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## *The Fight Against Rockwool: A Brief Timeline*



The fight against Rockwool began after the June 2018 groundbreaking. The announcement of the Rockwool plant was a shock to many as the prior public notice consisted of a small announcement for the air-quality permit that ran the day before Thanksgiving in the local paper. Soon after the groundbreaking during the summer, residents from all walks of life banded together to oppose the plant. Thousands joined the Concerned Citizens Against Rockwool Facebook group and signed onto the petition opposing Rockwool in Jefferson County. Hundreds attended rallies and gave comments at public meetings.

Not long after, it would be discovered that Rockwool had begun talks with government officials about the plant under the name "Project Shuttle" in 2017. The City of Ranson rezoned the annexed Jefferson Orchard property for this

heavy industry to locate here. The land was supposed to be used for a sustainable community that would also serve as a MARC train connection point to DC, known as Northport.

The Jefferson County Development Authority (JCDA) played a major role in bringing Rockwool to the county. By November 2018, twelve members of the JCDA resigned en masse following overwhelming backlash and opposition to the plant. The Jefferson County Commission, who appoints members of the JCDA, entered into a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement with Rockwool in October of 2017.

Following public scrutiny, County Commissioner Jane Tabb independently hired an air quality expert to review Rockwool's air quality permit, which was approved before the factory was announced to residents. She found that the air quality permit modeling was deficient and that Jefferson Orchards is an inappropriate site for the project.

In the Spring of 2019, the Jefferson County Board of Education offered to purchase the property from Rockwool to develop a Regional Student Support Center for students with special needs. This proposal became a lawsuit with Rockwool, who argued the county board violated Rockwool's state and federal constitutional rights in the process.

Throughout 2019, citizens traveled near and far to call attention to the Rockwool project. A small delegation of Jefferson County citizens traveled to Denmark to meet with key Danish stakeholders, journalists, and elected officials. Several citizens also attended Rockwool's annual shareholders meeting in support of a resolution submitted to the company calling for greater transparency around environmental risks from their operations. Others held sit-ins at Senator Joe Manchin's office in DC and at the Danish Embassy.

The nonprofit West Virginians for Sustainable Development filed a complaint regarding Rockwool's international business practices with the Danish Mediation and Complaints-Handling Institution for Responsible Business Conduct (NCP Denmark) after a trip to Denmark. In the summer of 2021, following a year-long investigation, NCP Denmark determined that Rockwool International A/S and its North American subsidiary failed to comply with well-established international guidelines in the planning and construction of its factory in Jefferson County, West Virginia. This report marked the first time that a final ruling for non-compliance had been issued under these guidelines

against a multinational corporation while operating in the U.S.

While last year marked the opening of the Rockwool factory in Ranson, the fight is not over. It is vital that we continue to hold Rockwool, elected and appointed officials accountable and prevent damage to our beautiful home. Thank you for standing together with us in this fight. Over these past few years, we have shown just how strong and resilient our community is.



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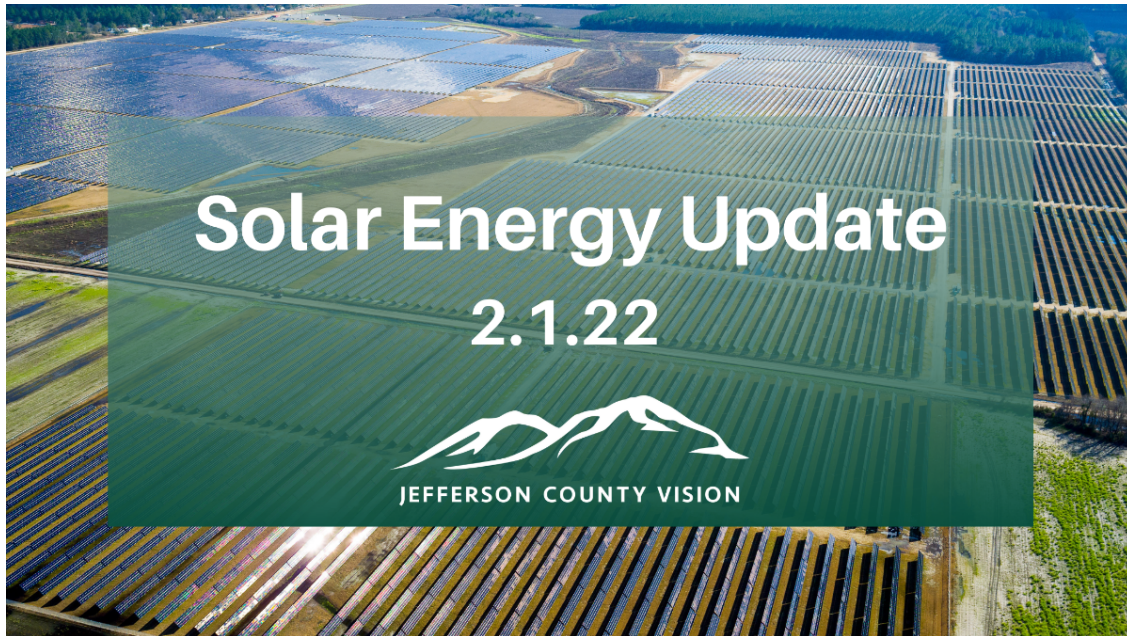
Patty Bain Bachner has been an advocate in the fight against Rockwool since the very beginning. Patty moved to Jefferson County with her family after a long search to find their forever home. Soon after the move, news started trickling out about the proposed Rockwool plant that was set to be located just seven miles away. Shortly after the announcement, Patty attended a demonstration at the proposed Rockwool site.

Patty noted that the first big red flag was that the plant was going to be half a mile from an elementary school and was concerned about the students and staff being in the direct vicinity. After learning more about the specifics of what the factory would be spewing, she became very alarmed. Patty soon became a dedicated member to the fight against Rockwool and served as a Jefferson County Vision Board Member for two years. Having been involved in nonprofit work since the 1990's, she lent her expertise in nonprofit management to the cause, and she and her husband John have been instrumental in organizing and supporting our Pickin' on Rockwool events and the Starry Night Gala held in 2019 at Breaux Vineyards. These events have gone far to raise funds for Jefferson County Vision's critical work, as well as raise awareness.

When she started working with JCV's Board of Directors, she was impressed with the group and their knowledge. Everyone she worked with was immensely hopeful and dedicated. The experience differed from her work with other nonprofits due to the intensity of the work. She noted "It

felt so heady and so exciting; fighting powers that were so powerful and well funded. There was always this push forward, can-do attitude”. Patty hopes that we will continue fighting to protect the character of our county and keep pushing for transparency in Charleston, ultimately ensuring clean energy, a clean environment, and clean government.

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The Jefferson County Commission will hold a public hearing on **February 3rd at 10 a.m.** concerning an [amendment to the Envision Jefferson 2035 Comprehensive Plan](#) recommended by the Planning Commission. The draft amendment defines large-scale solar energy facilities as a principal permitted use in the rural and residential zoning districts throughout the county. View the agenda and proposed changes [here](#). After the public hearing, the County Commission may take action to approve, reject, or table the proposed amendment. We encourage you to submit public comments on the proposed changes. Please submit written comments to [info@jeffersoncountywv.org](mailto:info@jeffersoncountywv.org), or sign up to speak at the public hearing.

The meeting will be held in the County Commission Meeting Room located at the Old Charles Town Library at 200 E. Washington Street Charles Town, WV. Five attendees will be allowed in the meeting room at one time. Email [info@jeffersoncountywv.org](mailto:info@jeffersoncountywv.org) if you wish to attend the hearing in-person. You will also be able to access the meeting virtually through GoToWebinar.



## Register for the Public Hearing

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Attending local government meetings is another important way you can be active in the community. Your presence helps to hold our officials accountable to the values and concerns of Jefferson County's citizens. "Think global, act local!"

### View This Week's Meetings

Please consider a gift to support our critical work if you are able to. We greatly appreciate every donation. All proceeds benefit JCV's efforts to lead legal, political, and community action to support sustainable growth, without heavy industry, and to empower our citizen's voices to ensure a clean, transparent government in Jefferson County.

### Donate to Support Our Work



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