



+ Medical Advocates for Healthy Air

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Health Professionals Urge Governor Cooper to Protect Public Health by Revoking Enviva Pellets, LLC Flawed Air Quality Permit

Charlotte, NC – Medical Advocates for Healthy Air members sent a letter today to Governor Roy Cooper asking him to protect the health of Richmond County residents by revoking Air Quality Permit No. 10365R02 from the wood pellet facility that is proposed to be built in Hamlet, North Carolina by Enviva Pellets Hamlet, LLC. The letter outlines the health and environmental issues Richmond County residents already face and would be exacerbated by the Enviva biomass facility.

“Wood pellet manufacturing releases large amounts of particulate matter, volatile organic compounds, formaldehyde and other recognized air pollutants that have been shown to cause cancer, cardiopulmonary disease and premature death,” said Robert Parr, DO, Medical Advocates for Healthy Air board member and letter signee. Dr. Parr continues, “To protect citizens, all industrial operations in Richmond County must limit their air emissions to the greatest extent possible by using state of the art pollution controls, safeguards that are missing in the present permit.”

Wood pellet facilities emit air pollutants directly and indirectly that are harmful to human health. One of these air pollutants, fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), can cause numerous health issues, most notably adverse respiratory and cardiovascular health effects. In 2010, the American Heart Association deemed particulate matter a modifiable factor in heart disease and a key contributor to premature deaths (Brook et al. 2010). In 2016, the American Lung

Association stated it does not support biomass combustion for energy generation because of the adverse health effects from air pollutants emitted during production (American Lung Association, 2016).

In 2015, the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) issued an air quality permit (No. 10365R02) to Enviva which violates air quality regulations. Richmond County residents currently face air pollutants caused by Duke Energy, Piedmont Natural Gas, Perdue Chicken Plant, the CSX rail line and coal ash. The additional air pollutants emitted by this proposed Enviva wood pellet in Richmond County will cause an added and unnecessary burden of disease on residents.

Health professionals request that Governor Cooper protect public health by directing the Department of Environmental Quality to revoke the flawed air quality permit.

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Medical Advocates for Healthy Air (MAHA) is a statewide network of medical and health professionals leading the call for cleaner air. MAHA members learn about the health impacts of air quality so that they can help their patients and advocate for strong, clean air policies.

Clean Air Carolina is a nonprofit organization based in Charlotte, NC with a satellite office in the Triangle. Our mission is to ensure cleaner air quality for all North Carolinians through education and advocacy and by working with our partners to reduce sources of pollution.

References

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