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CENTERPIECE FEATURED

Proposed concrete crusher facing stiff opposition

By Kent Miller | Herald-Banner
Mar 15, 2024



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Much like Bell Concrete discovered when they proposed building a concrete batch plant in neighboring Rockwall County, Dry Creek Materials could soon learn they have a fight on their hands as well.

The Caddo Mills-based company wants to build a permanent rock and concrete crusher in southwest Hunt County at 4310 W. State Highway 276 between Quinlan and Union Valley but opposition to the proposal has already begun to pop up in concerted, coordinated efforts from groups such as Friends of Union Valley.

Friends of Union Valley is encouraging residents and property owners within the impacted area to attend a public meeting on Thursday at Quinlan Ford High School's auditorium. The meeting will be hosted by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to "provide information and answer questions" regarding the proposed facility. The meeting is set to begin at 7 p.m.

Public written comments about the TCEQ application can be submitted at any time during the public comment period the ends on Thursday following the meeting. Comments may be made online at www14.tceq.texas.gov/epic/ecomment. More information about the permit application is also available by calling (800) 687-4040.

Dry Creek Materials has applied to the TCEQ for a standard permit for the permanent crusher, which could operate from before sunrise to after sunset six days a week and crush 528,000 tons a year. A crushing plant setup is a series of machines that are designed to take large pieces of concrete, asphalt or rock and break them into smaller pieces. The crushed material is subsequently used for construction, landscaping and other purposes.

Friends of Union Valley says Dry Creek Materials' permit application "fails to demonstrate public health protections that clean air laws mandate, so the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality must deny the permit."

According to a statement provided by FUV, the proposed crusher poses a "potential significant health risk because Dry Creek has failed to demonstrate air emissions from its crusher will be below protective levels established by the federal and state governments.

The proposed crusher, FUV says, would emit particulates and quartz silica pollutants that can remain airborne for miles and are known to cause serious health effects including heart and respiratory diseases, Silicosis, cancer, asthma severity and premature death. Children and seniors are particularly vulnerable, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Additional detrimental impacts on community quality of life, says Friends of Union Valley, would likely include:

- Up to 52,800 added annual heavy tractor trailer truck trips using four major local highways and six local roads – worsening diesel pollution, road maintenance costs, traffic congestion, commute times, public safety.
- Lower property values – threatening residents’ life savings, school funding, public budgets.
- Significant added noise pollution from truck traffic and from up to 2,640 hours per year of crusher operation.

In addition to FUV’s efforts, formal written opposition has been submitted to TCEQ by the Hunt County Commissioners Court, the city councils of Quinlan and Union Valley, Poetry’s town council, State Sen. Angela Paxton, State Rep. Jill Dutton, State GOP Rep. candidate Brent Money and more than 1,100 individuals.

In addition to TCEQ staff, Dry Creek Materials’ owner and permit consultant, representatives of elected bodies and individual officeholders and candidates on record opposing the permit are expected at Thursday’s meeting.

One opponent of the proposed crusher who’ll be attending the meeting is cancer survivor Lisa Washington.

“Will you give just one evening to help stop the crusher?” Washington asked. “Showing up at this meeting is vital for everyone’s health, home values and our quality of life throughout the Royse City-Union Valley-Quinlan community.”

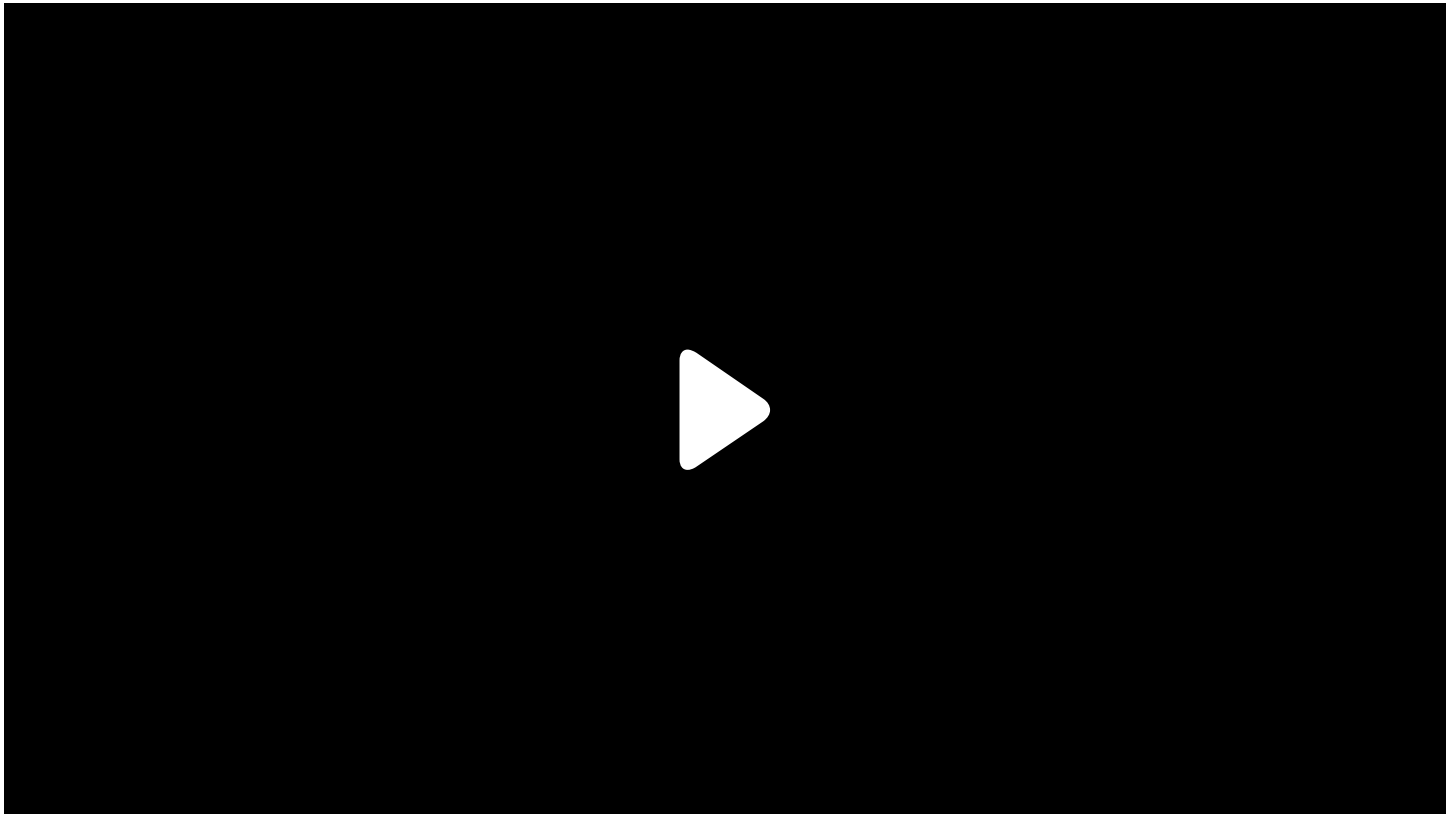
Washington and her husband, Dan, live in their “forever home” on land that adjoins the proposed crusher site and are managing Friends of Union Valley’s efforts along with other private citizen volunteers.

“Strong public turnout at this meeting is key,” said Dan Washington. “Permit applicants often withdraw after they see in person the large number of people they’ll impact.”

A typical crusher authorized by the standard permit might have these components: a primary crusher to break large rocks into chunks, a secondary crusher to break those chunks down into smaller pieces, two screening units to separate the crushed rock by size, conveyors to carry materials from stockpiles to the crushers, stockpiles of rock and crushed rock and diesel-powered generators.

More information about FUV is available online at www.CrushtheCrusher.com.

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