



April 5, 2020

Jefferson County Health Department
1948 Wiltshire Road
Suite 1
Kearneysville, WV 25430

RE: Rockwool-Ranson site preparedness related to COVID-19 spread

Dear Jefferson County Board of Health Members,

The recent Executive Order issued by Governor Justice to address community spread of COVID-19 in the Eastern Panhandle could all be for nothing if changes are not implemented immediately at a construction site in Jefferson County. This construction site has hundreds of workers who are laboring in close quarters to one another under poor sanitary conditions. To make matters worse, over a 24-hour period in early April 2020, vehicles from 18 different states in addition to West Virginia were observed entering and exiting the site. Many of those workers return to their home states on weekends, which could further community spread across state lines if changes are not implemented quickly. This location could be a focal point for the next COVID-19 cluster in the Eastern Panhandle.

The reasons to tightly restrict or to halt construction at this site are many:

- The Rockwool-Ranson factory is not expected to be operational until 2021.
- There is photographic evidence from early April that the company wasn't following the guidelines requiring social distancing and groups of less than 10 people (or even less than five as is now required).
- There is no sewer service to the site, so the only sanitary services are portable toilets. Confidential reports state that there is no hot water available for hand washing.
- The majority of workers at the site appear to be out-of-state workers who travel between states (MD, VA, PA) on a daily basis or who stay in local motels during the week and travel back to their homes (NY, NC, TN, etc.) on weekends. Over a 24-hour period in early April 2020, a staggering 595 vehicles entered and exited the site. The majority of these vehicles were from states other than West Virginia. This behavior increases the likelihood of COVID-19 spread to multiple communities.

Everything about this worksite violates the actions Governor Justice and public health experts recommend to curb the spread of COVID-19. We urge you to do all in your power to limit activity at this unnecessary worksite until the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic passes. It is ludicrous to put the health of people at risk in order to continue work on a factory that is not expected to open for another year.

Sincerely,

Anastasya Tabb
President