

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

In Re:)
)
Soilutions, LLC, Proposed) TRANSCRIPT OF HYBRID
Edge Road Mine - DHEC) IN-PERSON/VIRTUAL
Application 1-002375, Horry) PUBLIC HEARING
County, South Carolina)

DATE: Thursday, June 30, 2022

TIME: 6:31 p.m.

LOCATION: J. Bryan Floyd Community Center
1030 Possum Trot Road
North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
& Remote Videoconference

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:

Donna Moye, HEARING OFFICER
Kaylin Joye, PRESENTER
Chris Stout, PRESENTER
Kristy Ellenberg, TECH HOST
Katherine Yon, TECH TEAM

Shawn Williams, TECH TEAM

SPEAKERS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Mark O. Bara
Sara Rich
Emily Nellermoe
Tammy Baker
Korbin Causey
Allyson Noto
Becky Ryon
Brian Fuxan
Cara Schildtknecht
Brook Heider
Trapper Fowler
Crystal Caulder
Stan Barnett
David Ellis
Michael Hill
Amelia Wood
Sudie Thomas
Mary Lowman
Jessica King, Esquire - SOILUTIONS, LLC
Tim Edge
Mandy Edge
Jeff Bowen
Joe Woodle
Catherine Watts
Danny Hardee

I N D E X

Proceeding 03
Certificate of Court Reporter 102

1 PROCEEDING

2 DONNA MOYE: Hello, and welcome. I want to make sure
3 that our remote audience can hear us okay. Kristy,
4 Katherine, are we coming through, okay? (No
5 response.) Let's try this again. Kristy and
6 Katherine, can you hear us okay?

7 KATHERINE YON: Yes.

8 KRISTY ELLENBERG: We got you.

9 DONNA MOYE: Great, thank you. So, again, hello and
10 welcome. Thank you for being with us tonight for
11 DHEC's public hearing on the individual mine
12 operating permit requested by Soilutions, LLC for
13 the Edge Road Mine in Horry County.

14 The time is now 6:31 PM on Thursday, June
15 30th, 2022. This hybrid public hearing is being
16 held by the South Carolina Department of Health and
17 Environmental Control, hereafter referred to as
18 DHEC. The purpose of this hearing is to accept
19 comments on the individual mine operating permit
20 requested by Soilutions for the Edge Road Mine,
21 which is what I just said, but I was on the wrong
22 page, so I apologize for repeating it.

23 This is a formal proceeding and DHEC staff
24 will not be responding to questions or comments.
25 Please be aware that this public hearing is being

1 recorded and a written transcript will be prepared
2 by the certified court reporter who is in
3 attendance tonight and is seated to my right. The
4 recording of this public hearing will be placed on
5 our webpage prior to the end of the public comment
6 period on July 15th, 2022. The transcript will
7 also be posted on our webpage when available.

8 My name is Donna Moye. I am part of DHEC's
9 Community Engagement Team for the Office of
10 Environmental Affairs, and I will be serving as
11 your hearing officer tonight. Providing safe and
12 effective opportunities for public involvement in
13 our permitting processes has remained a top
14 priority for DHEC throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
15 This hybrid public hearing is unique because it
16 allows you to be with us in person here at the J.
17 Bran Floyd Community Center, or virtually from your
18 remote location. This added accessibility gives
19 everyone the opportunity to participate and hear
20 the same thing at the same time. Regardless of how
21 you have chosen to participate, it is a pleasure to
22 be with you and we thank you for taking the time to
23 join us.

24 We have behind-the-scenes virtual assistants
25 tonight from our Environmental Affairs Tech Team.

1 So that you will recognize their voices, I will ask
2 them to introduce themselves now.

3 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Good evening; this is Kristy
4 Ellenberg.

5 KATHERINE YON: Good evening, everyone. This is
6 Katherine Yon.

7 DONNA MOYE: I would be remiss if I did not say, I
8 also have help tonight here from one of our
9 regional staff, Shawn Williams, who you've seen up
10 here and who may be helping with the audio and the
11 visual as we go through the evening.

12 Participating in a hybrid hearing may be a new
13 experience for some of you. Kristy and Katherine
14 are here to help things run smoothly and
15 troubleshoot any problems we may have. Should we
16 have any technical issues, we appreciate your
17 patience and understanding as we work through them.
18 We have been doing this quite a bit, so I'm hoping
19 that by now we have a good system down pat and we
20 won't have any trouble tonight.

21 We will be doing a few things for our remote
22 participants to help prevent distractions and
23 ensure that everyone is heard at the appropriate
24 time. Please respect that all cameras have been
25 turned off and all lines have been muted to

1 minimize background noise and echoing. After the
2 presentation, we will unmute lines and share
3 further instructions so that all who would like to
4 provide comments tonight are able to do so.

5 I mentioned our webpage earlier. If you not
6 aware, DHEC has created this webpage for convenient
7 access to information about the Edge Road Mine.
8 The webpage address is www.scdhec.gov/edgeroadmine
9 with no spaces. If you have not already done so, I
10 encourage our remote participants to go to the
11 webpage and complete the registration form for this
12 hearing. This will let us know how to notify you
13 of DHEC's final decision.

14 The permitting process at DHEC begins when an
15 application is received for one or more
16 environmental permits. During the permitting
17 process, an applicant must show that the proposed
18 operation can comply with state and federal
19 regulations. These regulations were developed to
20 ensure that human health and the environment are
21 protected. In addition to reviewing the
22 application, DHEC's role is to write, and if
23 issued, enforce permits in accordance with
24 requirements of the regulations.

25 You should know that DHEC does not have the

1 authority to regulate or consider some common
2 issues related to mining operations when making a
3 permit decision. These include truck traffic,
4 access to public roads, weight limits, operating
5 hours, and zoning or land use as determined by
6 local government.

7 Although a final permit decision cannot be
8 made based on a vote or how many people say the
9 same thing, your comments are important and they
10 provide DHEC staff with additional things to
11 consider. You should know that a final decision
12 has not yet been made and will not be made here
13 tonight. The purpose of this hearing is for you to
14 provide comments before a final decision is made.
15 There are multiple DHEC staff attending this
16 hearing, both in person and remotely, who are
17 listening and want to hear your comments.

18 As I mentioned earlier, a recording of this
19 hearing will be made available on our webpage. The
20 recording provides an opportunity for mining
21 representatives, local government officials, your
22 legislative delegation, and any other interested
23 parties to hear what you have to say if they were
24 not able to join us tonight.

25 DHEC welcomes and encourages all comments made

1 tonight, as well as those submitted in writing
2 through the end of the extended public comment
3 period on Friday, July 15th, 2022.

4 We will now move on to our agenda and the
5 order in which we will proceed for this hearing.
6 An overview of the mine permit application and
7 DHEC's permitting process will be provided by
8 Kaylin Joye and Chris Stout. Kaylin will be
9 presenting remotely and Chris is here with us in
10 person.

11 Following the presentation, I will begin the
12 public comment portion by calling on those of you
13 who previously indicated that you would like to
14 make a comment either during pre-registration
15 online or during sign-in here tonight. If you have
16 decided that you no longer wish to comment when you
17 are called on, you may decline at that time. We
18 will alternate between those of you who are here in
19 person, those of you who are joining online, and
20 those of you who are joining by phone.

21 Once we have finished hearing from everyone
22 who previously indicated their intention to speak,
23 those who have decided to speak during the course
24 of this hearing will be given an opportunity to
25 make their comments. At that time, I will give

1 instructions on how to indicate that you would like
2 to make a comment.

3 Finally, after all comments have been heard, I
4 will make closing remarks and this public hearing
5 will be adjourned.

6 For everyone to have a fair and equal
7 opportunity to participate tonight and to ensure
8 that we proceed in a timely and effective matter,
9 the following four guidelines have been
10 established.

11 There will be no questions or answers during
12 or after the presentation or any comment. Your
13 comment should not go over three minutes each. At
14 the end of your allotted time, you will hear this
15 sound (timer sound demonstrated). That's magic,
16 don't you think? Thank you, Katherine. We worked
17 really hard on that. I will interrupt to remind
18 you if you do not conclude your comments at that
19 time. If you are not able to complete your
20 comments within the allotted time, you may still
21 submit them in writing before the end of this
22 public comment period.

23 Third, please be respectful towards all who
24 are presenting information or making comments here
25 tonight. You each have a unique and valued

1 perspective. No one comment is considered more
2 important than another.

3 And, fourth, please do not interrupt or ask
4 other participants to respond during your comments.
5 Comments or actions that are disruptive and
6 distract from the purpose of this hearing will not
7 allowed.

8 I will now call on Kaylin Joye to begin the
9 DHEC presentation. Kaylin, are you with us?

10 KAYLIN JOYE: I sure am. Can everyone hear me all
11 right?

12 DONNA MOYE: We're going to adjust the sound here in
13 the auditorium, if you'll give us just a second.
14 (Pause.) Okay, Kaylin.

15 KAYLIN JOYE: All right, can you hear me better?

16 DONNA MOYE: Yeah, perfect. Thank you.

17 KAYLIN JOYE: Good evening, ladies and gentleman, and
18 thank you for showing interest in our mine
19 permitting process. My name is Kaylin Joye and I
20 am the project manager for this application for the
21 proposed Edge Road Mine in Horry County. For those
22 following along on your phone, we are currently on
23 slide six.

24 Tonight, I'd like to go over our process with
25 you, what we have already accomplished, where we

1 currently are, and what we expect for the future.
2 We'll go over general information regarding the
3 site and then speak of the details of the mining
4 application and the proposed reclamation plan.

5 Then we will go over the DHEC requirements and
6 some of the concerns that we've already received
7 from notified agencies and the community from the
8 initial and -- hearing -- public notices, and
9 lastly, the next steps moving forwards.

10 We are now on slide seven. On April 7th,
11 2021, DHEC received a general permit application
12 from Soilutions, LLC for the proposed Edge Road
13 Mine. At that time, we began our administrative
14 review to make sure that we had all relevant
15 information needed to complete our technical
16 review.

17 On September 16th, 2021, DHEC approved
18 coverage under the GP1 for the Edge Road Mine after
19 the technical review of the application was
20 completed and all other permits and certificates
21 were obtained. On October 11th, 2021, DHEC
22 rescinded the GP1 permit for Edge Road Mine due to
23 the general coastal zone consistency determination
24 had expired. For the current application, the
25 operator has applied for an individual CZC that you

1 will hear about later in this presentation.

2 We are now on slide eight. On January 14th,
3 2022, DHEC received an application for an
4 individual mine operating permit for Soilutions,
5 LLC for the proposed Edge Road Mine. At that time,
6 we began our administrative review to make sure
7 that we had all relevant information for our
8 initial public notice.

9 On February 15th, 2022, DHEC published the
10 initial public notice by running an ad in the
11 Myrtle Beach Sun News, an Horry County newspaper,
12 and mailed out memos to the adjacent landowners and
13 those that owned land within half a mile of the
14 proposed mine.

15 Additionally, we sent the application package
16 out to the federal, state, and local agencies for
17 their comments. Some of these include the Mine
18 Safety and Health Administration, or MSHA; the US
19 Fish and Wildlife; the SC Department of National
20 Resources, or DNR; the SC State Historic
21 Preservation Office, or SHPO; SC Department of
22 Transportation, DOT; and the Horry County
23 Administrator, among others. At this time, we
24 began our technical review of the application
25 package.

1 Tonight, on June 30th, DHEC is holding a
2 public hearing which will be incorporated into our
3 technical review. In addition to the oral comments
4 that we will receive tonight, all subsequent
5 written comments may be delivered to DHEC via the
6 Edge Road Mine webpage. Contact information will
7 be provided in another slide. We ask that those
8 comments be received by us no later than July 15th,
9 2022, for consideration in our permitting process.

10 Our technical review will continue to ensure
11 that we address as many comments and concerns as
12 the SC Mining Act and Regulations will allow.

13 At a time to be determined, if a reason to
14 deny the application has not been discovered, DHEC
15 will make a permitting decision. If the permit is
16 approved, we will include a summary response to
17 comments, which will address the comments and
18 concerns that we received throughout the permitting
19 process.

20 This will also begin the 15-day appeal period,
21 and information on how to appeal the decision will
22 be included. If the permit is denied, a letter of
23 denial and reasons for such will be sent to the
24 applicant, which will also begin the 15-day appeal
25 period for them to appeal our decision.

1 We are now on slide nine. The permit boundary
2 outlined in green contains three tracts of land
3 currently owned by Soilutions, LLC. This area
4 currently has one residential dwelling and the
5 remaining property is undeveloped and totals 33
6 acres. Old Highway 90 can be seen to the northwest
7 and Edge Road to the north as indicated by their
8 respective labels.

9 Edge Road will be the primary avenue of
10 transportation and is accessed via Old Highway 90,
11 approximately 1.5 miles from the proposed access
12 road.

13 The Town of Wampee is approximately five miles
14 as the crow flies in the northeast direction as
15 indicated by the arrow. Likewise, the Town of
16 Conway is approximately 13 miles to the west of
17 this site.

18 We are now on slide 10. This is a closeup
19 view of the proposed mine site. The Lewis Ocean
20 Bay Heritage Preserve abuts the southern property
21 boundary, privately-owned land abuts the north and
22 northeastern-most property boundaries with Edge
23 Road beyond. The proposed entrance would be
24 located at the intersection of Edge Road and the
25 private shared driveway located onsite. Boggy

1 Swamp runs along the east side of the site, from
2 north to south, respectively.

3 As previously mentioned, this proposed site
4 has a total area of approximately 33 acres.
5 Approximately 8.9 acres of this site have been
6 categorized as buffer and is denoted by the yellow
7 and green overlays. Buffer is defined as land that
8 will not be disturbed beyond the pre-mine natural
9 state. This includes a minimum 50-foot perimeter
10 buffer around the entire permit boundary acting as
11 visual screen indicated in green, and a minimum 50-
12 foot buffer along wetlands near the affected area
13 indicated in yellow. Again, this is area that will
14 remain untouched by mining activities.

15 Approximately 24.1 acres of this site have
16 been categorized as affected area and are denoted
17 as areas outlined in red. The red dotted line
18 indicates silt fencing that will be erected around
19 the perimeter of the site on the mine side of the
20 proposed 50-foot buffers.

21 Therefore, all area contained within the red
22 dotted line is considered the proposed affected
23 land. Affected area is defined as area of land
24 from which overburden or minerals have been removed
25 or upon which overburden material has been

1 deposited or stockpiles and saline ponds associated
2 with mine, mining activities reside.

3 The pit will be excavated in four segments
4 with the first segment at the southeastern-most
5 area and then slowly expanded westward into Segment
6 2, and eventually northward into Segments 3 and 4.

7 Lastly, the proposed maximum depth of the mine
8 is 50 feet below ground surface. However, the
9 depth may be less in some sections of the pit
10 depending on continuity of sand deposits. Typical
11 of sand deposits, there are clay layers that will
12 be encountered. Thin clay layers can be stripped
13 to uncover sand deposits below and mining can
14 continue. However, thick layers of clay could
15 render the sand deposits below uneconomic and
16 mining would not extend any deeper in that section
17 of the mine. There will be no processing plant
18 located onsite.

19 We are now on slide 11. On this slide, you
20 can see the relative location and proximity of the
21 proposed mine to the Lewis Ocean Bay Heritage
22 Preserve. The Lewis Ocean Bay Heritage Preserve is
23 a 10,427-acre preserve that allows visitors to go
24 hiking, horseback riding, hunting, nature viewing,
25 and bird watching.

1 In addition to the 50-foot undisturbed natural
2 buffers between mining activities and the Lewis
3 Ocean Bay Heritage Preserve, the operator is
4 proposing to install silt fencing and other BMPs to
5 contain sediment onsite and protect potential
6 wandering wildlife. If permitted, the operator
7 proposes to perform segmented mining where the mine
8 will be excavated in phases so that groundwater and
9 land impacts will be minimized during operations.

10 We are now on slide 12. The proposed mining
11 process will require the installation of best
12 management practices, or BMPs. These will allow
13 the operator to prevent or minimize offsite
14 impacts. BMPs cover a wide array of activities
15 that include but are not limited to, the
16 installation of silt fencing, brush barriers, or
17 check dams to control sediment transport; retaining
18 or enhancing vegetation; and the use of water
19 trucks or dust suppressants to minimize dust
20 generation; and the installation of stormwater
21 basins to better manage the site's water balance.

22 The operator will begin clearing the trees and
23 vegetation only in the affected areas and only as
24 necessary to operate the site. For example, after
25 the first segment is mined, the operator will begin

1 sloping and vegetating the grassland areas as they
2 begin mining the second segment and so on until
3 mining is complete. Once the BMPs are in place,
4 the operator will then remove and stockpile the
5 topsoil to reuse in later reclamation activities.
6 This will allow them to better revegetate the area.

7 Topsoil is the material that is sitting on top
8 of the sand material that the applicant is
9 proposing to mine. It has little to no value and
10 must be moved before the operator can expose the
11 sand underneath. This material will be stockpiled
12 into stockpile areas for reclamation at the end of
13 mining.

14 The topsoil stockpile as well as the mine
15 walls, if permitted, will be sloped no steeper than
16 a three horizontal, one vertical grade. These
17 slopes would then be revegetated with a variety of
18 grasses based on SCDNR and SCDOT specifications.

19 As the topsoil is being removed, the pit will
20 be developed and dewatered as necessary to maintain
21 a dry and safe working environment. Once the sand
22 is exposed, it will be excavated and hauled
23 offsite. The operator will be required to slope
24 the walls per safety regulations by the Mine Safety
25 and Health Administration.

1 We are now on slide 13. The operator is
2 required to perform reclamation activities
3 concurrently with mining as feasible. When the
4 mine reaches its end of life, the operator is
5 required to perform final reclamation activities.
6 Reclamation is the process to restore the affected
7 land to a useful purpose while protecting the
8 natural resources of the surrounding area.

9 The applicant has indicated in their
10 reclamation plan that the site will be reclaimed as
11 a pond/lake and grasslands. As previously
12 mentioned, the land will be sloped on a three
13 horizontal, one vertical gradient as soon as
14 feasible and stockpiled topsoil will be spread out
15 on the top and sides. This will be used to
16 revegetate these areas.

17 The pond/lake shall also meet minimum
18 reclamation standards detailed in Regulation 89-
19 330. Financial insurance from the operator is
20 required to ensure that reclamation will be
21 completed. This is a financial mechanism such as a
22 surety bond or letter of credit that will cover the
23 cost of reclamation should the operator not meet
24 reclamation standards.

25 In this hypothetical scenario, this financial

1 mechanism will be forfeited and DHEC will use the
2 money to complete reclamation activities. By law,
3 based on the site's size, the financial insurance
4 is set at \$25,000. Slide 14 shows examples of
5 different sand mines that have been reclaimed. All
6 are comparable to the size of the proposed Edge
7 Road Mine.

8 We are now on slide 15. Other DHEC permits
9 that will be required for this site is a National
10 Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit and
11 an approved Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan,
12 or NPDES and SWPP, from the Bureau of Water. This
13 permit will assure that water quality standards are
14 being met for the protection of human health and
15 the environment.

16 In addition to the NPDES Permit, the operator
17 will need to obtain and comply with DHEC's Ocean
18 and Coastal Resource Management Coastal Zone
19 Consistency Certification. This certification
20 ensures that the operator conducts mining
21 consistent with the state's Coastal Zoning
22 Management Plan to ensure quality standards are
23 being met for coastal resources such as endangered
24 species, archeological and historical resources, as
25 well as wetlands.

1 We are now on slide 16. Prior to DHEC's
2 technical review of the application for the Edge
3 Road Mine, several state, federal, and local county
4 agencies were notified of the application for their
5 review and comments. So, far, the South Carolina
6 Department of Natural Resources have submitted
7 comments that we are currently reviewing and taking
8 into consideration during our technical review of
9 the application for Edge Road Mine.

10 We are now on slide 17. DHEC also received
11 comments from the community expressing concerns on
12 a variety of issues. We would like to take some
13 time tonight to show that we are considering these
14 concerns and how they relate to the proposed site.
15 The first concern that we would like to address
16 tonight is the safety concerns regarding the use of
17 Edge Road Mine during -- or the use of Edge Road
18 during mining.

19 We are now on slide 18. A common concern
20 expressed is the increase of truck traffic and dust
21 due to hauling mined material offsite and the
22 safety of using Edge Road. The SC Mining Act only
23 authorizes DHEC to regulate truck traffic on roads
24 inside the permit boundary. DHEC can only evaluate
25 impacts to public roads as it pertains to the

1 physical effects from the mining operation -- for
2 example, blasting or undermining -- not due to
3 traffic patterns, dust, or general wear and tear.

4 Other concerns with road systems including use
5 of the roads are under the jurisdiction of SC
6 Department of Transportation, SC Public Service
7 Commission, or Horry County Public -- Department
8 Public of Works. These concerns should be
9 addressed to these agencies, and their contact
10 information is available on the current slide.

11 We are now on slide 19. The community also
12 expressed concerns that dewatering will lessen the
13 groundwater supply for nearby residents who rely on
14 wells for their water or the potential for
15 groundwater impacts surrounding the site.

16 We are now on slide 20. To address concerns
17 about the proposed Edge Road Mine causing impacts
18 to nearby drinking water wells, DHEC is providing
19 this Well Survey Information Form. We encourage
20 nearby residents to use this form to provide
21 information on the presence of wells near the
22 proposed mine site. DHEC will use this information
23 along with an internal database search to gather as
24 much information available to understand the
25 location and depth of drinking water wells nearby

1 and fully consider these concerns.

2 If the Edge Road Mine is permitted and a
3 drinking water well complaint is received, DHEC is
4 responsible for determining if dewatering
5 activities at the mine have caused the problem. If
6 DHEC determines the mine caused the problem, the
7 operator's responsible for repairing, deepening, or
8 redrilling the affected well or the wells, and to
9 supply the affected household or holds with bottled
10 water until access to groundwater is restored.
11 Having this information is important to
12 understanding what effects, if any, that a mine may
13 have on nearby wells.

14 If you'd like to provide your well location
15 and information to DHEC, please find one of the
16 DHEC members present tonight to obtain a copy of
17 this form. A self-addressed envelope is available
18 with the well survey form for your convenience.

19 We are now on slide 21. As discussed in
20 earlier slides, the proposed mine plan indicates
21 that mining will take place in phases. There will
22 be four total phases that will be mined, meaning
23 that the need to discharge could be significantly
24 less than if the operator were to mine out of one
25 large pit.

1 The operator intends to use Segment 1, which
2 is approximately 6.7 acres, as a sediment settling
3 basin, where water will be allowed to infiltrate
4 back into the ground or, as necessary, routed into
5 the wetland adjoining Boggy Swamp. By using
6 Segment 1 to reintroduce water back into the water
7 table, it is not predicted that the localized
8 dewatering of the other areas will have a
9 substantial drawdown effect, especially to the
10 southeast in the direction of the Lewis Ocean Bay
11 Heritage Preserve.

12 Concerning the potential for sedimentation
13 occurring in wetlands or offsite, if dewatering is
14 necessary, the South Carolina Mining Regulation
15 state in Chapter 89-120 that, "Appropriate best
16 management practices for sediment and erosion and
17 control shall be designed, constructed, and
18 maintained to prevent additional contribution of
19 sediment to streams, lakes, ponds, or land
20 outside the permit area."

21 Sediment control ponds, such as the one
22 proposed by the applicant, along with other best
23 management practices, like silt fencing buffers,
24 vegetation, and responsible mining practices in
25 general, will help to ensure water quality

1 standards are met during mining operations.

2 Additionally, the proposed mine must meet
3 compliance standards and parameters outlined in the
4 National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
5 Permit and the Coastal Zoning Consistency
6 Determination Certification.

7 We are now on slide 22. Noise levels are a
8 common concern DHEC receives during the permitting
9 process for proposed mining operations. There is
10 no government standard for noise from this type of
11 industry; however, the Mine Safety and Health
12 Administration does have noise standards for worker
13 safety to protect hearing, which also limits noise
14 to neighbors. Distance from the operation can also
15 decrease the decibel level of sound.

16 If a DHEC mining permit is issued, the
17 operator would be required to maintain equipment
18 per the standards established to minimize excessive
19 noise. Additionally, best management practices
20 such as vegetation, buffers, and berms can also
21 lessen noise from mining operations.

22 We are now on slide 23. Next, we will hear
23 from Christopher Stout, the manager for the Coastal
24 Zone Consistency Section in the Office of Ocean and
25 Coastal Resource Management. Chris will talk about

1 the Coastal Zoning Consistency Determination
2 required for mines located in the eight coastal
3 counties of South Carolina. Chris?

4 CHRIS STOUT: Thank you, Kaylin. Can everybody hear me
5 okay? (Pause.) No? We'll try that again.

6 Normally, I don't need a microphone. I've usually
7 been told I'm pretty loud, so hopefully we can get
8 this for everybody. Is that better? (Pause.) All
9 right.

10 As Kaylin mentioned, my name is Christopher
11 Stout. I manage the Coastal Zone Consistency
12 Section for DHEC's Office of Ocean and Coastal
13 Resource Management. Our program, I'm trying to
14 explain a little bit tonight about, briefly about
15 our program and then kind of what our review would
16 entail for a project like this that we are required
17 to review.

18 Our program is termed a network program, and
19 what that means for a coastal program is that we
20 are coordinating with and relying upon areas of
21 expertise with state resource agencies. So, as
22 Kaylin referenced earlier on slide 16, she's
23 coordinated with a list of agencies; we coordinate
24 as well with those same agencies.

25 So, we rely on the expertise from DNR for

1 threatened and endangered species at the state
2 level. We coordinate with the State Historic
3 Preservation Office for archeological and culture
4 resources, and things of that nature. So, we, we
5 perform that review in that regard.

6 I also want to make sure that, that it's kind
7 of understood that our review, while independent,
8 is occurring concurrently with the mining and
9 reclamation sections. So, the public notice that
10 went out initially to start the comment period for
11 this mine, as well as this extended comment period,
12 also serves as a comment period for the Coastal
13 Zone Consistency Review. So, all the comments that
14 you all have been submitting and, and will continue
15 to submit, we are taking those into review as it
16 relates to our part of this process as well.

17 So, next slide, we will be on slide 25. So,
18 the Coastal Zone Consistency Review, or the CZC
19 Review, is a policy-based review for a project
20 under the enforceable policies found in South
21 Carolina Coastal Zone Management Program Document.
22 In addition to the guidelines for the evaluation of
23 all projects, there are project-specific policies,
24 such as those under our Coastal Industry Section
25 for mineral extraction. Also, there are stormwater

1 management policies for landfills and mines. These
2 are just kind of a couple examples of two that are
3 particular for this type of project.

4 In addition to those types of reviews, there
5 are also resource-specific policies, and so those
6 would cover any, any type of review where we are
7 concerned with potential impacts to threatened and
8 endangered species and their habitat, those for
9 wetlands, archeological and cultural resources.

10 Additionally, there's another group of
11 resource policies that are denoted as Geographical
12 Areas of Particular Concern. These are evaluations
13 involving review of that GAPC and how a project may
14 impact that GAPC's Priority of Use. So, depending
15 on what that may be, in this case, you know, we are
16 talking about the, the Heritage Trust Program with
17 the Lewis Ocean Bay Heritage Preserve, as well as
18 threatened and endangered species' habitats, and so
19 we're looking at the project as proposed and how
20 that fits with our policies.

21 Following the conclusion of the extended
22 comment period, as part of this process, our
23 section will also review, like I said earlier,
24 those comments that are received. We will evaluate
25 those based on our enforceable policies that are

1 appropriate for this type of project. We may ask
2 for some additional information in response to
3 those, as those relate to our policies as they
4 bring concerns on our part as, as part of that
5 process.

6 Once we have the final response to those and
7 they've addressed all of our concerns, we would
8 work towards then drafting a Coastal Zone
9 Consistency Certification decision, which is then
10 routed to our mining and reclamation staff, and
11 that gets incorporated into their final application
12 review.

13 At this time, I'm going to turn it back over
14 to Kaylin. Thank you.

15 KAYLIN JOYE: Thank you, Chris. We are now on slide
16 26. To reiterate our next steps, DHEC is currently
17 holding a public hearing and will accept written
18 comments until July 15th, 2022, and will consider
19 these comments in order to continue our technical
20 review of this permit application.

21 At the conclusion of that technical review,
22 when all comments have been considered, DHEC will
23 make a final permitting decision and provide
24 notification and a summary response to comments to
25 everyone on our mailing list. Whether the

1 application is approved or denied, this decision
2 will begin the 15-day appeal period, and
3 instructions on how to appeal our decision will be
4 included.

5 Again, thank you for your time tonight and I
6 look forward to hearing your additional comments.

7 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Kaylin and Chris. I think we
8 need to have a mic muted somewhere. (Pause.)
9 Thank you.

10 Before I go on with my next comments, I did
11 want to mention a couple of things that I failed to
12 mention as we started. First of all, you may see
13 me or other DHEC staff members using their phones
14 during the presentation or while you're commenting.
15 That's not because we don't want to hear you; it's
16 because we're communicating with our team back in
17 Columbia to make sure that everything is going okay
18 on that end as well as on our end.

19 Also, I did want to notify, for those of you
20 joining us remotely, that we are noting if you have
21 raised your hand or unmuted your microphone that
22 you would like to speak and we will call on you, I
23 promise, if you can just be patient with us a
24 little bit longer.

25 And finally, I did want to double-check with

1 our court reporter over here and make sure
2 everything's good with you.

3 COURT REPORTER: (Gives thumbs-up signal.)

4 DONNA MOYE: Okay. Kristy and Katherine, can you hear
5 us okay?

6 KATHERINE YON: Yes.

7 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Yes, Donna.

8 DONNA MOYE: It sounds like we're experiencing a
9 downpour, so just let us know if something isn't
10 working right on your end.

11 As we transition into the comment portion of
12 this public hearing, please remain patient as we
13 alternate between those of you who are here in
14 person, those of you who are joining online, and
15 those of you who are joining by phone.

16 I would like to reiterate that DHEC staff are
17 here to listen to your comments. Answers or
18 responses to questions will not be provided
19 tonight. All comments made during this hearing,
20 again, are being recorded. If you are unable to
21 complete your comments within the allotted time,
22 you may still submit them in writing through the
23 end of the public comment period on July 15th,
24 2022.

25 We want to make sure that everyone can hear

1 the comments being made tonight. For those
2 attending in person, after I call your name, please
3 come forward to this microphone to speak. I would
4 ask that you come around to my left so that you're
5 not traveling through the cords that we have.

6 For those of you joining online, Kristy will
7 call on you by your last name or the last four
8 digits of your phone number when it is your turn to
9 speak. Please remember that we have placed a
10 three-minute limit on all comments so that everyone
11 who wishes to speak can do so. Finally, please
12 state and spell your name for the court reporter
13 prior to speaking.

14 I would also like to mention that we do have a
15 container of wipes here under the podium if you
16 want to wipe the microphone off as you come up.
17 And also, if you have a copy of your comments in
18 writing and would like to leave those with me, that
19 would certainly help the court reporter as she
20 transcribes your comments later.

21 So, with that, we will begin by calling on
22 someone who is here in person, and I would like to
23 call on someone who approached me prior to the
24 beginning of the hearing and kindly asked to have a
25 few extra minutes to state his comments. Is that

1 okay with everyone? He said, he assured me it
2 would not go over five minutes, so. And he has
3 given me a little intro to read to you, so I will
4 do that now.

5 Our next presenter is Mark Bara, B-A-R-A,
6 answer I hope I pronounced that correctly. He was
7 a regional wildlife coordinator for nine counties
8 here in the Pee Dee Region when he retired after 33
9 years with the South Carolina Department of Natural
10 Resources. He is a Wildlife Society certified
11 wildlife biologist, and he earned a master's degree
12 in wildlife science from the University of Georgia.
13 He is a veteran of the US Coast Guard, where he
14 served three and a half years of active duty, and
15 I will add that he has an adorable Corgi with him
16 tonight, who I made the acquaintance of earlier.
17 So, Mr. Bara, if you would like to come on up.
18 Again if you'll just walk in front of the table
19 there, so that you're not trying to come through
20 the cords.

21 MARK BARA: My friends, permit me to invite your
22 attention -- Can y'all hear me?

23 DONNA MOYE: Make sure you're in the microphone.

24 MARK BARA: Can y'all hear me? (PAUSE.) I want to
25 invite your attention to the importance of public

1 trust lands to the people of Horry County. When a
2 young family's about to go on an outing to enjoy
3 nature and natural surroundings, they will lace up
4 their children's sneakers, throw some drink
5 bottles, sandwiches, and binoculars into their
6 backpacks, fasten the leash to the family dog.
7 They're not going to hike around their neighbors'
8 condos. They're going to seek out natural areas,
9 such as national parks, national wildlife refuges,
10 or state wildlife management areas, and heritage
11 preserves.

12 Encompassing 1134 square miles of land area,
13 this is the largest of our state's 46 counties.
14 We're also the fastest-growing county in the United
15 States. Putting evermore pressure on diminishing
16 farm and forest lands, our citizens find it
17 increasingly difficult to get out in the open and
18 commune with nature. Several tracks are open to
19 the public for traditional uses, such as
20 recreational hunting, hiking, and birdwatching.
21 Among them is Lewis Ocean Bay Heritage Preserve,
22 situated inland from Myrtle Beach and bordering
23 International Drive.

24 Protecting these lands and the public's
25 freedom to enjoy them is a major challenge,

1 including a significant law enforcement effort to
2 deter, deter poaching of animals and rare plants.

3 Managing these lands has another challenge,
4 and the efforts invested here are largely unseen
5 and unappreciated by the general public. Heritage
6 preserve managers tasked with managing and
7 protecting these resources utilize carefully
8 planned burns or prescribed fires as it's typically
9 called. With prescribed fire, the manager chooses
10 the conditions under which the area is burned,
11 including wind speed and direction, air
12 temperature, and establishment of fire breaks, and
13 soil moisture conditions.

14 Wildfires on the other hand, whether caused by
15 natural factors, such as lightning, or human
16 activity, such as careless trash burning, or worse
17 arson, often take place under conditions when it's
18 easy to carry a fire, such as high wind, low
19 humidity, and drought. Within these conditions,
20 excuse me, it's a, it's a recipe for catastrophic
21 problems.

22 Land managers also prescribe fire for habitat
23 improvement. Forest floor litter is turned into,
24 into recycled soil nutrients allowing for
25 regeneration of the grass and herbaceous

1 understory, attractive to deer and wild turkeys.
2 Rodents, such as cotton rats and gray squirrels,
3 are also attracted to the lush regeneration, as
4 well as the predators that follow them, such as
5 foxes, bobcats, box owls, rattlesnakes, and pine
6 snakes.

7 Every single natural area has been or is
8 currently under threat from commercial activities.
9 Yellowstone National Park established in 1872, our
10 first and the world's first national park, was so
11 beset by market hunters that President U.S. Grant
12 sent federal troops commanded by General Philip
13 Sheridan to protect this iconic park, which today,
14 of course, we take for granted.

15 Fast forward, Lewis Ocean Bay Heritage
16 Preserve with its unique assemblage of plants and
17 animals is under threat from a sand mining
18 operation at the upper end and the planned hospital
19 project across International Drive. Losing our
20 ability to utilize prescribed fire will seriously
21 compromise our efforts to manage increasingly rare
22 habitats. Perhaps just as importantly, to manage
23 understory fuel accumulation and result in threats
24 to nearby subdivisions.

25 These are yours and your children's lands.

1 They are your heritage, your birthright. Regarding
2 the Edge Road sand quarrying operation, while not
3 all of the facts may be in hand, one thing is for
4 certain: this project cannot be calculated to
5 enhance natural resource values in any way.

6 Because of the unique and irreplaceable
7 resources at risk, it should be disapproved. All
8 of the excavated areas should be restored to grade
9 and revegetated.

10 To the representatives of DHEC, your ability
11 to protect these assets for the citizens, citizens
12 of South Carolina and ultimately their children is
13 a serious responsibility. It's a sacred duty.

14 Permit me to leave you with this concluding
15 thought. Our soils, water, vegetative cover, --
16 I'm in the last sentence -- and the animals
17 supported by these plants, these things are gifts,
18 and as such, they are sacred. They should be
19 regarded and revered as such. Thank you for your
20 attention and your concern.

21 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Mark. I have given a copy of
22 your comments to the court reporter, so I
23 appreciate you sharing with -- those, those with me
24 before the hearing started.

25 So, now we are going to go to our virtual

1 audience and let Kristy call on the next person who
2 had signed up to speak.

3 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Thanks, Donna. I'm going to start
4 with those who had pre-registered to speak that I
5 believe are also here virtually, so Sara Rich. Ms.
6 Rich, if you're able to unmute your microphone.

7 SARA RICH: Hi; I'm here. Can you all hear me?

8 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

9 SARA RICH: Hi, thank you so much. My name is Sara,
10 S-A-R-A; last name is Rich, R-I-C-H. DHEC should
11 not permit the Edge Road Mine to continue
12 operations for the following three reasons and many
13 more besides these.

14 One, Lewis Ocean Bay Heritage Preserve, as our
15 last speaker just said, is special, and a 50-foot
16 buffer is simply not enough to protect this place
17 from the mine. A mine will disturb rare and
18 endangered species that compose a unique ecosystem.
19 The wetland ecology of the preserve will be
20 hindered with the addition of the mine. Water will
21 go into the mine instead of the wetland, and for
22 the sake of safe and clean drinking water and a
23 healthy ecosystem, of which we are all a part, we
24 need those wetlands to thrive, not to be reclaimed
25 into a pond.

1 Two, the mine is already disturbing longtime
2 residents who live on this road. Their property
3 values will plummet if the mine goes through, just
4 like their quality of life and even their health
5 already have. The mine needs to be stopped, if not
6 for the sake of the plants and animals, at least
7 for the sake of the people living in its vicinity.
8 Health, DHEC, should be your top priority. Healthy
9 people, healthy communities, right?

10 My last point, in this state and especially in
11 this county, in Horry County, governmental bodies
12 must stop prioritizing development at all costs.
13 This attitude is decimating the very place that is
14 so special, that brings people from all over the
15 world. The mine is just one example of many of
16 this battle between development on the one hand,
17 and on the other, a future that Horry County
18 residents actually look forward to. Please stop
19 the mine. Thank you.

20 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Thank you, Ms. Rich. For those who
21 are joining us virtually, I will add a little tech
22 point as well. If you want to be able to enlarge
23 the view of the facility that is hosting the
24 meeting in person, you can click in that window.
25 If you're not seeing that as an option, you can go

1 to the top control bar in Teams where it says,
2 "More," and has three dots. You can click in that.
3 Make sure you're choosing the view that says,
4 "Gallery at top" and then you can click on that.
5 So, that way, you may be able to, to see the
6 facility in a little larger view. With that, I'll
7 turn things back over to Donna.

8 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Kristy. Let me apologize
9 upfront if I pronounce names wrong and we have
10 shuffled the names of, of everyone who signed in to
11 speak, so you are being called at random, and that
12 is being done online as well.

13 So, our next speaker is Emily Nellerroe. I
14 know SCELP, so I know you're representing SCELP.
15 If you'll come on down, and please remember to
16 state your name and spell it for the court reporter
17 before speaking.

18 EMILY NELLERMOE: Good evening. My name is Emily
19 Nellerroe, it's N, as in November, E-
20 L-L-E-R-M-O-E, and I'm a staff attorney with the
21 South Carolina Environmental Law Project, or SCELP
22 for short.

23 SCELP has reviewed Solutions' proposal and
24 we're glad that the law finally allows us to have
25 an opportunity to voice our concerns about this

1 project. Because while all mining has impacts and
2 negative consequences, this particular mine is of
3 upmost concern because of its proximity to Lewis
4 Ocean Bay Heritage Preserve.

5 Tonight, we're asking DHEC to deny this
6 application. Even though mine permits are rarely
7 denied in this state, DHEC was given the legal
8 authority to do so by the South Carolina Mining
9 Act. The Mining Act states that, "DHEC shall deny
10 the mining permit when it will have undue adverse
11 effects on wildlife, violate standards of
12 groundwater quality, or have a significantly
13 adverse effect on the purposes of a publicly-owned
14 park or forest." This proposed mine checks all of
15 those boxes.

16 So, what do we know? We know the Edge Mine
17 property directly abuts the Lewis Ocean Bay
18 Heritage Preserve. We know that Lewis Ocean Bay
19 provides habitat for a variety of rare, threatened
20 and endangered species of plants and animals. We
21 know that the national hydrological conditions of
22 this area are critical to sustain these habitats,
23 including a supply of groundwater. We know that
24 mines dewater the environment and that dewatering
25 exacerbates the development of sink holes and the

1 drying of the wetlands.

2 We also know that the groundwater table
3 beneath Edge Road is shallow and that Soilutions
4 expects to mine as deep as 50 feet. We know that
5 when asked in the mining application to describe
6 the precautions they will take to protect adjacent
7 resources such as wildlife areas during mining,
8 Soilutions stated that, "Wildlife may be
9 temporarily, temporarily displaced, however new
10 wildlife habitats will be formed and populated by
11 indigenous species."

12 And when asked to describe the methods that
13 will be used to prevent adverse impacts on
14 publicly-owned parks or forests, Soilutions
15 responded, "The Lewis Ocean Bay Heritage
16 Preservation area is adjacent to the mine site."

17 And when asked to describe methods that they
18 will use to limit adverse effects on groundwater,
19 Soilutions confidently claimed that, "After mining,
20 groundwater levels will rebound to approximate
21 original elevations."

22 All of these responses were not only
23 nonresponsive to the actual question asked, but
24 demonstrate a lack of basic knowledge about how
25 groundwater works and the potential impacts this

1 project has.

2 I won't go into depth about the importance of
3 Lewis Ocean Bay or its ecology or its biodiversity,
4 but I do want to highlight a few things as part of
5 our legal analysis.

6 DNR has already expressed concerns that the
7 (timer sounds) -- Sorry, I'm almost done. They've
8 expressed concerns about dewatering and, and the
9 ability, the lost ability to use controlled burns.
10 Soilutions wants us to accept the idea that nature
11 will heal itself. That's a misconception and
12 that's not an acceptable assumption for DHEC to
13 base its decision on.

14 The consequences of altering the hydrology of
15 this area through mining could cause portions of
16 Lewis Ocean Bay to be detrimentally disturbed and
17 even permanently destroyed, which would constitute
18 legally a significantly adverse effect to wildlife,
19 as well as the purposes of the preserve.

20 To conclude, there are greater environmental
21 impacts associated with this project than the
22 applicant will admit. Soilutions says in its own
23 mine plan that this is land is, "A conservation-
24 worthy site," and on that point alone, we do agree
25 with them, and we would ask DHEC to deny

1 Soilutions' mining application. Thank you.

2 DONNA MOYE: Thank you so much. Kristy, go ahead.

3 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Yeah. Next, we have Tammy Baker.

4 Ms. Baker, if you're able to unmute your

5 microphone.

6 TAMMY BAKER: Hi; this is Tammy Baker. Can you hear

7 me?

8 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Yes, ma'am, thank you so much. If

9 you could begin by spelling your name, that would

10 be very helpful. Thanks.

11 TAMMY BAKER: T-A-M-M-Y, B-A-K-E-R. Emily just ---

12 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Go ahead, Ms. Baker.

13 TAMMY BAKER: Okay. Emily just spoke about a lot of

14 the points that I had. But a couple things I want

15 to reiterate, on the red-cockaded woodpecker, the

16 cavity tree survey is only good for one year and

17 the last survey was coming up in July 1, 2021. So,

18 I think another one needs to be done before, in

19 doing the mining request and reviewing that. I

20 think that's really relevant. And the wetlands

21 delineation, the letter from the US Army Corps of

22 Engineers, the image that was accompanying that

23 letter states that the wetland delineation has not

24 been verified by the US Army Corps of Engineers.

25 And I really think that needs to be done before we

1 can, before DHEC can truly consider approving this
2 permit. I'm sorry, I'm so nervous.

3 And on page six of the application -- well,
4 that was where it was asked to describe the methods
5 used to prevent adverse effects on the surrounding
6 property. And again, a 50-foot buffer is just
7 inadequate and it's just not a good place for a
8 mine that close to Lewis Ocean Bay.

9 And I think that pretty much covers what I
10 have, but I thank you for the time to put in my
11 public input.

12 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Ms. Baker. Next, here in
13 person, we have Korbin Causey. Again, I'll remind
14 you to please state and spell your name for the
15 court reporter.

16 KORBIN CAUSEY: Can everybody hear me? (Pause.) My name
17 is Korbin Causey. It's K-O-R-B-I-N; the last name
18 is Causey, C-A-U-S-E-Y. So, I'm actually a
19 resident of Myrtle Beach, a business owner, and a
20 mortgage lender in the Town of Myrtle Beach.

21 First off, I've known the owners of Soil
22 Solutions for years. One of them was actually a
23 mentor to me when I got in the business. And to
24 put it simply, they're probably some of the best
25 people that I know, which actually means a lot to

1 me. They're some of the best business people that
2 I know, and they're people of their word, which
3 should go a long way.

4 From my understanding, they're willing to put
5 about anything in writing for you, which they've
6 done in though is PowerPoint. A little more
7 importantly, they're word means everything.

8 I also want to touch on some real estate facts
9 that were brought up for a second. Obviously, I
10 close about 400 mortgages a year, so that puts me
11 right in the heart of the real estate industry.

12 Horry County is the fastest growing county in the
13 country. Myrtle Beach is a top 10 growing city in
14 the country. With that being said, mine, this
15 mine, has the ability to be a natural resource to
16 not only help slow inflation, support another small
17 local business that keeps money in your city, and
18 keeps the markup on new construction homes down.

19 I'm sure that's something that a lot of people here
20 haven't put a lot of thought into, but, you know,
21 when you pay more to have your material brought to
22 you, guess what? Your house is going to end up
23 costing a little more as well. So, with everyone
24 complaining about inflation and cost of living, I
25 actually find it kind of perplexing that everyone

1 here wouldn't want to utilize a natural, local
2 resource to keep the cost of construction down to
3 slow inflation.

4 Probably a more laughable matter for me is a
5 news article that I read awhile back that said this
6 shouldn't be approved solely because it makes the
7 road dusty. You know, I ask everyone here to
8 imagine yourself as a business owner, spending
9 hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not millions,
10 into buying land, utilizing equipment, and coming
11 up with this business plan, and then having someone
12 solely tell you that you [sic] don't think they
13 should be able to utilize what you spent a million
14 dollars on, solely because it's going to make the
15 road dusty.

16 With all due respect, I've got really great
17 news for you. The real estate industry is really
18 hot. You'll have no problem selling your house and
19 we'll be glad to help you. God bless.

20 DONNA MOYE: Thank you Mr. Causey. Kristy?

21 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Donna, I'm not sure if this person
22 has been able to join us tonight but during pre-
23 registration, Kirk Hannah had asked to be able to
24 speak. Mr. Hannah, if you've joined us by phone,
25 you can unmute by dialing *6. (Pause.) Kirk

1 Hannah? (Pause.)

2 Donna, I am not seeing anyone unmute at this
3 time. We'll make sure we come back and, and check
4 for Mr. Hannah later. Allyson Noto also indicated
5 during registration that she wanted to be able to
6 speak. (Pause.) Allyson Noto? (Pause.) Again,
7 if you're attending by phone, you can unmute by
8 dialing *6. (Pause.) I believe we have a line
9 that's unmuted.

10 ALLYSON NOTO: Yes, ma'am.

11 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Give us one moment on the tech side
12 to reduce that echo. Thank you, Shawn. Okay, Ms.

13 ---

14 ALLYSON NOTO: Yes, hi. Can you hear me? Yes, ma'am,
15 Allyson Noto. First name, A-L-Y-S-O-N, A-L-L-Y-S-
16 O-No; Noto, N-O-T-O, and I am in support of the
17 Edge Road Mine as an Horry County resident. Thank
18 you. Have a good evening.

19 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Thank you, Ms. Noto. Donna?

20 DONNA MOYE: Thank you. I do appreciate everyone
21 adhering to the guidelines that I set forth before
22 this hearing. It's really important for us to make
23 sure that we're able to move along, so thank you
24 for that.

25 The next person who signed up to speak is

1 Becky Ryon.

2 BECKY RYON: Good evening. My name is Becky Ryon,
3 R-Y-O-N. I am the North Coast Office Director of
4 the Coastal Conservation League. Thank you for the
5 opportunity to comment on the proposed individual
6 mining permit near Ocean Bay Heritage Preserve.
7 Please allow me to add my voice in support of the
8 previous speakers who were in opposition to the
9 mine and urge you to deny the proposed permit.

10 First, I'd like to share a brief timeline of
11 the operations on the site as we understand it for
12 the benefit of the audience and the record. The
13 Conservation League became aware of mining at the
14 proposed site from nearby concerned landowners.
15 Soilutions initially sought a general mining permit
16 for just under five acres, which was granted by
17 DHEC on September 16, 2021.

18 On October 1st, the Conservation League
19 requested that DHEC conduct a final board review
20 for the general permit. During that review, staff
21 determined that the General Coastal Zone
22 Consistency Small Mines Permit required for all
23 mines in the eight coastal counties expired in
24 2018, therefore the mining permit was not valid.
25 The coastal zone is considered by DHEC to be the

1 most sensitive in terms of natural resources and
2 the associated habitat types.

3 On October 8th, DHEC rescinded the permits,
4 pending renewal of the GCZC, and ordered all mining
5 to cease. Despite this, Conservation League staff
6 alerted DHEC that dirt was being loaded into trucks
7 in November of 2021, and in February 2022 that
8 there was a mini excavator operating on the site,
9 which the operators told media was a gentleman who
10 was practicing to install a pool.

11 Let me speak plainly. All mining on the site
12 has occurred without valid permits. We are here
13 today because they have now applied for an
14 individual permit expanding the scope of the
15 project to 23 acres and a depth of 50 feet. We
16 share concerns expressed by the Department of
17 Natural Resources in their letter to DHEC regarding
18 Edge Road Mine dated March 17th. DNR's geologists
19 have been studying Horry County for decades, and
20 back in 1987, 35 years ago, identified sink holes
21 resulting from dewatering operations at limestone
22 quarries in Loris and North Myrtle Beach. At the
23 time, one of the mines was known to have 20
24 sinkholes around it.

25 DNR pointed out that this mine, Edge Road Mine

1 site, shared similar soil and karstic features to
2 those sites which form sinkholes, and stated that,
3 "Disturbing or dewatering the carbonate sand could
4 increase the risk of sinkholes outside of the
5 proposed mine footprint on LOBHB and other sites
6 nearby."

7 In addition, the cumulative impacts of sand
8 mining in the coastal zone have not been
9 sufficiently studied by DHEC to justify the
10 pervasiveness of mining in the coastal zone.
11 According to the SC Active Mines Viewer, which is
12 managed by DHEC, there are over 150 active sand
13 mines in the eight coastal counties, with 45 of
14 those just in Horry.

15 We don't know the effects on the hydrology and
16 water source capacity of an area that's already
17 prone to flooding. As previously stated, the
18 coastal zone is a sensitive area, necessitating a
19 separate certification and OCRM'S Coastal Zone
20 Consistency Review is meant to consider those
21 cumulative impacts, and if there are no feasible
22 alternatives. As I said, there are already 45
23 other sites in Horry County, so there are many
24 feasible alternatives that aren't next to a

1 and public recreational land. So, again, I urge
2 you to deny the mine. Thank you.

3 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Ms. Ryon. Kristy?

4 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Donna, I believe we've gone through

5 those who were attending virtually who asked to be

6 called on tonight. So, I'm going to see if we can

7 go ahead and go to those who have raised their hand

8 or who have previously kind of unmuted. So, I

9 believe we have Raina Gable. Ms. Gable? (Pause.)

10 Raina Gable, if you would like to unmute.

11 FEMALE VOICE: Hello?

12 BRIAN FUXAN: Hello.

13 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Hello.

14 FEMALE VOICE: Hello?

15 BRIAN FUXAN: Yes, my name is Brian Fuxan, B-R-I-A-N,

16 and last name is spelled F, as in Frank; U, as

17 umbrella; X, as in Xerox; A, as in Apple; N, as in

18 Nancy.

19 I have a couple of concerns and I am in strong

20 opposition to this sand mine. For one, do we have

21 a list of the plants and seeds that will be used

22 for the sloped areas? My concern is I've seen

23 other projects throughout the state that use no

24 nonnative invasive plants. Those can and do spread

1 into adjacent areas, and especially being a
2 sensitive area like this, there are some things
3 that I'm concerned about.

4 We've seen sightings of Torpedo Grass, and of
5 Koken Grass within the state. They're making their
6 way through the coastal zone. And for any of those
7 to make their way into the wetlands and adjacent
8 areas, that would be highly detrimental and very
9 costly for any sort of herbicide used to be
10 applied.

11 Lewis Ocean Bay is special to me, and other
12 members of the South Carolina Native Plant Society.
13 We use it as a basis for what a natural pristine
14 land should look like when we're trying to do other
15 restorations ourselves and for the identification
16 of native plants.

17 Once again, my wife and I are in strong
18 opposition to this mine, and we echo the thoughts
19 of the Coastal Conservation League and others out
20 there with what they have mentioned. Thank you
21 very much.

22 DONNA MOYE: Thank you very much. Next, I'm going to
23 take the easy way out and just say that we have the
24 Waccamaw River Keeper, and I'm hoping that she will
25 spell her name for us.

1 CARA SCHILDTKNECHT: You'll find out why she didn't want
2 to say it. Cara is my first name, C-A-R-A; last
3 name is Schildtknecht, S-C-H-I-L-D-T-K-N-E-C-H-T,
4 and I'm your Waccamaw River Keeper with Winyah
5 Rivers Alliance.

6 I've heard a lot of great reasons to oppose
7 this mine today. As the Waccamaw River Keeper,
8 it's my job to protect swimmable, drinkable,
9 fishable water for everybody in the watershed. So,
10 our concerns are around protecting water quality
11 and protecting water quantity. We've talked a
12 little bit about the groundwater concerns so I
13 won't harp on that too much.

14 One of the things that I hear a lot about
15 mines is that they're great for flood mitigation.
16 I don't know where the water's going to go when the
17 ponds are already full of water and we've removed
18 the soils and the sand that's actually really great
19 for absorbing those floodwaters. So, it's not
20 really a good flood mitigation plan to have mines
21 reclaimed. It just doesn't work. It's not a good
22 reservoir for that. And despite the fact that
23 there are NPDES permits and that it is a somewhat
24 natural area, even after being mined, you can have
25 only 20 percent of land change, land use change,

1 before you start seeing water quality impacts from
2 runoff coming from those areas. And that's
3 increased turbidity, increased conductivity, and
4 increased bacteria.

5 And I know that there probably isn't going to
6 be you know like humans out there using the area,
7 but turbidity, which is sediments in the water, is
8 a great host for bacteria. It gives bacteria a
9 great place to survive. So, often when you see
10 higher turbidity, you see higher bacteria. And
11 while it's going into our swamps, so this area is
12 going to eventually run off into Boggy Swamp, which
13 then joins Big Jones Swamp. That eventually makes
14 its way to the Waccamaw.

15 And while we're really lucky in this area to
16 have so many swamps that do a great job of
17 filtering water before it makes it to the main stem
18 of the river, our swamps are becoming overburdened,
19 and it's not going to last forever. The swamps
20 can't keep doing what they're doing as we impact
21 them time and time and time again. So, I'm
22 concerned about the swamp, and I'm concerned about
23 the other swamps on 90.

24 We all know that the swamps on 90 love to
25 flood. They aren't in the best health; I will tell

1 you that. We have water quality monitors who
2 sample at Sterritt Swamp and it's impaired because
3 of land use problems that are there. So, it's not
4 unheard of that Boggy Swamp and Big Jones Swamp
5 could become impaired due to these actions
6 happening there.

7 I'll just mention that hydrology is also an
8 issue for us. We don't have a really great
9 understanding of this unique watershed that we all
10 live in, in those Lower Pee Dee Basin where we have
11 seven rivers coming together and entering into one
12 place. We don't know a whole lot about the
13 hydrology of this area. It hasn't been studied in
14 depth in quite some time and we really need to look
15 into it before we keep putting more and more
16 development in our watershed. So, I just hope that
17 you'll keep that in mind. We're not against
18 mining, we're not against development, but like
19 Becky said, there are better places. There are
20 better opportunities for this. So, this isn't a
21 great place for a mine based on everything we've
22 said, and also water quality and quantity concerns.
23 Sorry guys, it's been a long day. (Timer sounds.)
24 I came from Charlotte. Thank you for your time.

25 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Waccamaw River Keeper. I'm

1 still not bold enough to say it, but thank you. We
2 appreciate you driving all the way from Charlotte
3 to be here. We'll go back to Kristy.

4 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Yes, Donna, we have a hand raised
5 from Elizabeth Stillwell. Ms. Stillwell if you'd
6 like to unmute the mic?

7 BROOK HEIDER: Hello, actually, my name's Brook Heider.
8 Can you hear me?

9 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Thank you, Mr. Heider. Yes, sir.
10 If you can begin by spelling your name? That would
11 be really helpful for the court reporter.

12 BROOK HEIDER: Yes, ma'am. It's B-R-O-O-K, last name is
13 H-E-I-D-E-R.

14 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Go ahead, Mr. Heider.

15 BROOK HEIDER: So, as a resident of Horry County, I am
16 in favor of this Edge Road Mine project. Having
17 known the owners of Soilutions for many years, in
18 many facets of business, I know they will do
19 everything to make this a positive project, you
20 know, not only for the short term of just this
21 mining project, but the long term and the promises
22 they, you know, put on paper, will put in writing
23 for y'all to make the long-term life of the
24 property a meaningful, you know, end to a positive,
25 you know, situation going on, with a growing

1 economy, you know, and keeping it here local, you
2 know.

3 In looking at past DHEC approvals, I would be,
4 you know, find it very difficult to see this not be
5 approved within, you know, the, the board and
6 anyone else involved in it. Thank you for your
7 time.

8 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Mr. Heider. Next, we have
9 Trapper Fowler, also, it looks like with the South
10 Carolina Coastal Conservation League. If you'll go
11 in front of the table, sir, so we don't have a trip
12 hazard. Thank you so much.

13 TRAPPER FOWLER: My name's Trapper Fowler. Last name
14 F-O-W-L-E-R. I'm also a certified wildlife
15 biologist. I had the pleasure of managing Lewis
16 Ocean Bay for about six years as a wildlife
17 biologist and burn boss. I'm here tonight on
18 behalf of the Coastal Conservation League, as the
19 North Coast Project Manager.

20 I want to start by stating that I'm urging
21 DHEC to deny this application. Proposed Edge Road
22 Mine is situated on the boundary of Lewis Ocean Bay
23 Heritage Preserve. Of the 76 heritage preserves in
24 the state, Lewis Ocean Bay is the most biologically
25 diverse. Mining 50 feet in depth and 23 acres in

1 size will impact LOB for not months, but years,
2 possibly forever.

3 Major concerns associated with this mine
4 include potential to drain adjacent wetlands and
5 Carolina bays on the preserve, which equates to the
6 loss of habitat for threatened and endangered rare
7 species. Lewis Ocean Bay is globally significant,
8 in that it's one of two areas in the world where
9 you can find Venus flytraps growing naturally.
10 Venus flytraps depend on specific moisture levels,
11 and we can't afford to lose South Carolina's
12 population. They also depend on fire, which I'll
13 address here in a second.

14 Where else in the state can you find Venus
15 flytraps, red-cockaded woodpeckers, and black bear,
16 all on the same property. The answer is nowhere,
17 nowhere that I know of. This place is special.

18 In addition to hydro concerns, heavy equipment
19 noise from a mine can disrupt animal ecology, as
20 well as recreation. Predators need stillness in
21 the woods to be able to hunt their prey, mates need
22 the ability to hear each other's calls during
23 breeding season, mating season, and as a hunter
24 myself, I can tell you right now, I'd be extremely
25 upset if I put the time and the effort to research

1 and put in a tree stand, only to find the racket,
2 the banging, the clanging of heavy equipment and
3 dump trucks the morning of my hunt on public land.

4 Noise from the mine could result in loss of
5 wildlife viewing opportunities for recreations.
6 People come from all over the world to see Bachman
7 sparrows or red-cockaded woodpeckers.

8 Geologically, Lewis Ocean Bay is important
9 that it's South Carolina's best assemblage of
10 Carolina bays. These wetlands provide so many free
11 ecosystem services to us humans, like water
12 retention during major storm events, which we
13 expect will increase with the change in climate.

14 I ask DHEC, how will this mine alter these
15 ecosystem services? Our remaining natural
16 infrastructure, like wetlands and Carolina bays,
17 are our best defense against extreme weather
18 events. The species I've mentioned, along with the
19 Carolina bays, are protected within the boundary
20 lines of Lewis Ocean Bay, but they're not protected
21 from external threats, like this sand mine. This
22 is why any development plans on the borders of the
23 conservation lands, especially lands requiring
24 prescribed fire, need extra examination. And you,
25 DHEC, should recognize this mine as being a

1 significant environmental threat to one of our
2 state's greatest natural resources. (Timer
3 sounds.)

4 If the mine causes wetlands to drain
5 unseasonably, not only will you increase wildfire
6 risk, -- we all remember the Highway 31 fire, I
7 believe -- you also make it extremely difficult for
8 burn managers onsite, Forestry Commission DNR
9 included, to conduct prescribed fires. Because as
10 a burn manager, we expect wetlands to be wet after
11 it rains. We, we can't measure what's happening
12 from an external threat like a sand mine. Without
13 burning, we lose species, wildfire increases, we'll
14 lose places like Lewis Ocean Bay.

15 And just to close, I want to say that the
16 conservation community has identified risk, and so
17 far, our concerns have not been disproven, nor have
18 they been addressed. There's truly too much at
19 stake here with proposed mining project due to its
20 location and scope. I appreciate your time.

21 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Mr. Fowler. Kristy?

22 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Donna, a little earlier, I noted
23 there was a phone number ending in 4367 that had a
24 hand raised. Again, if you're joining us by phone,
25 and would like to make a comment, you can use *6 to

1 unmute your line.

2 I want to check in with that same number
3 ending in 4367 to see if they would like to make a
4 comment from earlier. I see that they're unmuted
5 now. (Pause.)

6 Hello, from that phone number ending in 4367?

7 I'm not sure that we're hearing you. (Pause.)

8 KATHERINE YON: Make sure you also unmute your actual
9 phone if you've pushed the *6 button.

10 CRYSTAL CAULDER: Yes?

11 KRISTY ELLENBERG: We can hear you now, yes, ma'am.

12 CRYSTAL CAULDER: Hi. Good evening; my name's Crystal
13 Caulder; C-R-Y-S-T-A-L, C-A-U-L-D-E-R. I am in
14 support of the Edge Road Mine, and I am also a
15 member of, or a resident of Horry County. Thank
16 you. Have a good evening.

17 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Thank you, Ms. Caulder. Donna?

18 DONNA MOYE: Thank you so much. Our next speaker will
19 be Stan Barnett. Hello again, Mr. Barnett, it's
20 good to see you.

21 STAN BARNETT: Hey, I'm Stan Barnett. I'm a lawyer from
22 Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, but I'm originally
23 from Williamsburg County. I like to tell people
24 that when I'm up here in Horry which I am a lot.

25 DONNA MOYE: Can everybody hear him okay? (Pause.)

1 STAN BARNETT: Do what?

2 DONNA MOYE: Stand up close to the microphone, Mr.
3 Barnett.

4 STAN BARNETT: Oh, I'm sorry.

5 DONNA MOYE: Great, thank you.

6 STAN BARNETT: All right, okay. I submitted written
7 comments on behalf of my client, who lives on Edge
8 Road. He and his family have lived there for a
9 very long time. It's in a small rural community,
10 which if you read the mine permit application as I
11 did, you will note that they just brush this off,
12 like it's not even there. It's the classic
13 approach by people, who may be fine people in many
14 other aspects of their lives, but when people come
15 into a small rural community, like the one I grew
16 up in, and just want to brush it aside so they can
17 make a little bit of money digging up sand, that's
18 not a fine thing to do.

19 Now, DHEC mentions rather blithely that --
20 problems with the road, and they call it the
21 introduction of more truck traffic. It is not the
22 introduction of more truck traffic; it is the
23 introduction of truck traffic period. There have
24 never been industrial uses of this road. The road
25 is not a publicly owned road, it is a public use

1 road by prescription. It was used by the public
2 for a long time to access their houses and their
3 farms. Dump trucks and other industrial uses would
4 be a new use, which myself and my colleague, who
5 plan to represent my client, Mr. Livingston and
6 other people on the road, believe is an
7 inappropriate and illegal use of that road, and we
8 are prepared to fight it. Okay?

9 DHEC is not able under the statute to just
10 simply say, "Well, go talk to the Horry County
11 Public Works Department." I like the Horry County
12 Public Works Department. I represented your county
13 in the International Drive case, and I worked
14 closely with them, and I like them, but they are
15 not the people to address this question. DHEC is
16 the agency to address this question, pursuant to
17 the statute that it is supposed to be
18 administering, which says, "They are forbidden to
19 issue a permit for a mine that will constitute
20 substantial physical hazard to a neighboring
21 dwelling house or public road."

22 The road is too narrow for a big dump truck
23 and any other vehicle to pass. Somebody's going to
24 have to trespass on land. That's inappropriate.

25 The young lady from the SCEL P organization,

1 who I've had the pleasure of working with and often
2 against, but I agree with her that this project, if
3 they draw down groundwater as much as they say they
4 will, it will drain wetlands, including wetlands in
5 Lewis Ocean Bay. By the end of the comment period,
6 I will have a report from an engineer who knows
7 quite a bit about that business of draining
8 wetlands, who will tell us exactly how much
9 wetlands will be drained, if they draw that
10 groundwater down.

11 This permit, as far as I'm concerned, I've
12 been an environmental lawyer since 1978, is not
13 permittable, and is -- (timer sounds) -- and it
14 should not be permitted, and I urge DHEC to live up
15 to its responsibilities to the people of Horry
16 County, and particularly the people that live in
17 that small rural community, and deny the permit.

18 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Mr. Barnett. I would like to
19 remind you, if you have a copy of your comments
20 here in person, I'm sure the court reporter would
21 very much appreciate having that copy. It will
22 help her as she transcribes the comments that are
23 made here tonight.

24 So, now, we will hop back over to Kristy.

25 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Yeah, again, Donna, our tech team's

1 been watching as people have unmuted or raised
2 their hands through the night, and we're going to
3 continue to do that as well on the virtual side.
4 Earlier tonight there was a phone number ending in
5 2562, that looked like it was unmuting or raising a
6 hand. Again, if you're joining by phone, and want
7 to unmute your line, you use *6 to unmute.

8 (Pause.) It's a phone number ending in 2562.

9 (Pause.)

10 I have another number that looks like it's
11 unmuting, so -- I think that next phone number,
12 Donna, that was unmuting ended in 0880, if you want
13 to go ahead, please, and by using *6.

14 DAVID ELLIS: Yes, thank you very much. My name is
15 David Ellis. D-A-V-I-D, last name, E-L-L-I-S. I'm
16 calling in support of the Edge Road Mine. I
17 appreciated the production put on by DHEC, as well
18 as the comments of others this evening. I just
19 want to bring to the attention, I'm sure most
20 people know, maybe they do not, there are active
21 mines within a quarter mile of this particular
22 property. And those mines are active for a reason.
23 There are great quality soils that's located in
24 this area. Those quality soils need to go
25 underneath of the roads. They're fine structural

1 materials. As we continue to build roads in the
2 county and improve the infrastructure, that soil
3 is, is very valuable for structural integrity
4 underneath of the roads.

5 Another thing I want to point out is this
6 property is not a part of Lewis Ocean Bay. If it
7 was a part of Lewis Ocean Bay, none of us would be
8 on this call or having this meeting this evening.
9 I hear a lot of folks trying to say that Lewis
10 Ocean Bay is right next door. Well, that, that
11 would be right next door, that is not the property
12 itself.

13 I also believe that 50-foot buffer is more
14 than adequate to hold a line between a protected
15 area and an area of operation. The drawn down of
16 the water during the activities of the mining is
17 definitely temporary in nature. As the young lady
18 mentioned earlier, it's broken up into four
19 different segments, so there are very small
20 portions, 25 percent in size in theory, of the
21 water being drawn out in those particular areas,
22 and it does not necessarily affect the other side
23 of the property as much. And the waters,
24 groundwaters will eventually replenish itself,
25 especially as the, the mine gets completed and, and

1 those ponds are left behind. What they're going to
2 leave behind for us is a habitat for turtles, fish,
3 ducks, and other kinds of animals.

4 So, I'm just calling in support of the mine.

5 I appreciate your time, thank you.

6 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Mr. Ellis. If you will just
7 unmute your -- mute your mic back for the echoing,
8 we would appreciate that very much. Thank you.

9 Our next person here to make a comment is
10 Michael Hill.

11 MICHAEL HILL: Good evening. I didn't write no eloquent
12 speech, but I did come as a, as a resident of Horry
13 County. I came out to voice my opinion. And a
14 large portion of people that don't want it aren't
15 from Horry County, but anyway. As a local
16 businessman, a builder, and a developer, I know the
17 needs for a mine in a convenient location like Edge
18 Road. I, I just, I think it's important for the
19 community. I think my business, as well as similar
20 businesses, as well as -- even the entire
21 community, I think, will benefit from it. That's,
22 that's my belief, and that's what I have to say
23 about it. Thank you.

24 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Mr. Hill. Kristy, do you have
25 someone else who's waiting?

1 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Again, a little earlier tonight,
2 Donna, I saw the line ending in 6656 that was
3 unmuting. If you'd like to use *6, unmute at this
4 time. It's the phone number ending in 6656, if
5 you'd like to make a comment? (Pause.)

6 So, Donna, this might be a good time to remind
7 everybody who's joining us virtually that maybe
8 didn't pre-register to speak, that you can unmute
9 or, or raise your hand when we're trying to help
10 everybody be able to participate tonight.

11 Oh, I see another number is unmuted ending in
12 8378, if you'd like to go ahead, please? (Pause.)

13 Did we lose that call, Katherine?

14 KATHERINE YON: It looks like we did.

15 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Okay. So, Donna, why don't you
16 return to calling on some of those who are there
17 with you, and we'll be keeping an eye out for that
18 call, caller to rejoin us, and look for others who
19 are raising their hand.

20 DONNA MOYE: I certainly will. Thank you, Kristy.
21 For those of you here in person, we do still have
22 four people left who pre-registered to speak. So,
23 we will move ahead with Randy or Amelia Wood.

24 AMELIA WOOD: My name's Amelia Wood. A-M-E-L-I-A,
25 W-O-O-D.

1 I have some intimate experience with mines, as
2 a result of the fact that my neighborhood was
3 turned into a heavy industrial use for a period of
4 time while a mine operated close by, and I live
5 just several miles from the Edge Road Mine. So,
6 I'm here to encourage South Carolina DHEC to deny
7 this permit.

8 After experiencing the mine use in my
9 neighborhood, it caused me to become very
10 interested in mining, and I'm also a public radio
11 listener. So, one Friday I was listening to
12 Science Friday, and the author of this book was
13 being interviewed and so I bought the book, and I
14 have read all of it, but I want to just, as food
15 for thought, I just want to share a little bit
16 about sand.

17 And the title of this book is The World in a
18 Grain: The Story of How Sand -- The Story of Sand
19 and How It Transformed Civilization. So, all the
20 speakers that have spoken tonight in opposition to
21 the mine, I totally support the things that they
22 have said, but this -- and this may sound a little
23 surprising, that I'm reading this particular
24 statement from the book, but it says in here that
25 "Sand, in short, is the essential ingredient that

1 makes modern life possible. Without sand, we
2 couldn't have contemporary civilization."

3 I think that's what the real estate agent and
4 several other people might be referring to, but
5 another thing that I happened to read was in 2019,
6 in a National Geographic publication by Paul
7 Salopek.

8 And he was talking about a UN study, and he
9 said, "The UN study calculates, however, that
10 humankind's total consumption of sand, more than 40
11 billion tons a year, is now double the amount of
12 sediments being replenished naturally on the Earth
13 by the sum of the world's rivers."

14 So, therefore, we're needing about twice as
15 much sand as what our rivers can reproduce. So,
16 for these reasons, I'm thinking that maybe our
17 state, Mr. Hardee, our state, and local regulations
18 might need to be modified and looked at a little
19 bit more closely than what we have been thinking
20 that we needed for many years.

21 So, this is, this is just food for thought.
22 We have actually loosened our regulations in Horry
23 County recently, and based on the things that he
24 said, that I read in this book, we need to be
25 thinking about (timer sounds) looking at those

1 regulations just a little bit more closely.

2 And I want to beg just another few seconds.

3 Sand mining tears up wildlife habitat, fouls
4 rivers, and destroys farmland. Some companies are
5 more conscientious than others, some extraction
6 methods are more disruptive than others, and some
7 governments are more vigilant than others. But
8 everywhere, the process of pulling sand from the
9 Earth causes, at best, a little damage, and at
10 worst, catastrophe.

11 So, those are the things we need to consider
12 in our regulations, and I, I want to once again
13 encourage South Carolina DHEC to deny this permit.
14 Thank you very much.

15 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Ms. Wood. Kristy, I know that
16 we were having a little bit of a lag with people
17 unmuting online, so if it's okay with you, we are
18 going to move on to our next speaker here in
19 person, and that would be Sudie Thomas.

20 SUDIE THOMAS: My name is Sudie Thomas. That's
21 S-U-D-I-E, Thomas. And I'm a citizen of -- I'm an
22 Horry County native, I'm a professional wildlife
23 biologist, and I'm asking that DHEC does not
24 approve this mine for the following reasons.

25 I agree with a lot of people that spoke in

1 opposition, I just wanted to add a few things.
2 There are some issues under the current mining
3 regulations. This mine started as a 5-acre mine,
4 at 20 feet deep, with general permit, which we, the
5 public, had no notice. The lack of public notice
6 is an issue that needs to be addressed. This is
7 especially troublesome when this mine can impact a
8 globally important state heritage preserve such as
9 Lewis Ocean Bay.

10 As you know, the conservation community,
11 including South Carolina DNR, our state's natural
12 resources experts, expressed concern over the
13 initial general permit. As such, the new plans for
14 this project under an individual permit, and with
15 an even larger footprint, are even more concerning.

16 It's unfortunately common to see a small mine
17 use this route to later enlarge under an individual
18 permit. This is a huge issue needing attention.
19 Preliminary surveys conducted in July of 2021 by a
20 contractor hired by the mine were to address a
21 South Carolina DNR letter of concern regarding the
22 5-acre initial mine project. This letter is on the
23 DNR -- I mean, the DHEC website, so everybody can
24 read it.

25 Multiple red-cockaded woodpeckers were found

1 foraging on the mine site during the surveys. Red-
2 cockaded woodpeckers are federally listed under the
3 Endangered Species Act as endangered. The Mining
4 Act does not allow mining where federal threatened
5 and endangered species exist. Animals don't know
6 property lines, this is a specific example of why
7 it truly does matter what occurs next door to our
8 conservation lands.

9 The mine conducted state threatened reptile
10 species surveys, for spotted turtles and hog-nosed
11 snakes during the wrong time of year. So, these
12 surveys are incomplete and need to be revisited.
13 The 5-acre mine site was documented to be in
14 drought status during the initial surveys. These
15 surveys, both the drought and the timing of the
16 surveys, may have skewed findings of these species.
17 And this is pointed out in the letter by South
18 Carolina DNR.

19 So, I ask you, DHEC, what is the plan now
20 given this project -- given that the project is now
21 proposed to expand? Will these original surveys be
22 completed and completed correctly, given they were
23 biased? Will surveys or have surveys been
24 completed for the new proposal under the individual
25 permit given that it has a larger footprint, and

1 likely more of an impact on Lewis Ocean Bay? Will
2 a silt fence be maintained and monitored around the
3 newly proposed expansion of this mine?

4 And there is certainly a chance for animal
5 entrapment in a 50-foot deep pit across 23 acres.
6 The Heritage Trust Program designates only the most
7 special and critical lands as heritage preserves.
8 Lewis Ocean Bay is a favorite recreational area and
9 educational area for locals and visitors. The
10 degradation of this preserve will have effects far
11 and wide. Lewis Ocean Bay is our land, the
12 taxpayers', the public's land. What happens on
13 this property immediately adjacent to our land
14 matters. Our preserve will become drier and more
15 prone to wildfire. Our land will lose wetland
16 functions and values. Our land will lose (timer
17 sounds) habitats supporting rare and endemic plants
18 and animal species. This affects all of us. I
19 just wanted -- because there's people here that
20 might also oppose the mine but they're not
21 speaking, can I ask them to stand up? No? I can't
22 do that? Okay, well, thank you for hearing my
23 comments.

24 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Ms. Thomas, and thank you so
25 much for asking first because that does tend to be

1 sometimes very disruptive, and I appreciate that
2 you asked about that. Kristy, do you have someone
3 else remotely who's ready to speak?

4 KRISTY ELLENBERG: I do not have anyone at this time.
5 Again -- Wait. Actually, we've got a hand right
6 now, Donna. That's Mary Lowman. (Pause.) Mary
7 Lowman, if you'd like to unmute your mic. You
8 unmuted and then muted right back. Let's see if we
9 can, can help you here.

10 MARY LOWMAN: Hello?

11 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Mrs. Lowman, we can hear you.

12 (Pause.) Ms. Lowman, if you'd like to go ahead and
13 speak? (Pause.) We could hear you for a second
14 there, and it looks like you're still unmuted. Ms.
15 Lowman?

16 MARY LOWMAN: Hello?

17 KRISTY ELLENBERG: We can hear you now, that's great.

18 MARY LOWMAN: Hello, My name is Mary Lowman. It is
19 L-O-W-M-A-N. I am not a resident of Horry County.
20 I am a resident of Charleston County. I wanted to
21 speak against the mine project just because I would
22 like to address DHEC's future obligation when a
23 project like this comes to mind. I feel that many
24 of the speakers that have come up and commented on
25 the characteristics of the ones proposing the mine,

1 thank you for that input; however, there seems to
2 be many questions that are not addressed fully.
3 And that the plan for after the mine is finished
4 leaves a lot of loopholes or gray areas that I
5 would be very concerned about if this were in my
6 county or in my neighborhood. That's it. Thank
7 you.

8 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Ms. Lowman. So, we have two
9 speakers left. The next that I will call is Jessie
10 King, and then after Jessie King, we will have Tim
11 Edge. And then we will, then we will call on
12 everyone else who, like I, like I said at the
13 beginning, we will give everyone an opportunity to
14 speak. These are just the people who have pre-
15 registered to speak. So, Jessie King, please come
16 around the front. Thank you.

17 JESSIE KING: Thank you, Donna. My name is Jessie
18 King, K-I-N-G. I work for Soilutions; I'm with
19 Williams Mullen, and we appreciate the opportunity
20 to hear the concerns here tonight. I'm here with
21 Soilutions. We've got Joshua and Ethan Epps
22 sitting in the front row. Would you all stand up?
23 They're here to hear your concerns. They are open
24 to listening to your concerns. They have been from
25 the beginning of this project, and they certainly

1 are open to discussing those with you, one-on-one
2 at a time and place. They've been wanting this
3 hearing for a long time now, but there's been
4 delays, as you heard during the timeline. This has
5 not really gone the way that it was expected.

6 Soilutions, again, is a small business.
7 They're owned by two brothers and they were born
8 and raised here, and they live in this area.
9 Actually, Ethan Epps lives on the property, on the
10 edge of the property where the mine is proposed.
11 His family lives there. He uses the water well
12 there. He goes down Edge Road every day.

13 So, these aren't, this is not a big business
14 coming in and putting a mine in, but not living the
15 reality of the mine. So, of course, it is
16 important to them that they do this in a way that
17 is, takes into consideration, the community and the
18 habitat that surrounds it.

19 Again, they came to this process wanting to
20 talk to the community and wanting to have an open
21 conversation. Unfortunately, there's been a lot of
22 misinformation that's been given to the media about
23 this mine, and we would like the opportunity at
24 some point to, to clear that up. If you have
25 questions about the facts that are in the

1 newspaper, they're happy to talk to you about those
2 things, but a lot of those things are incorrect and
3 unfortunately, the newspaper has left, so again,
4 there will be no communication from Soilutions in
5 the, in the newspaper.

6 DHEC did inspect this mine, and after they
7 were -- they rescinded the general permit. They
8 didn't rescind the permit because of anything
9 Soilutions did. They did it because there was a
10 problem with the expiration of the Coastal Zone
11 Consistency. DHEC, DHEC concluded that they were
12 not mining after they rescinded the permit. On two
13 separate occasions, they came out and concluded
14 that Soilutions was not illegally mining as has
15 been stated in the newspaper.

16 Also, this mine's not going to harm or
17 prohibit your enjoyment of Lewis Ocean Bay. As
18 stated by one of the callers, this is not a
19 property that's within Lewis Ocean Bay. You saw
20 how large this bay is. This is a tiny piece of
21 property. This is a very small mine compared to
22 the larger mines that are operating, including one
23 by Mr. Barnett's client, Mr. Livingston. Which
24 brings me to that point, (timer sounds) I'd like to
25 make which is that Mr. Barnett mentioned that Mr.

1 Livingston is worried about truck traffic on Edge
2 Road. Well, Mr. Livingston brings trucks on to
3 Edge Road. He brings some of his own trucks from
4 his business to his property. He, he has a
5 business. He's allowed to operate his business and
6 we would like for the same opportunity for the
7 Epps.

8 What's very important to note, is that the
9 woodpecker, the red-cockaded woodpecker, was found
10 by Soilutions' own consultant. They put it in
11 their report. Nobody had ever -- DNR didn't say
12 anything about a woodpecker. They were talking
13 about the turtle, and the snake, and the sunfish,
14 or the fish. They said nothing about a woodpecker,
15 and it was our own consultant who said, "Just to be
16 clear, there -- we did see a woodpecker on the
17 Lewis Bay Preserve property," one of these
18 red-cockaded woodpeckers. That's why we had a
19 second study done to make sure that there were no
20 habitats or no trees within the property where
21 these woodpeckers are living.

22 So, Soilutions is trying to do the right
23 thing, and to address concerns and make sure that
24 there are no negative impacts. Its own consultants
25 have stated this in numerous reports that have not

1 been cited.

2 The wetlands have been -- there has been a
3 concurrence from the Army Corps that the wetlands
4 have been properly delineated. There will be a 50-
5 foot buffer, but there will also be acres of
6 buffers from the existing wetlands that are on the
7 property that they will not be mining. The
8 wetlands will be preserved, and there will be nine
9 acres of un-mined land remaining on the parcel.

10 We, we ask that DHEC grants this permit, and
11 we appreciate your time and attention, and we would
12 love another opportunity in the future to hear from
13 you. Thank you.

14 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Ms. King. Kristy, do you have
15 anyone else who has indicated that they would like
16 to make a comment?

17 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Donna, I don't at this time. Again,
18 if there is someone who would like to make a
19 comment, who has joined us virtually, you can
20 either raise your hand or if you joined by phone,
21 you can use *6 to unmute.

22 DONNA MOYE: Thank you. We will keep moving along
23 and, and come back to you, then. And I apologize,
24 the one name that I saw was Tim Edge. I see now
25 that it's Tim Edge, Hunter Edge, and Mandy Edge.

1 I'm not sure if one person is speaking? All three
2 of them will be speaking? Two of you will be
3 speaking? Okay, who would like to come up first?

4 TIM EDGE: I'll go first.

5 DONNA MOYE: Okay. If you will just state which Edge
6 you are, and thank you for being here and being so
7 patient with us tonight.

8 TIM EDGE: My name is Tim Edge. T-I-M, E-D-G-E.

9 First of all, I was born and raised for 70 years on
10 both pieces of property we're referring to. I was
11 fortunate enough to work on the farm for many
12 years. Then, I was blessed to have an agriculture
13 degree from Clemson Education where I taught school
14 for 30-some years in agriculture with environmental
15 science, soil science and all this kind of stuff.

16 Some main concerns that I had in the last
17 three or four months, we would not even be here
18 today if people had witnessed what I'd been
19 witnessed happening on Edge Road. My
20 grandchildren, my grandkids are being deprived from
21 playing in their youth, own yard, because of truck
22 pollution.

23 Today, when I was mowing grass, I witnessed
24 several vehicles on a 13 and a half foot road have
25 to drive into the yard, under the pear trees, to

1 get by the trucks.

2 I'm also concerned about the road has a, a
3 restrictive easement, which was supposed to have
4 been used, only used for farm equipment and
5 machinery. My father helped build the road, along
6 with the Livingstons, and with their permission,
7 they helped us get the road on through. Years ago,
8 the road was level, I could drive in the fields.
9 Now, there is probably a 8 to 10 inch gap where I
10 have to go over a hump to get into the field.

11 The boys are growing hay. This year, the hay
12 has took a hit because of the dust and dirt. My
13 grandkids are trying to raise some animals.
14 They're also trying to produce fruit. They're
15 trying to live off of the land, and I see a major
16 problem with this going.

17 I don't know a whole lot about mining, but I
18 do have a little bit of common sense. I grew up on
19 a farm. I've walked every step of that piece of
20 property they're talking about, the Heritage. It
21 used to be the Vaught tract. My uncle used to own
22 the property where they're wanting to mine, and I
23 strongly do urge DHEC to not approve it.

24 Now, I don't know whether you mines out or
25 not, but I do know if you do, the land that's

1 around it is owned by the Heritage, and also on the
2 northwest side, my family, sons and their wives
3 owns an 80-something acre farm there, where they
4 have an irrigation pond there, and a fish pond.
5 With all of this pollution going on, it's
6 disturbing and messing up the water quality.

7 I've also witnessed, being sitting in the
8 field, within 100 yards of my grandchildren's
9 house, two trucks coming in, and the dust would be
10 so bad, (timer sounds) till it looked like the fire
11 in 2009 upon the Highway 31.

12 I don't have to say it, it's already been
13 mentioned, but I worry about the biodiversity,
14 which means how the plants and animals have to live
15 together. I worry about the hydrology system. I
16 know we've got problems. I've got -- the large
17 pond I've just mentioned has spring feds, and it's
18 already a foot and a half lower than I've ever seen
19 it in my life.

20 Every neighbor within that particular area and
21 on Edge Road are on well water. If the, if the
22 mine would have been there this time of year
23 probably there's 10 houses right in that particular
24 area would have no water and septic tanks.

25 I strongly urge DHEC to not allow it. And as

1 most of you know, God gives us our natural
2 resources, and our children and grandchildren are
3 the future of Horry County and South Carolina.
4 Thank you for your time and I appreciate your
5 attention. Thank you.

6 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Mr. Edge. Thank you for
7 sticking with the time limit. I know that you have
8 also submitted written comments to us, and we
9 appreciate you doing that. So, we will keep
10 moving, Kristy, if it's okay with you, and it looks
11 like Ms. Mandy Edge is ready to speak.

12 MANDY EDGE: Good evening, my name is Mandy Edge.
13 M-A-N-D-Y, E-D-G-E. If I don't sound very polished
14 and versed, it's because I don't do this on a day-
15 to-day basis.

16 Nobody wants to be told to do with their
17 property and I agree with that, but when what you
18 are doing with your property is affecting the
19 people around you, you have to stand up and speak
20 out. Everything on this line looks really good.
21 The I's are dotted, the T's are crossed. We're
22 trying to cover all bases here. But, what I'm
23 hearing from DHEC and have been hearing since I've
24 reached out to them in November, is that it's not
25 their problem, even though they are the ones who

1 are pending this approval and started the permit
2 with the under 5-acre mine back in September.

3 I don't really care whose problem it is,
4 whether it's the road's, whether it's DHEC's
5 problem, but what I live in, every day, is the dust
6 from the road. And what I live in, every day, is
7 running with my one-year-old on my hip, to get to
8 my pond bank, to get a semi-truck bed carrying an
9 excavator, who's pulled onto my property, to get
10 off my property, so they can make the turn into the
11 illustrated 50-foot wide private driveway of the
12 mine.

13 Lo and behold, we've measured 13, 14 feet on
14 the road that's perpendicular to it. So, I would
15 like to be able to feel the security and safety
16 that what's mine is mine, and what's yours is
17 yours, and not be bothered because this came to us
18 on our doorstep. And with the way DHEC is
19 approving mines -- up to 10 a year has been the
20 track record for the first year, and already, we're
21 up to I believe around five, and prior to that,
22 when the county had it, it was two to three mines
23 -- this could be your backyard or front porch as
24 well.

25 So, I appreciate that DHEC is giving us this

1 opportunity to speak out. It seems like this is a
2 very high-risk mine operation. We've heard from
3 all of the environmentalists and people who have
4 spoken out and said what could happen, what's
5 likely to happen. The science is there. You can
6 form your opinion if you would want to agree with
7 it or not, but it's a high-risk mine, and it's
8 going to affect the ecosystem, and it's going to
9 affect the community around it.

10 We've had a petition signed by 18 residents
11 off of Edge Road mines stating their opposition,
12 which ends up being everyone living on that road,
13 with the exception of the mine owners. We would
14 like our quiet, rural road to be preserved. Our
15 neighbors don't want to drive on our property in
16 order to make the turns. (Timer sounds.) And, I
17 just want to speak -- we've already sent all of our
18 videos and pictures to DHEC, and I hope they are
19 truthfully considering our comments that are made
20 here today and not just going through the protocol
21 so they can check off a box, but that they're going
22 to be held responsible as well for their due
23 diligence to our community, since they are
24 representing Horry County.

25 And with the -- when I, when I read over the

1 mine permit and what they are planning on doing as
2 far as donating the land to either the county or
3 DNR, let's just be real. That's just a dog bone to
4 get the mine approved. Thank you.

5 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Ms. Edge. I'm aware of the
6 information that you have submitted to DHEC prior
7 to tonight. If you would like for the photos that
8 you brought with you tonight to be a part of the
9 record of this public hearing, I would ask that you
10 leave those with the court reporter, so that she
11 can make sure that they are included in the
12 transcript. So, now, I believe that Hunter Edge?
13 Jeff? Go ahead. So, do we have a Hunter Edge here
14 that wants to speak?

15 HUNTER EDGE: Everything has already been said.

16 DONNA MOYE: Okay. Mr. Edge has indicated that
17 everything has already been said. Before we get to
18 you, sir, I would like to doublecheck with Kristy,
19 with our remote audience, do we have anyone who is
20 waiting?

21 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Donna, I don't see anyone at, at
22 this time, and again, if someone is wanting to
23 speak, please make sure you raise your hand, or if
24 you have joined by phone, it's going to be *6 to
25 unmute.

1 DONNA MOYE: Okay. I will go through instructions in
2 just a moment, but since this gentleman is ready to
3 come speak, I will let you go ahead and come on up.
4 Please remember to state and spell your name for
5 the court reporter.

6 JEFF BOWEN: Good evening. My name is Jeff Bowen.

7 J-E-F-F, B-O-W-E-N. All right. So, like my
8 neighbors, I'm in a unique situation. I am behind
9 this proposed line, and during the beginning of it,
10 when they first started this, there was a lot of
11 noise. Usually, I leave my window open at night,
12 to breathe in the fresh air, which you can't do
13 nowadays because of the dust coming in from the
14 road.

15 Not only that, as I've heard as late as 10:30
16 at night, banging, and banging, and banging from
17 this mine. A couple of other things. We are on a
18 well, okay? So, that means if the water goes, we
19 don't have no water. I feed the wildlife. My
20 mother has rehabilitated wildlife. So, a couple of
21 years back, there was a bear and we watched this
22 little bear get a bigger bear. He had a little
23 baby. It broke my heart to see at the end of the
24 road that this little bear was run over, along with
25 its mother. Now, I don't know if that was the mine

1 or the other mine that's down the road.

2 We all hear this about, this will help the
3 economy and things of this nature. There's another
4 mine down the road, guys. Why do we have to have
5 so many? You know, other people here say they're
6 for the mine, and everything of that nature, but if
7 this was in your backyard, I'm sure you wouldn't be
8 a part of that. You wouldn't let your kids breathe
9 in the dust that is supposedly not a big deal.

10 Well, let me tell you, if you drive down this
11 road, there's dust everywhere. It's over the
12 plants, the corn, it's, it's horrible. I strongly
13 hope that DHEC takes into consideration of the
14 small neighbors that live down this road. There is
15 only a few of us. Since this mine has operated
16 down this road, it has not been the same. We want
17 our small, quiet community back. We'd appreciate
18 it. Thank you for your time.

19 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Mr. Bowen. That concludes
20 everyone who previously indicated their intention
21 to make a comment. I will now give instructions
22 for those of you who did not pre-register to speak,
23 but have decided during this hearing to make a
24 comment.

25 Again, please remain patient as we alternate

1 between those of you who are here in person, those
2 of you who are joining online, and those of you who
3 are joining by phone. For those of you here in
4 person who would like to make a comment at this
5 time, please come take a seat to my left in the
6 chairs that are lined up here, and wait until I
7 call on you to come to the microphone. Don't be
8 shy.

9 For those of you joining by phone, simply
10 press *6 if you would like to make a comment, and
11 for those of you joining online, please let us know
12 you would like to comment by raising your hand,
13 using the hand icon on your screen or unmuting your
14 line using the microphone icon on your screen.

15 And, I may be able to skip through this whole
16 next session because I don't see that we have
17 anyone here in person who desires to make a comment
18 at this time, who has not had the opportunity. I
19 have one gentleman. So, Kristy, after this, we
20 will come back to you. Sir, you can come on up. I
21 won't put you in the corner.

22 JOE WOODLE: I've been called up before. My name is
23 Joe Woodle, W-O-O-D-L-E, and just a very brief
24 comments. The road, the dust. I see in going
25 through the mining regulations, that's not DHEC's

1 forte. They depend on the county, they depend on
2 the highway department, they depend on somebody
3 else. If we were allowed to ask questions, my
4 first question would be, how many permits have been
5 turned down by DHEC? Are we just going through the
6 motions here? It would be of interest to see that.

7 The next thing is, has anybody in here ever
8 felt a dump truck go by? I'm not talking about
9 hearing. I'm not talking about the noise. I'm not
10 talking about dust, but I'm talking about feeling,
11 laying in your bed, a dump truck coming down the
12 highway? Has anybody in here ever sat on their
13 front porch, trying to drink coffee and let their
14 lab run a little bit, and had dust blow in on them?
15 Has anyone here ever had an offer to be assisted to
16 sell your farm, which has been in the family for a
17 couple of hundred years, so that people who have
18 spent up to \$1 million on equipment, surely hoping
19 to make a few dollars on that? Thirty, 40 million
20 dollars on a 30 acre, I think the farm would be
21 reasonable.

22 I want people to do with their property what
23 they want to do with their property, as long as it
24 does not affect the people around them. The people
25 around this mine don't want it. I think you've

1 seen that here tonight. The people around this are
2 involved in this community, they work in this
3 community, and they believe in this community. And
4 what we've got here is somebody trying to make a
5 buck at the expense of that community. Do we need
6 it? Go back and go on the Google Earth and look at
7 the number of pit ponds that are within a mile of
8 this.

9 DHEC recently approved one that was very well
10 organized, the county turned down on 905. DHEC
11 came in and approved it. I want to know that this
12 process is being looked at carefully. I appreciate
13 your time, I appreciate DHECs time, but this is
14 something that the community does not want. We
15 feel it will affect the community adversely. There
16 is dirt out there for everybody. Thank you for
17 your time.

18 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, sir. Kristy, do you have
19 anyone else who has indicated that they would like
20 to make a comment virtually?

21 KRISTY ELLENBERG: Not at this time, Donna.

22 DONNA MOYE: Okay. We will go ahead. Thank you for
23 coming to the seats, and you can come on up.
24 Please remember to state and spell your name for
25 the court reporter and speak directly into the mic.

1 CATHERINE WATTS: Catherine Watts, C-A-T-H-E-R-I-N-E,
2 W-A-T-T-S. I was born in Conway and I grew up on
3 Highway 90. I'm speaking today, not only as a
4 resident of this community, but also as an
5 environmental scientist, with a master's degree in
6 ecology. I think we forget how reliant we are on a
7 healthy environment. From the furniture in our
8 homes, the food we eat, the water we drink, and the
9 medicines we take, it all comes from the earth.
10 And the health of the ecosystems in which we derive
11 these resources is key. But it is important that
12 we don't dissociate the environment from public
13 health.

14 We may forget how linked and how connected the
15 two are. So, I want to talk about the effect sand
16 mining can have on public health. That is the
17 health Horry County residents, because I think
18 that's when people really start listening.

19 Sand mining will create air pollution in the
20 form of dust, thus decreasing the quality of air to
21 the surrounding communities. Breathing in dust can
22 lead to impaired lung function and respiratory
23 issues such as asthma. Sand mining will increase
24 flood risk, because this county already has a
25 flooding problem, partially because of

1 unsustainable development on unsuitable land. But
2 this mine will require the removal of all
3 vegetation. No trees, shrubs, or grass. This
4 destroys the land's natural ability to soak in
5 water.

6 Rather than soaking into the ground, the water
7 will simply run off, taking whatever physical or
8 chemical pollutants with it, off into the nearest
9 river, stream, or pond. Thus, putting additional
10 stress on our aquatic ecosystems, as well as
11 increasing the risk of surface and groundwater
12 contamination.

13 The effects of sand mining listed above do not
14 address the negative impact this mine will have on
15 the fragile ecosystems within Lewis Ocean Bay
16 Preserve. The mine is likely to change the
17 hydrology of the land, such as drying of wetlands
18 in threatened Carolina bays.

19 Again, thinking in terms of public health, the
20 drying of these ecosystems will increase the risk
21 of wildfires, such as the one in 2009, where my
22 family had to be evacuated from our home on Highway
23 90. We were among the lucky ones, as we all know
24 more than 70 families lost their homes.

25 Additionally, we don't want to forget that

1 providing these public natural areas, such as Lewis
2 Ocean Bay, promotes the health of our community.
3 Many studies have shown exposure to nature has
4 health benefits, like improved attention, lower
5 stress, a better mood, and reduced risk of mental
6 health disorders.

7 All of this is to say that if we don't have
8 the health of the environment then we have nothing.
9 At this hearing, we are not only speaking -- we are
10 only speaking about the Edge Road Mine, but it
11 could easily be a mine that has popped up in your
12 backyard.

13 I want to see the county I was born and raised
14 in prosper. I understand development is
15 inevitable, but we must do it in a way that is
16 sustainable so this, this county can continue to
17 thrive and be a destination, while also caring for
18 our unique natural resources and the health of the
19 people in our community. Thanks.

20 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Ms. Watts. I know we're about
21 20 minutes shy of nine o'clock. I know it's been a
22 long night, but we certainly do want to make sure
23 that we give everyone the opportunity to speak.
24 Kristy, do we have anyone else remotely?

25 KRISTY ELLENBERG: I still don't see anyone at this

1 time, Donna, but again, we invite anyone who has
2 joined us remotely to raise a hand, or use *6 to
3 unmute if you would like to make a comment.

4 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Kristy. And I will call on
5 our next person, who has stood up, indicating you
6 would like to speak, sir, you can come forward. If
7 you'll just remember to state and spell your name
8 for the court reporter. And make sure that you are
9 speaking directly into the microphone.

10 DANNY HARDEE: (Speaks directly to Ms. Moyer.)

11 DONNA MOYE: I do recall the pictures. I did not have
12 them up here. I don't think you've already given
13 them to the court reporter, but I did -- indicated
14 that if you would like for them to be made a part
15 of this record of the hearing tonight to please
16 leave them with the court reporter before we leave.
17 Thank you.

18 DANNY HARDEE: My name is Danny Hardee. D-A-N-N-Y,
19 H-A-R-D-E-E.

20 COURT REPORTER: Can you repeat -- I'm sorry; can you
21 repeat that?

22 DANNY HARDEE: My name is Danny Hardee, D-A-N-N-Y,
23 H-A-R-D-E-E. The only thing I would like to say is
24 if DHEC is going to approve this thing or whatever,
25 if you don't have the manpower and you don't have

1 the people to take care of what you approve, don't
2 approve it, because I wouldn't ask anybody to have
3 to live with this. I've been out there. And I've
4 looked at her children. They can't go in their
5 yard, they can't play, because of that dust, things
6 are covered in white.

7 We need mines. Mines are a necessary evil. I
8 understand that. And that's fine to have the
9 mines, but don't approve these mines if you're not
10 able to take care of the quality of life of the
11 people that have to live around them. Thank you.

12 DONNA MOYE: Thank you, Mr. Hardee. Is there anyone
13 else here, in person, tonight that would like to
14 make a comment, who has not had the opportunity to
15 speak? I am not seeing anyone else here in person.
16 Kristy, do we have anybody else virtually
17 indicating they would like to speak?

18 KRISTY ELLENBERG: No, Donna. I don't have anyone
19 indicating they want to speak at this time.

20 DONNA MOYE: Since there are no other attendees
21 indicating that they would like to speak, the
22 comment portion of tonight's public hearing has
23 been concluded. We do have some closing remarks,
24 though, so don't leave yet.

25 On behalf of DHEC, I would like to thank

1 everyone for joining us tonight and giving your
2 comments. DHEC will review all comments received
3 by July 15th, and may request additional
4 information from the applicant if necessary. A
5 decision will then be made to approve or deny an
6 individual mine operating permit.

7 Once a final permit decision is made, DHEC
8 will provide notification to all who registered or
9 attended this public hearing, and all who provided
10 written comments during the public comment period.
11 The final decision will also be posted on our
12 webpage. A summary response to all comments
13 received will be provided if an individual mine
14 permit is approved for the Edge Road Mine.

15 You have the right to request a final review
16 of any permit decision made by DHEC. The final
17 review request must be submitted in writing to
18 DHEC's Clerk of the Board, along with the filing
19 fee, in the amount of \$100, within 15 days after
20 notice of DHEC's permit decision has been mailed.

21 In consideration of this requirement, you will
22 receive notification of DHEC's permit decision by
23 standard US mail or by email. If you wish to be
24 notified of DHEC's decision by certified mail
25 instead, please make your request in writing no

1 later than July 15th, 2022.

2 Finally, if you have any questions, or if
3 you're interested in discussing specific aspects of
4 the Edge Road Mine, please reach out to Kaylin Joye
5 at 803-898-1367, or Chris Stout at 843-953-0691.
6 They will be happy to begin a conversation with
7 you. If you have a question tonight, and you're
8 here in person with us, our DHEC staff, who are
9 here, I'll ask you just to raise your hands now,
10 the DHEC staff that are here so that you are easily
11 recognized, if you have a question tonight, as we
12 pack up to get ready to head back to Columbia,
13 please feel free to approach any of these
14 individuals. We have staff here from Columbia, as
15 well as from our local office here, like Shawn, who
16 has so kindly assisted me all night.

17 As the state's public health agency, we do
18 encourage you to stay abreast of counties
19 experiencing high impact from COVID-19 in our
20 state, that does unfortunately include Horry
21 County. Those who live in or visit these counties
22 should assess their risk for COVID-19 and take
23 appropriate prevention steps as recommended by both
24 the Centers for Disease Control and DHEC. Visit
25 DHEC's website at SCDHEC.gov for more information

1 about COVID in your county.

2 On behalf of DHEC, thank you once again for
3 your attendance, and your courtesy tonight, and for
4 comments that you have made. The time is now 8:45
5 PM, this hearing is officially adjourned. For
6 those who are joining us remotely, you may
7 disconnect at this time. Good night.

8 (Whereupon, at 8:45 p.m., the public
9 hearing was concluded)

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

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