



August 6, 2025

The Honorable D. Reid Wilson
Secretary
North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
217 West Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27603

Re: Deny Permit 61-22 for Horizon 30, LLC

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On behalf of the Mitchell County Democratic Party (MCDP), I am writing to respectfully request that the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) deny Permit 61-22 for Horizon 30, LLC. There are a multitude of reasons why this permit should be denied.

On February 6, 2025, the NCDEQ's Division of Energy, Mineral, and Land Resources (DEMLR) inspected the site and determined that a mining permit would be required. DEMLR sent Horizon 30, LLC a second notice on March 7, 2025 notifying them that the activity they were conducting required a mining permit. DELMR personnel verbally instructed the operator to cease mining operations and submit a permit application in order to come into compliance with the Mining Act on April 23, 2025. On April 30, 2025, DELMR issued a notice of violation for mining without a permit to Horizon 30, LLC and was asked to cease all mining activities and to either submit a complete mining permit application or restore the mine site. On May 27, 2025, a follow-up inspection was conducted by DELMR and it was observed that additional lands had been disturbed. On June 5, 2025, a notice of continuing violation for mining without a permit was issued by DELMR to Horizon 30, LLC. It is obvious that Horizon 30, LLC has no intention of complying with North Carolina or federal law and will continue to harm our local environment and people with this illegal mine. Their refusal to comply with current law should be grounds to deny this permit and any future permits.

It is evident from all of the drone footage that has been taken of this illegal mining project the following has occurred: undue harm to the water, wildlife, and freshwater systems of the area

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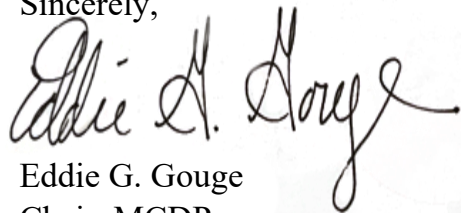
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around the Nolichucky River; sedimentation and pollution to the rivers, streams, and lakes of this beautiful mountain area; significant damage near publicly-owned lands; and, last but not least, impacted the public health and safety of the people in the Poplar area and beyond.

Therefore, the Mitchell County Democratic Party respectfully requests that Permit 61-22 be denied and criminal prosecution of those involved in this illegal mining activity be actively pursued. These actions will go a long way in protecting the people and natural resources of this beautiful mountain area for future generations.

Please do not hesitate to contact me whenever I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eddie G. Gouge". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Eddie" being more prominent.

Eddie G. Gouge
Chair, MCDP

Post Office Box 332
Bakersville, NC 28705-0332
(202) 567-1340

cc: The Honorable Josh Stein, Governor
The Honorable Jeff Jackson, Attorney General