Florence County
16 will produce over 40,000 tons of pellets each
17 year, amounting to more than three acres of
18 our forests being cut down every single day.
19 It will produce carbon emissions equivalent to
20 an additional 18,171 cars on the road every
21 single year.

22 Despite claims by industry
23 proponents, including many who I expect will
24 speak on the call tonight, wood pellet and
25 biomass energy sources are not clean and

1 climate-friendly, but in fact severely
2 exacerbate the climate crisis from the
3 beginning to the end of the harvesting,
4 producing, and burning process.

5 In addition to the catastrophic
6 impact projects like this one will have on our
7 climate, the air we breathe will be
8 significantly impacted by particulate matter,
9 volatile organic compounds, and more, which
10 will contribute to high rates of asthma, lung
11 disease, and lung cancer found in communities
12 which live at near facilities like that in the
13 proposal, even if they follow the standards
14 set by DHEC.

15 While nothing can make these
16 devastating impacts on our health and futures
17 worth it, this proposal especially will wreak
18 havoc on the surrounding community with no
19 meaningful tradeoff. It is projected to only
20 produce about 10 jobs in the Florence County
21 region. This proposal will enrich a few
22 executives at the expense of our health and
23 lives.

24 It is imperative for all of our
25 futures that we do not expand carbon-intensive

1 energy sources anymore, which includes
2 biomass. The stakes are too high. The IPCC
3 has already warned that we must cut emissions
4 in half by 2030 to avoid climate catastrophe
5 and we have hardly made progress towards this
6 target. Wood pellet mills like these will
7 only push us further offtrack, while further
8 harming already vulnerable communities like
9 those in Effingham.

10 For the health and wellbeing of all
11 the members of the Florence and Effingham
12 Community, and for all of our futures, I'm
13 asking DHEC to please deny the air permit
14 requested by Effingham Pellets, LLC, and
15 prevent further expansion of the harmful and
16 destructive wood pellet industry in South
17 Carolina. Thank you for the opportunity to
18 comment.

19 MS. MOYE: Thank you so much, Mr. Phillips.

20 Next on our list is David White.

21 Mr. White, I believe you're joining
22 us by computer. You can unmute your, your
23 line now.

24 MR. WHITE: Thank you. My name is David White,
25 D-A-V-I-D, W-H-I-T-E. I live in Darlington

1 County, South Carolina. I oppose the wood
2 pellet plant because the -- while the industry
3 claims that it is a carbon-neutral
4 application, it is, it is indeed not, and
5 making wood pellets from the trees and, and
6 doing our fast-rotation forestry that we do,
7 it does not help with carbon sequestration.

8 While it is said that forests do
9 contribute to carbon sequestration, that
10 really just applies to older-growth forests,
11 not the, the fast pine rotations that we're
12 doing now. The public would be better served
13 by policies that promote diverse forests with
14 longer rotations. I oppose the plant, but if
15 it, if it is to be built, it should be held to
16 high pollution standard controls and should
17 not be subsidized at taxpayer expense, as if
18 they were providing a public good. Thank you.

19 MS. MOYE: Thank you so much, Mr. White.

20 Moving along with our pre-registered speakers,
21 we have David Quick.

22 Mr. Quick, I believe you are joining
23 us by computer as well. You can unmute your
24 line now and begin your comments.

25 MR. QUICK: It's actually cell phone. Can you

1 hear me?

2 MS. MOYE: Yes, we can; please go ahead.

3 MR. QUICK: My name is David Quick, D-A-V-I-D,
4 Q-U-I-C-K. I live in the Town of Mount
5 Pleasant, in the County of Charleston, in the
6 State of South Carolina.

7 I oppose the wood pellet facility in
8 Effingham and urge DHEC to deny the permit.
9 My family has lived in the Pee Dee area of
10 South Carolina for generations dating back to
11 the late 1700s. During that time, our forests
12 have been repeatedly decimated, our soil
13 depleted and poisoned with everything from
14 radioactive waste to other states' garbage, to
15 nonstop pesticide use, and our air has been
16 filled with fumes from factory exhaust to hog
17 farm effluent.

18 Many of the obnoxious industries in
19 South Carolina have been located in
20 communities where black, brown, and indigenous
21 people live, as well as working-class whites.
22 I am tired of South Carolina being okay with
23 all the pollution and environmental injustices
24 that have occurred over the centuries.

25 Why should we be okay for an

1 industry to be located in a predominately-
2 black community that would be responsible for
3 cutting down more than a thousand acres of
4 forest, produce 94.3 thousand tons of CO2
5 emissions, which is equivalent to more than
6 18,000 gas-powered cars on our road, and
7 release particulate matter, VOCs, and
8 hazardous air pollutants? All for just 10
9 jobs? Come on, we can do better. South
10 Carolina can do better.

11 A new wood pellet mill will further
12 degrade our climate, ecosystem, and the health
13 of our people. Denying this permit is
14 essential to protect the health and wellbeing
15 of all South Carolinians now and in the
16 future. Thank you very much.

17 MS. MOYE: Thank you, Mr. Quick.

18 And I do want to say that we appreciate
19 everyone being mindful of the time limit as we
20 do have many people who want to speak tonight.
21 So, thank you very much for that.

22 Next on our list is Elaine Cooper.
23 Ms. Cooper, are you with us? (Pause for
24 response.) Elaine Cooper? (Pause for
25 response.)

1 Ms. Cooper, if you are having
2 trouble online, joining us online, we do
3 encourage you to try joining us by phone.

4 Katherine, if you can put that, that
5 slide back up on the screen with the call-in
6 number. And what we will do, Ms. Cooper, is
7 we will come back to you in just a few
8 minutes.

9 Next, we have Taylor Fitts on behalf
10 of the U.S. Industrial Pellet Association.

11 (Pause for response.) Taylor Fitts, F-I-T-T-
12 S?

13 MR. FITTS: Good evening. My name is Taylor
14 Fitts, T-A-Y-L-O-R, F-I-T-T-S, and I'm the
15 Vice President of Communications for the U.S.
16 Industrial Pellet Association.

17 USIPA is a not-for-profit trade
18 association based in Richmond, Virginia, that
19 promotes sustainability and safety practices
20 within the U.S. wood energy industry. Our
21 membership includes largescale-producers of
22 sustainable wood biomass fuel across the
23 Southeast.

24 As you consider the permit
25 application for Effingham Pellets, I'd like to

1 emphasize that the world's leading scientific
2 institutions and real-world data confirm the
3 positive benefits of wood biomass for the
4 climate, our environment, and growing
5 economies like Effingham. According to the
6 world's foremost climate experts, wood
7 bioenergy limits global warming by replacing
8 fossil fuels and keeping our forests intact.
9 This is the conclusion of the U.N.
10 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,
11 which is widely considered the global
12 authority on climate science.

13 The IPCC makes clear that forests
14 and forest products have an essential role to
15 play in mitigating climate change and this
16 includes biomass fuel. Wood biomass fuel also
17 benefits the environment by strengthening the
18 market for forestry. It provides additional
19 income for landowners to help them keep
20 planting trees and managing their forests
21 versus converting their land for other uses.

22 It's because of these strong
23 markets, the data from the U.S. Department of
24 Agriculture shows that forest inventory and
25 forested area in the U.S. Southeast has

1 steadily increased since the mid-1950s, and
2 that forest carbon stocks have more than
3 doubled.

4 In South Carolina alone, the volume
5 of live trees has increased by more than one
6 billion cubic feet between 2014 and 2019.
7 This trend has held steady for decades. Wood
8 biomass fuel only accounts for about three
9 percent of all harvested wood each year across
10 the Southeast. Therefore, it's easy to see
11 why our forests remain stable, productive, and
12 healthy, even as they provide a steady supply
13 of renewable forest products, including
14 biomass fuel.

15 Finally, I'd like to point out that
16 the Effingham Pellet facility is specifically
17 designed to produce wood pellets using only
18 the wood residues that are left over from
19 sawmill operations. These residues are a
20 nuisance for sawmills and often have few other
21 commercial uses. Effingham Pellets will help
22 alleviate this problem by providing a higher-
23 value, more efficient use for this existing
24 byproduct.

25 The science and real-world data show

1 us that an approved permit at the Effingham
2 facility will help to fight climate change,
3 support sustainable forestry, and provide jobs
4 and economic investment for the local
5 community. Thank you.

6 MS. YON: Thank you, Mr. Fitts. The ---

7 MS. MOYE: Thank you.

8 MS. YON: Okay.

9 MS. MOYE: Next on the list, we have Loretta
10 Slater with the Whitney M. Slater Foundation.
11 Ms. Slater, if you're joining -- are you
12 there?

13 MS. SLATER: Yes, I am here.

14 MS. MOYE: Thank you so much, please go ahead,
15 if you'll remember to spell your name for the
16 court reporter, please.

17 MS. SLATER: Okay. My name is Loretta Slater,
18 and that's L-O-R-E-T-T-A, Slater, S in front
19 of later, that's it. My comment, I lost my
20 daughter to a facility plant like this
21 already, so I don't want nobody to go through
22 what I'm going through, because I'm by myself,
23 and I lost her at the age of 21, of toxics in
24 the air, because it don't stay there in one
25 place. It -- the wind blows and it flows.

1 So, that's my comment.

2 My statement is, please don't build
3 this facility. We do not want to, to -- for
4 our young people to get sick, and any mothers
5 and fathers have to go through what I'm going
6 through at this time. Thank you.

7 MS. MOYE: Thank you, Ms. Slater, and I would
8 like to say how sorry I am for your loss. I
9 know losing a child cannot be easy, so thank
10 you for sharing that with us.

11 Next on the list, we have Carolyn
12 Witherspoon, also on behalf of the Whitney M.
13 Slater Foundation, I believe. Ms.

14 Witherspoon, you can ---

15 MS. WITHERSPOON: Yes. My name ---

16 MS. MOYE: Go ahead.

17 MS. WITHERSPOON: Hello?

18 MS. MOYE: Yes, ma'am, ---

19 MS. WITHERSPOON: Yes, my name ---

20 MS. MOYE: --- go ahead.

21 MS. WITHERSPOON: Yes, my name is Carolyn

22 Witherspoon, C-A-R-O-L-Y-N, W-I-T-H-E-R-S-P-O-
23 O-N. I'd like to say I don't think that
24 that's a safe thing. I think y'all should
25 just, do not let them build here because we

1 already have enough of pollution, and more
2 people are coming up with cancer, healthy
3 people that don't smoke, that, you know, are
4 not in places that smoke.

5 I mean, it's just bad for our air,
6 and it's more pollution, and I feel like it's
7 going to be more people getting sicker and
8 sicker if this plant comes to Florence. Thank
9 you.

10 MS. MOYE: Thank you very much, Ms.

11 Witherspoon.

12 MS. WITHERSPOON: Uh-huh.

13 MS. MOYE: Moving along now with our pre-
14 registered speakers, we have Rashad Cade on
15 behalf of New Alpha Community Development
16 Corporation. (Pause for response.) Rashad
17 Cade?

18 MR. CADE: Yes, I'm here. Can you hear me?

19 MS. MOYE: Yes, sir, we can, thank you so much.

20 Please remember to spell your name for the
21 court reporter.

22 MR. CADE: Okay, thank you. My name is Rashad
23 Cade. You spell that, R-A-S-H-A-D, last name
24 C-A-D-E. And I am in full opposition of the
25 Effingham wood pellet plant being built

1 because of multiple reasons.

2 As it was stated earlier, I do know
3 that there are some people who have lost their
4 lives due to the pollution that has happened
5 as a result of companies just coming in and
6 acquiring land and just wanting to build in
7 areas that are fully populated with people of
8 minority descent.

9 And what I, what I have a problem
10 with is I don't think that it's a very wise
11 decision to just want to build in minority
12 communities when there are many, many acres,
13 thousands of acres of land that are nowhere
14 near our communities that are not even being
15 utilized.

16 If you drive through the State of
17 South Carolina, and states of that sort, you
18 can see that there are countless miles of
19 green land that they can go and take shop at,
20 but they decide to move right in the areas
21 where minority communities are, which I think
22 is a target on minority communities.

23 Not only that, but I also feel as
24 though the 10 jobs that are being offered is a
25 very low number from an economic standpoint.

1 Those 10 jobs, there are some that are already
2 accounted for that -- so that number won't
3 even be 10 jobs that they will be offering.
4 When it says that they are offering 10 new
5 jobs, this -- the town of Effingham has almost
6 11,000 residents, so you're talking about the
7 economic benefit for less than one one-
8 thousandth of the population.

9 And so, I really do think that it's
10 not an economically-savvy idea, especially
11 being that a lot of these companies are on
12 temporary contracts, so once they are done
13 with their jobs and done with whatever they're
14 going to do, the residents of Effingham, as
15 well as the residents of Florence County, will
16 be faced with the issues of bearing the
17 financial responsibility to keep that building
18 afloat and to continue to pay for that
19 building's existence even after they're done.
20 So, I am in full opposition.

21 MS. MOYE: Thank you so much, Mr. Cade.

22 I do want to jump back up to Ms. Estrella
23 Sainburg.

24 It looks like, Ms. Sainburg, that
25 you are joining us by phone. If you are ---

1 MS. SAINBURG: Yes, I am. Can you hear me?

2 MS. MOYE: Yes, ma'am, we can. Thank you so
3 much, and if you would please spell your name.

4 MS. SAINBURG: Yes, definitely. So, it's E, S as
5 in Sam, T, R as in rabbit, E-L-L-A, and last
6 name Sainburg, S-A-I-N-B-U-R-G.

7 MS. MOYE: Thank you. You can go ahead and
8 begin.

9 MS. SAINBURG: Thank you. Thanks for having me and
10 thanks for coming back to me, so.

11 My name is Estrella Sainburg, and I
12 am an organizer with the, a, a concerns group
13 of Effingham, and we have heard loud and clear
14 from members of communities across the
15 Southeast that have faced wood pellet
16 facilities, that their communities have not
17 benefited from these facilities, that the
18 facilities themselves have caused disturbances
19 to their day-to-day life, and not their, the
20 employment has been limited, it's non,
21 nonexistent for their communities.

22 And so, given that there is, that
23 there are families in the area that are asking
24 for this plant to be denied, it's important
25 that we learn from other places that have

1 already had plants in their locale, to, to
2 grow and progress, and to really create the
3 South Carolina that we seek and, and dream of.

4 It's important to acknowledge the
5 benefits of trees and to prioritize our, to
6 prioritize our environment over profit.

7 Furthermore, as our -- as a community member,
8 the previous community member mentioned, the
9 benefits, the jobs are not -- the, the jobs in
10 the facility does not bring employment to the
11 local community. Ten is not a high number,
12 and furthermore, it's requiring subsidies and
13 tax money from, from the, from the State.

14 And so, please, you know, as, as
15 individuals that have taken an oath to serve
16 the people, it's important that we listen to
17 the people in the decisions that we make.

18 And so, thank you for, for
19 listening, and I really hope that you'll
20 consider the impact, because an air permit is
21 not just about the air you're -- it is, it is
22 the entryway into, into, into the many
23 devastating effects of a wood pellet facility.

24 Thank you.

25 MS. MOYE: Thank you so much, Ms. Sainburg.

1 Okay, next on our list is Dr. Florence Anoruo,
2 I'm not sure if I'm pronouncing that
3 correctly, on behalf of Environmental Action
4 Group. (Pause for response.)

5 Dr. Anoruo, if you are with us, you
6 can unmute your line now to begin your
7 comments. (Pause for response.)

8 And I'm not sure if Dr. Anoruo is
9 with us, so we are going to skip and go on to
10 the next, and we'll come back to Dr. Anoruo
11 before we wrap up the registered commenters.

12 So, next on the list of pre-
13 registered speakers is Drew Martin. (Pause
14 for response.) Drew Martin on behalf of
15 Sierra Club, I believe. (Pause for response.)
16 Okay, we will skip Drew Martin as well and
17 come back in a few minutes.

18 Next on the list is Pete Parr on
19 behalf of the Pee Dee Indian Tribe. Mr. Parr,
20 if you are with us, you can unmute your line.
21 (Pause for response.)

22 CHIEF PARR: Hello?

23 MS. MOYE: Yes, Mr. Parr?

24 CHIEF PARR: Hello?

25 MS. MOYE: Hi, can you hear me?

1 CHIEF PARR: Yes, ma'am.

2 MS. MOYE: Okay.

3 CHIEF PARR: Can you hear me?

4 MS. MOYE: We, we sure can. Please go ahead
5 with your comments.

6 CHIEF PARR: My name is Chief Pete Parr of the
7 Pee Dee Indian, Indian Tribe in South Carolina
8 here. P-E-T-E, P-A-R-R. We Native Americans
9 have been fighting these forests and trying to
10 keep them alive, and it seems like when
11 money's involved, we lose out. We've been
12 losing for a long time.

13 I think if, if y'all would not allow
14 the permit to, to be done and give us a chance
15 to, to build our air and our flooding, to stop
16 the flooding by the trees being removed for
17 this pellet plant, we would appreciate it.
18 You know, our people have been around for
19 years and years, and we learned, and it's time
20 that we start learning again. And the people
21 that is money-hungry, and I hate to say that
22 -- these wood pellets are being shipped all
23 over the world and it's not benefiting our
24 country.

25 So, I ask you, please, do not give

1 this permit. Thank you very much.

2 MS. MOYE: Thank you, Chief Parr, for your
3 comments. We appreciate that.

4 Next on our list, we have Reverend Leo
5 Woodberry. Reverend Woodberry, are you with
6 us? (Pause for response.)

7 MR. WOODBERRY: Good evening. My name is Reverend
8 Leo Woodberry, L-E-O, last name, W-O-O-D-B-E-
9 R-R-Y, and I'm the Executive Director for New
10 Alpha Community Development Corporation making
11 my comments in opposition to the construction
12 of this proposed facility.

13 You know, we often hear about the
14 good things that these types of industries
15 bring to communities, but in actuality, when
16 you look at the number of trees that are
17 increased, they are primarily pine plantations
18 that disrupt ecosystem, do not contribute to
19 the biodiversity that causes disruptions to
20 our environment.

21 It also does not take into
22 consideration the industry science that is
23 equivalent to the industry science that once
24 told us that cigarette smoking was good for
25 our health.

1 When we look at the IPCC and what
2 they said about biomass, that was not done in
3 a monolithic manner. We look at the 200
4 scientists that sent a letter last year to
5 congress opposing the expansion of the biomass
6 wood pellet industry, we find scientists like
7 Bill Moomaw, who was a member of the IPCC,
8 which won a Nobel Prize in 2007.

9 The big problem that we have with
10 plants like this is that they're taking
11 advantage of a loophole in the Clean Air Act.
12 EPA and South Carolina DHEC is not looking at
13 the cumulative impacts on the health of, of,
14 of our citizens. More than 18,000 more
15 emissions will be released into the air
16 because of this facility.

17 Let's keep in mind the emissions
18 that we have from our I20 and I95, which
19 combined threatens the health of our
20 community. Let's keep in mind the impacts on
21 the clean water that we see when, when trees
22 are cut down. Let's look at the impacts that
23 forest, forestry, foresting and logging has on
24 our forests when they cut down trees but they
25 don't dig appropriate ditches which allows the

1 flooding to increase.

2 And then, once again, time after
3 time after time, we hear that when these
4 plants are built that they're going to start
5 off just by using wood waste, but when the
6 expansions take place, as we much, as we very
7 much suspect that this plant will be expanded
8 because of the adjacent land that it's on,
9 that as they expand, more trees are cut down,
10 more VOCs are released, to say nothing about
11 the noise that the citizens have to put --
12 (timer sounds) --and the particulate matter.

13 So, in closing, I'd just say, we
14 oppose the, the construction of this facility.
15 Thank you.

16 MS. MOYE: Thank you so much, Reverend
17 Woodberry. Next, we have Penny Cothran on
18 behalf of the Sierra Club.

19 Ms. Cothran are you with us? (Pause
20 for response.) Penny Cothran on behalf of the
21 Sierra Club? (Pause for response.)

22 Cothran, if you're having trouble
23 unmuting your line, you can call in. We will
24 skip Ms. Cothran and come back to you.

25 Anthony Hall, on behalf of Florence

1 Democracy Center? (Pause for response.)

2 MR. HALL: Can you hear me?

3 MS. MOYE: Yes, sir, we can. Please go ahead.

4 MR. HALL: All right, can you hear me?

5 MS. MOYE: Yes, sir.

6 MR. HALL: All right, it's Anthony Hall, A-N-T-

7 H-O-N-Y, H-A-L-L. I'd like to voice my

8 opposition to the Effingham wood pellet plant.

9 Well, I guess, first of all, just
10 from listening to everybody else, we know
11 that, that number one, that this plant will be
12 a polluter. You know, you, you admitted it
13 yourself. You, you just admit that it -- you,
14 you seen it as in terms of acceptable amounts
15 of pollution.

16 We've, we've heard that cutting down
17 the trees is bad for the environment. So, I
18 was looking at something and I saw that the
19 CDC estimates that it costs 80 billion dollars
20 a year in, in asthma-related costs, treatment,
21 lost-time wages, work, those kind of things.
22 In 2015, South Carolina spent 12 billion for
23 the flood.

24 So, it seems like to me that for the
25 few little jobs that you're going to get,

1 which, most likely, most of those jobs are
2 probably already gone, and the ones that
3 they'll probably give to the -- if anybody in
4 Effingham is going to get one, it'll probably
5 be some minimum wage. It's not going to be a
6 -- it's not like it's going to be a, a good-
7 paying union job.

8 So, it seems to me that the
9 devastation that it does doesn't necessarily
10 equal out. That's, that's -- on the streets
11 they would call that backward hustling. You,
12 you spending, you spending more money than you
13 getting in, than you bringing in.

14 Number one -- another thing is that
15 asthma is one of the number one diseases
16 amongst the young. African-Americans are
17 three times as likely to get it, three times
18 as likely to die for it, die from it. So, it
19 seems like to me that, again, what you're
20 getting of it is not really worth what you're
21 putting into it.

22 And I also thought it's funny
23 because I'm assuming that DHEC is there to, to
24 keep the people safe, you know, to, to, to
25 look out for the people's interest. So,

1 anything that -- a little bit of pollution is
2 too much for our children. The smallest
3 amount of pollution is too much for our
4 children.

5 And it's like they say, what goes up
6 when the wind blows, you don't never know
7 where, where it goes. You know, one day that
8 wind is going to blow into your neighborhood.
9 Just, just hope that it's not, it's, it's not
10 anything devastating before people realize
11 that facilities like this, that they're worth
12 more harm than they are good. (Timer sounds.)

13 Again, like I say, my name is
14 Anthony Hall, voicing my opposition to the
15 Effingham wood pellet plant. That's my
16 comment.

17 MS. MOYE: Thank you so much, Mr. Hall.

18 Next, we have Harold Hughes. (Pause for
19 response.) Is there a Harold Hughes? I was
20 about to say Howard Hughes. Is there a Harold
21 Hughes who pre-registered and is with us
22 tonight? (Pause for response.)

23 Okay, we're going to skip over Mr.
24 Hughes and come back in a moment. Next, we
25 have Virginia Sanders on behalf of Midlands

1 Sierra Club Chapter.

2 Ms. Sanders, are you with us?

3 (Pause for response.) Virginia Sanders.

4 (Pause for response.) Okay, we'll ---

5 DR. SINGLETON: This is Virginia ---

6 MS. MOYE: --- skip Ms. -- is that you, Ms.

7 Sanders?

8 DR. SINGLETON: Hi, this is Dr. Virginia Singleton.

9 I think that was supposed to be Singleton.

10 MS. MOYE: Okay. Thank you, and are you with

11 the Midlands Sierra Club?

12 DR. SINGLETON: Well, they probably called me in as

13 the Midlands Sierra Club.

14 MS. MOYE: Okay, I want to make sure we have

15 this right. So, it's Dr. Virginia Singleton?

16 DR. SINGLETON: Virginia Singleton, right. Just

17 like the State of Virginia, and Single-ton.

18 MS. MOYE: All right, we have you now, Dr.

19 Singleton. Thank you so much for clarifying

20 that and you can begin with your comments.

21 DR. SINGLETON: Thank you so very much. Yes, I

22 called in concerning the Effingham wood pellet

23 plant coming to Effingham. I am in total

24 opposition to that plant coming to Effingham.

25 I live here in Florence, South Carolina. I am

1 the Senior Pastor at the Divine Church of
2 Deliverance; however, my concern is, first of
3 all, the location of the plant being in a
4 rural area which is predominately black.

5 Usually, these plants, when they
6 come, they come into the disadvantage
7 communities, or the black and brown. The
8 blacks are the most disproportionately
9 affected by air pollution, which causes all
10 types of respiratory problems, and we read
11 these things are ignored mostly in these type
12 of areas.

13 There's all type of contaminates
14 that are released by these wood pellets,
15 including those hazardous air pollutants, such
16 as nitrogen oxide, carbon monoxide, and other
17 fine-grained soot, which get into the air, and
18 as we know, air travels. When it gets in the
19 wind, it blows. So, it does not just remain
20 in one particular location.

21 For 10 jobs, why should we risk so
22 many lives? In the black and brown areas,
23 there's already a lot of health disparities
24 that goes on. People cannot manage their
25 healthcare already, so why bring other

1 challenges to our black and brown communities
2 when they already cannot manage their
3 healthcare.

4 So, I'm asking that DHEC to please
5 take another look at is it really worth it to
6 bring other challenges to Effingham? Thank
7 you.

8 MS. MOYE: Thank you so much, Dr. Singleton.

9 Next, we have Buquilla Ervin-Cannon, and I
10 apologize if I have mispronounced the name, on
11 the behalf of Pee Dee Minority Health.

12 MS. ERVIN-CANNON: I'm here.

13 MS. MOYE: Thank you so much. If you would
14 please begin by spelling your first and last
15 name for the court reporter.

16 MS. ERVIN-CANNON: My name is Buquilla Ervin-Canon,
17 B-U-Q-U-I-L-L-A, Ervin, E-R-V-I-N, dash,
18 Cannon, C-A-N-N-O-N. I am speaking on behalf
19 of the Pee Dee Minority Health Office, which I
20 have been the Executive Director for 29 years.
21 I come to you on behalf of my clients, my
22 patients, in reference to Effingham pellet.
23 We discussed this consistently in our Zoom
24 meetings for the last three weeks. We are
25 concerned, as we have been for over three

1 decades, about the way that our black and
2 brown communities are used and abused by those
3 that have access, money, and power.

4 We have seen over the years, the
5 longevity of these plants in our communities.
6 As recently as 2003, there was a study done in
7 reference to how many manufacturing plants,
8 how much water that was contaminated that have
9 influenced and had an effect on the disease of
10 African-Americans, Native Americans, and
11 brown.

12 We are concerned because we have had
13 a high rate of asthma, sickle cell, heart
14 disease in young people because of lack of
15 insurance, lack of healthcare, and the issue
16 with the fact that, of where they're staying.
17 They can't move because it is probably family,
18 heir property, so they can't move out of these
19 communities.

20 And so, they just have to sit and
21 suffer, and suffer because of the fact that
22 these plants and manufacturers as Effingham
23 pellets that say they are providing jobs, but
24 what is 10 jobs, and it's probably not even
25 that many, compared to hundreds of folks for

1 generations to come, even after I am no longer
2 here, that will still be suffering and will
3 not -- will be the voiceless in the community
4 because of poverty and disadvantaged
5 locations?

6 I oppose this, and I oppose this on
7 behalf of minorities as, in which we serve the
8 six counties of the Pee Dee. So, we are
9 standing firmly, firmly on solid ground that
10 this plant is not a plant -- should not have
11 ever even been considered, due to the fact
12 that the stats, all -- (timer sounds) -- and
13 what it does to our community. Thank you.

14 MS. MOYE: Thank you so much for those comments
15 on behalf of the clients of Pee Dee Minority
16 Health.

17 Next on the list, we have Suzanne
18 LaRochelle. (Pause for response.)

19 Ms. LaRochelle, if you would like to
20 unmute your line now, you can begin by
21 spelling your name. It looks like you're with
22 us.

23 MS. LaROCHELLE: Hello, can you hear me?

24 MS. MOYE: Yes, ma'am, we sure can. Please
25 spell your name for the court reporter before

1 you begin.

2 MS. LaROCHELLE: My name is Suzanne, S-U-Z-A-N-N-E,
3 LaRochelle, L-a-R-O-C-H-E-L-L-E. I'm a
4 resident of Florence County and I oppose the
5 construction of this plant. I am appalled
6 that there are loopholes, as Reverend
7 Woodberry mentioned, that allow this plant to
8 be licensed, and then in a year or two, modify
9 their license. We need to stop these
10 loopholes.

11 I'm appalled that the pollution that
12 these plants will cause are ubiquitous.
13 They're invisible. The residents of Effingham
14 will not know that they're being poisoned.

15 I am appalled that this plant is
16 going into a community where the majority are
17 poor citizens. This is not justice. This is
18 not what America is about, and I'm urging DHEC
19 to choose people over power, people over
20 profit.

21 This plant does not help South
22 Carolina or South Carolinian people, maybe
23 one. This plant poisons our community, and I
24 say enough is enough. Thank you.

25 MS. MOYE: Thank you, Ms. LaRochelle. I do

1 think that we have clarified on our end that
2 Dr. Virginia Singleton and Virginia Sanders
3 are indeed two separate people.

4 So, Ms. Sanders, if you are with us
5 and would like to make your comments now, you
6 can unmute your line. (Pause for response.)

7 We are going to go back and see if
8 we can catch those that we called on earlier
9 who were not available. We will try going
10 through these names again one more time, and
11 for your convenience, we have also put the
12 slide up with the information on how to submit
13 comments by mail or email after tonight, if
14 you're not able to give your comments tonight
15 or if you're not able to finish them tonight.

16 So, I'm going back to those that we
17 skipped over. We had Elaine Cooper. Ms.
18 Cooper, are you with us now? (Pause for
19 response.) Okay, please let the record show
20 that Ms. Cooper is not with us tonight, or is
21 not responding.

22 Next, we have Dr. Florence Anoruo.
23 (Pause for response.) Dr. Florence Anoruo on
24 behalf of Environmental Action Group? (Pause
25 for response.) Let the record show that Dr.

1 Anoruo was called on again and was not with us
2 tonight.

3 Drew Martin, I believe on behalf of
4 Sierra Club? (Pause for response.) Drew
5 Martin. (Pause for response.) Okay, let the
6 record show that Drew Martin is not with us
7 this evening.

8 Penny Cothran on behalf of Sierra
9 Club? (Pause for response.) Okay, please let
10 the record show also that Penny Cothran is not
11 present at the hearing to speak.

12 Harold Hughes? (Pause for
13 response.) Please let the record also show
14 that Mr. Hughes was called on and was not
15 present.

16 And once again, Virginia Sanders?
17 (Pause for response.) Please let the record
18 show that Ms. Virginia Sanders was not present
19 at the hearing to speak.

20 And with that, that concludes
21 everyone who pre-registered to make a comment.
22 If you did not pre-register to speak but have
23 decided to make a comment, please let us know
24 by raising your hand, using the hand icon or
25 the microphone icon on your screen, or press

1 *6 if you are joining us by phone, and we will
2 put that up on the screen, those directions up
3 on the screen as well.

4 After our Tech Support has noted who
5 is raising a hand or unmuting, we will mute
6 you again to reduce background noise until we
7 call on you to give your comment. And what we
8 would like to do right now is give you the
9 opportunity to unmute or raise your hand so
10 that we can take your name down.

11 We're going to pause just a moment
12 to make sure we get everyone, everyone's name
13 noted, and then after that, we will begin
14 calling on you.

15 MS. SANDERS: I'm Virginia Sanders, and I'm here.

16 MS. MOYE: Okay, well, thank you, Ms. Sanders.

17 Well, I will go ahead and, and just say again,
18 if anyone wants to comment after Ms. Sanders,
19 you can go ahead and begin by raising your
20 hand and we will take your name down.

21 If your hand is lowered, it means
22 that we have taken your... (technical
23 interruption of audio).

24 MS. SANDERS: Hello? Hello?

25 MS. MOYE: Yes, Ms. -- yes, Ms. Sanders.

1 Please go ahead with your comments.

2 MS. SANDERS: Yes. I'm, I'm definitely against
3 this. I'm a community organizer, boots on the
4 ground, in, in communities such as this.
5 This, this plant would be detrimental to the
6 health and welfare of the people in this
7 community.

8 We are just coming out of a horrific
9 disaster as far as the COVID-19 is concerned.
10 This community where you want to put this,
11 where this, this is going to be located, is
12 low-income and predominately black. I don't
13 have to tell you that the number of black, or
14 people of color, who died as a result of the
15 COVID disease was astronomical.

16 And this condition, the, the pellets
17 is something that it, it, it attacks the, the
18 -- the remnants from, from making these
19 pellets can, can go into the respiratory
20 system, and the COVID-19 is a, is a condition
21 that attacks the respiratory system.

22 And when you ask why many so -- why
23 so many people of color died from this
24 condition, we died from it because these kind
25 of plants are located in the community where

1 we live.

2 The only people who are going to
3 profit from this plant and this kind of plant
4 being located even in the United States are
5 the people who make money, corporate people
6 who make money shipping those pellets
7 overseas. I've lived in, in Europe, in three
8 different countries. If the Europeans want to
9 make pellets, they can make pellets for
10 themselves. In fact, in some instances,
11 they're far ahead scientific, much far ahead
12 scientifically than we are.

13 So, I am definitely against this
14 plant even -- any, any -- this plant in South
15 Carolina or any other country, I mean, or any
16 other state in the United States period.

17 As I said, if you want to know why
18 so many black people had, that died from the
19 virus, it's because of plants just like this.
20 Thank you.

21 MS. MOYE: Thank you, Ms. Sanders.

22 Again, we are noting the lines for those who
23 have decided that they would like to speak
24 tonight but did not pre-register. Again, if
25 you would like to, to comment and you did not

1 pre-register, if you will raise your hand or
2 unmute your line, and we are noting those
3 names as those lines are unmuted and those
4 hands are raised so that we can call on
5 everyone who would like to make a comment
6 tonight.

7 We'll go ahead and get started with
8 those who we have noted. Danna Smith or Dana
9 Smith?

10 MS. SMITH: Danna, that's correct. Can you hear
11 me okay?

12 MS. MOYE: Yes, ma'am, we sure can; if you'll
13 please just spell your name for the court
14 reporter and go ahead.

15 MS. SMITH: Sure, Danna, D-A-N-N-A, Smith, S-M-
16 I-T-H. I live in North Carolina; however, I
17 grew up in South Carolina. My family is still
18 there. I am the executive director at Dogwood
19 Alliance. There is no Planet B. We all share
20 the same home. We have to think globally and
21 act locally to ensure a safe and healthy
22 environment for everyone.

23 We are experiencing right now
24 multiple ecological and health crises, climate
25 change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

1 These compounding crises hit low-income and
2 communities of color the hardest, and state
3 agencies such as DHEC have a vital role to
4 play right now.

5 Wood pellets are not green energy.
6 They're not climate-friendly. Biomass is as
7 dirty and destructive as coal and gas. This
8 proposed wood pellet mill will simply add more
9 fuel to the fire of a very dirty and
10 destructive industry which is rapidly
11 expanding across the South. The cumulative
12 impacts of this industry are devastating,
13 adding carbon emissions, impacting
14 biodiversity, and compromising human health.

15 I, I want to make sure we have a
16 rebuttal to the statements made by the USIPA
17 representative regarding the scientific
18 support for biomass, and the characterization
19 of IPCC's support for biomass. Just last
20 week, the European Academies Science Advisory
21 Council addressed this issue and I'm going to
22 make sure that DHEC gets a copy of, of the
23 European Academy of Science's [sic] rebuttal
24 to that. Over 800 scientists have gone on
25 public record warning the EU government that

1 burning wood in place of coal is going to
2 accelerate climate change.

3 The last thing we need right now is
4 another wood pellet mill. Communities in the
5 Pee Dee watershed are still recovering from
6 the last extreme flooding event, which
7 scientists are linking to climate change and
8 who are warning are going to get worse.

9 Burning wood releases even more
10 carbon into the air than burning coal, and
11 beyond that, forests provide bio-natural flood
12 control, and we need to leave a lot more trees
13 standing so that they can scrub the atmosphere
14 of carbon and shore up natural protections
15 against extreme weather events.

16 This facility is taking us in the
17 wrong direction. Just last week I read a
18 scientific study published this year that
19 documents that biomass and wood are now the
20 leading sources of stationary-source air
21 pollution health impacts in 24 states. In
22 many states, wood-based biomass combustion is
23 now the leading contributor of fuel combustion
24 mortality attributed to particulate matter,
25 exceeding that of coal.

1 Burning wood for fuel is killing
2 people. It's that simple. It's wrong and
3 this facility, no matter its size, will be
4 contributing to the premature death of
5 innocent people. DHEC can and should consider
6 disproportionate health impacts on communities
7 of color under the Civil Rights Act.

8 Finally, the wood pellet export
9 (timer sounds) industry poses an economic risk
10 to rural communities across the South, and
11 with 10 jobs at stake, it just isn't worth it.
12 We hope DHEC will do within its power to deny
13 this permit and stop the further expansion of
14 the wood pellet industry in South Carolina and
15 throughout the Southern U.S. Thank you.

16 MS. MOYE: Thank you, Ms. Smith.

17 Okay, next we have a caller with the last four
18 digits of the phone number being 7231. So, if
19 those are the last four digits of your phone
20 number, if you can unmute your line.

21 MS. CATHCART: Can you hear me?

22 MS. MOYE: We can. If you would please give us
23 your name and spell it for the court reporter.

24 Thank you so much.

25 MS. CATHCART: Of course; my name is Freeda, F-R-E-

1 E-D-A, Cathcart is C-A-T-H-C-A-R-T, and my
2 family's from Manning and I wanted to speak to
3 two issues. One is climate justice (brief
4 technical interference), my background has
5 been insurance.

6 MS. YON: I apologize, Freeda; you're going to
7 need to unmute yourself. Sorry, we got some
8 background noise and I muted the wrong line.
9 I apologize.

10 MS. CATHCART: Are you able to hear me?

11 MS. YON: Yes, ma'am.

12 MS. CATHCART: Okay. I don't -- Well, I was saying
13 that I wanted to speak about climate justice,
14 and my background's in insurance... (technical
15 interruption of audio).

16 I'm very concerned about the plant
17 using wood pellets because of the
18 deforestation. Trees do an important job when
19 it comes to flooding and I know how badly
20 Florence has been hit over the last couple of
21 years by flooding. It's been horrendous what
22 has happened there, and trees do an important
23 job soaking up the moisture when, when there's
24 big rain events as well as being a carbon
25 sink.

1 So, it, it really doesn't make
2 sense to have a plant that's going to be
3 contributing to the circumstances that have
4 treated Florence so terribly. So, -- and, and
5 there's a difference between a mature
6 woodlands compared to just growing trees as an
7 industry, and there's a lot of science, and
8 the person beforehand commented very
9 eloquently and scientifically in regards to
10 that, but I wanted to bring up the insurance
11 angle of it, too.

12 Insurance companies are starting to
13 not cover flooding. The floodplains are
14 expanding from what they used to be because of
15 the climate change and a lot of people don't
16 know that, and when insurance companies don't
17 cover that risk, it either goes to the, the
18 federal government, the state, or locality and
19 then the individual property owners, and if
20 the people who are renting are low-income
21 people, they really get hurt by the situation,
22 which leads me to my next point, which is
23 environmental justice.

24 It's not fair. It's not fair to put
25 that plant where they're talking about putting

1 it, and other people spoke to that. It's not
2 fair to people of color to take the brunt of
3 the poor-quality air, it's just, just not
4 fair, and, and --

5 You must deny this permit, you must
6 deny this, this plant, and I appreciate your
7 time tonight. Thank you.

8 MS. MOYE: Thank you so much, Ms. Cathcart.

9 I would like to remind anyone who has not had
10 the opportunity yet to speak and would like to
11 do so, you can raise your hand using the hand
12 icon or the microphone icon on your screen, or
13 press *6 if you're joining us by phone. We
14 will note your name and mute your line back,
15 and when it is your turn, I will call on you
16 by either your name or the last four digits of
17 the phone number you're calling from.

18 If for some reason you're
19 experiencing difficulty with muting or
20 unmuting your line, please remember that you
21 may also submit your comments in writing until
22 5 p.m. on July 1st, 2021.

23 And next, we have Suzanna Ellison.

24 MS. ELLISON: Hi there, can you hear me okay?

25 MS. MOYE: Yes, ma'am, we sure can. Please go

1 ahead.

2 MS. ELLISON: Suzanna Ellison, that's S-U-Z-A-N-N-
3 A, E-L-L-I-S-O-N. I am 23 years old and in
4 college. I study biology and environmental
5 science.

6 Today, I am coming to you from
7 Cherokee Land in so-called Greenville, South
8 Carolina, and I happen to have done some field
9 research in longleaf pine ecosystems of the
10 Lowcountry, so I know the forests of the South
11 at that intimate level, and if you listen to
12 the pine needles rustle in the wind, they
13 sound like the ocean.

14 I've personally gotten to study and
15 observe rare species of moths that require
16 old-growth pine ecosystems to live. These
17 organisms are beautiful and their habitat is
18 at risk. Their intricate relationships remind
19 me of our delicate ecosystems between humans
20 and nature, as well as between humans and each
21 other.

22 These forest ecosystems, these
23 marginalized communities, they are not the
24 Wal-Mart for the upper class. I have spent
25 years of my life trying to explain this, that

1 my present quality of life and many others is
2 worse off because of an older generations'
3 failure to stand up for land sovereignty and a
4 failure to stand up for each other.

5 I oppose the wood pellet facility
6 strongly because the presence in Effingham,
7 South Carolina is modern-day colonization; it
8 is an abuse of power; it is greenwashing.
9 Like others have said, this is not clean
10 energy and worse than it not being clean
11 energy, it is an assault on a rural South.

12 I strongly oppose its presence as
13 well as a permit approval, and I thank others
14 for speaking up today as well.

15 MS. MOYE: Thank you so much, Ms. Ellison.
16 Okay, and we have next, a phone number with
17 the last four digits of 6909. If those are
18 the last four digits of your phone number, you
19 can *6 to unmute your line.

20 DR. ANORUO: Can you hear me?

21 MS. MOYE: Yes, we can. Please state your name
22 and spell it for the court reporter.

23 DR. ANORUO: Can you hear me?

24 MS. MOYE: Yes, ma'am. Can you hear me?

25 DR. ANORUO: Yes. Good evening, this is Dr.

1 Florence Anoruo. First name is spelled F-L-O-
2 R-E-N-C-E, last name is A-N-O-R-U-O. I am a
3 professor at South Carolina State University
4 in environmental and plant, plant biologist,
5 and I have done a lot of work on environmental
6 justice, including studying air pollution and
7 health disparities in minorities, especially
8 African-American minorities.

9 I'm here to support all of the
10 scientists who have raised their voices
11 against wood pellet industry, as well as the
12 community leaders, my sisters and brothers I
13 call them, who I've worked very closely with,
14 especially the committee in Florence. A lot
15 of people have said everything that needs to
16 be said.

17 Danna speak -- Danna Smith, who I
18 also work closely with, has spoken on the
19 scientific merits against the wood pellets.
20 So, I don't need to repeat that, but where I'm
21 trying to add my voice is that the wood pellet
22 industry not only affects the health of those
23 communities where they're either expanding or
24 establishing new facilities, but it's adding
25 to the same communities that have been already

1 disproportionately affected by all forms of
2 pollution. And having the industry in this
3 community would have cumulative impact.

4 There are so many people in this
5 community with respiratory diseases, with
6 chronic diseases, and they're all, many of
7 them are linked to exposure to pollution, and
8 this will add another layer to that. So, I am
9 adding my voice to support that DHEC do not
10 grant permit to the expansion of the wood
11 pellet industry in the Florence County, and
12 also in any other place in the United States.

13 There are different forms of green
14 energy that we can pursue, that companies can
15 pursue, but this is not one of them because
16 the problems associated with it is more than
17 the advantages that the companies tout to
18 those communities. The jobs that are supposed
19 to be created is not enough to account for the
20 environmental degradation, the health problems
21 that will be coming from establishing this
22 facilities in this very rural and minority
23 community.

24 The communities that usually have
25 this impact have flooding issues. They have

1 other environmental issues. They have food
2 insecurity in all of those places. When you,
3 when you compound into it, the cumulative
4 impact, it's very, very high.

5 A lot of times, also, there is an
6 argument that the current wood pellet facility
7 that, that is supposed to be in Effingham is
8 not really located close to the minority
9 communities (timer sounds), but pollution does
10 not stay where it is started. Pollution moves
11 by air, it moves by water, so the people
12 around there are going to be affected.

13 So, I am joining all of the
14 supporters who are asking DHEC to not permit
15 the establishment of this wood pellet
16 industry. Thank you.

17 MS. MOYE: Thank you, Dr. Anoruo.

18 It looks like that is everyone that had
19 indicated they would like to speak tonight
20 either by pre-registering or by raising their
21 hand or unmuting their line. Again, if you
22 had trouble or were experiencing difficulty
23 tonight with unmuting your line, please
24 remember that you can submit your comments in
25 writing through 5 p.m. on July 1st.

1 MS. TAYLOR: Thank you, Donna.

2 As Donna mentioned, there is a way to submit
3 your comments in writing, if you have
4 commented tonight and you do have your comment
5 in writing and would like to also submit
6 those, please feel free to do so. The
7 information on where you can send those
8 comments are now up on the screen. Those
9 comments will be able to be received until
10 July 1st, 2021, by 5 p.m. They could be
11 submitted by mail to the address: BAQ Public
12 Notice Coordinator, DHEC/BAQ, at 2600 Bull
13 Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201; by
14 email at: AirPNComments@dhec.sc.gov.

15 On behalf of DHEC, we would like to
16 thank everyone for joining us tonight and
17 giving us your comments. Please note once
18 again your written comments can be submitted
19 until July 1st, by 5:00 p.m. DHEC will review
20 and consider all comments received during the
21 public comment period and will request
22 additional information from the applicant, if
23 necessary.

24 A decision will not -- I'm sorry. A
25 decision will then be made to approve, modify,

1 or deny the Draft Air Quality Permit. The
2 permit decision and a summary response to all
3 written comments received will be posted on
4 our webpage and provided to everyone on our
5 mailing list.

6 You have the right to request a
7 final review of any permit decision made by
8 DHEC. The final review request must be
9 submitted in writing to DHEC's Clerk of the
10 Board, along with a filing fee in the amount
11 of \$100, within 15 days after notice of DHEC's
12 permit decision has been mailed to the
13 applicant.

14 In consideration of these
15 requirements, you will receive notification of
16 DHEC's permit decision by U.S. Standard Mail
17 or by email. If you wish to be notified of
18 DHEC's decision by certified mail instead,
19 please make that request in writing no later
20 than July 1st, 2021.

21 Now, on behalf of DHEC, I would
22 again like to thank you and -- for your
23 attendance and your comments this evening. As
24 the state's public health agency, DHEC
25 encourages you to help us win the fight

1 against COVID-19 by getting a safe, effective,
2 and free vaccine at a convenient location near
3 you.

4 The time is now 8:02 p.m. and this
5 hearing is officially adjourned.

6 MS. LaROCHELLE: Thank you.

7 MS. TAYLOR: You may disconnect. Goodnight.

8 MS. LaROCHELLE: Thank you.

9 MS. SLATER: Thank y'all.

10 (Whereupon, at 8:02 p.m., this
11 public hearing was adjourned.)

12 (*This transcript may contain quoted material.
13 Such material is reproduced as read or quoted
14 by the speaker.)

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
) C E R T I F I C A T E
COUNTY OF HORRY)

BE IT KNOWN, that I, Cara-Leigh V. Richardson,
took the foregoing proceeding and hereby attest:

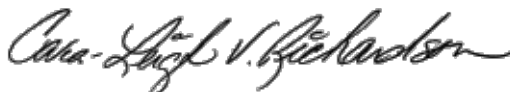
That I was then and there a notary public in and
for the State of South Carolina-at-large and that by
virtue thereof I was duly authorized to administer an
oath;

That the foregoing public hearing was taken down
by me and reduced to written form by means of Stenomask
with backup;

That the foregoing transcript represents a true,
accurate, and complete transcription of said hearing at
the time and place aforesaid to the best of my skill
and ability;

That I am neither a relative nor an employee of
any of the parties hereto, nor of any attorney or
counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor interested
in the outcome of this action;

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto
affixed my signature and title.



Cara-Leigh V. Richardson

Date: July 2nd, 2021
Notary public for South Carolina
My commission expires July 10, 2025