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ROCKWOOL'S RUSSIAN OPERATIONS: ORGS REVEAL ALARMING FACTS

Jefferson County Vision and other environmental watchdog groups call for further investigation of the Danish megacorp's ethical breaches and opaque practices

WASHINGTON, DC/RANSON, WV—(January 24, 2023)— Jefferson County Vision (JCV), a nonprofit organization that supports environmentally sustainable growth in Jefferson County, West Virginia, is joining forces with two other West Virginia based nonprofit groups, Eastern Panhandle Green Coalition (EPGC) and West Virginians for Sustainable Development (WVSD), to expose alarming operations by Rockwool, a leading manufacturer of stone wool insulation.

These groups have been fighting the Rockwool factory in Ranson, West Virginia for several years due to regulated pollutants emitted by the plant, among other environmental concerns. The factory is located in a beautiful, historic landscape where the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers converge as the river makes its way to one of America's most populous cities—Washington, DC.

ABOUT ROCKWOOL: The controversial Danish-headquartered company makes their product by melting “natural rock and other abundant materials”, then spinning the molten material into stone wool releasing a number of regulated pollutants in the process. Rockwool's Sustainability Report 2021 discusses using recycled materials in production from other industries. Rockwool has 51 manufacturing facilities around the world.

RUSSIAN INTERESTS: Rockwool continues to operate in 4 factories in Russia despite that country's invasion of Ukraine and a worldwide boycott of Russian companies and products. The [Yale School of Management issued a report](#) which tracked over 1,000 companies with operations in Russia and gave Rockwool a grade of “D” under the category of continuing substantive business but postponing future investment/development. The company's justification for operating in Russia has changed since the start of the war, as seen in corporate posts:

- **MARCH 2022:** “It would punish our own people and put at risk the livelihood of their families” They saw no contradiction between this policy and their claim in the same statement of standing side by side with the Ukrainian people, at a time over 1000 international corporations were ceasing operations in Russia.
- **NOVEMBER 2022:** “If Rockwool left Russia their factories would be nationalized or otherwise transferred to local players, we do not see how handing over more income and a well-functioning business to the Russian state would contribute to the end of the war.” Subsequently Rockwool stated they do not have a customer relationship with the Russian military although Rockwool became a member of the Russian Managers Association in July of

2022 which joined the Russian #WETOGETHER campaign in October directly supporting Russian war efforts.

Among other opportunities, JCV, EPGC and WVSD question whether the war in Ukraine could provide Rockwool's Russian factories with abundant recycled raw materials, including building debris.

A December 2022 article in AP references video footage of pallets stacked with Rockwool insulation near a Russian construction project in the occupied Ukrainian city of Mariupol. The article states "Russia already has constructed at least 14 new apartment buildings—a small fraction of the number coming down—and is repairing at least two of the hospitals it damaged by shelling. [Video obtained by the AP](#) showed rows of pallets stacked with insulation from the Danish company Rockwool, which maintains its division in Russia despite criticism." In a statement in the article, Rockwool's Vice President of Communications Michael Zarin said the insulation panels were distributed without the company's "knowledge or consent."

Rockwool shareholders in August 2022 approved a resolution to provide 100M to 200M DK for rebuilding in Ukraine, which included the statement "The amount approved today will only be used in areas **under control of the Ukrainian Government.**"

CORPORATE ETHICS: In addition, JCV, EPGC and WVSD highlight the ease by which Rockwool was granted approval for the toxin-emitting plant with little transparency or adequate public hearings (reported in [this article in the Washington Post](#)) for the residents of the county in exchange for the promise of a mere 150 jobs. In response to a complaint filed by a coalition led by WVSD, the Danish authority that investigates corporate compliance with Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development guidelines found that Rockwool failed to adequately engage the community in plans for its factory, and failed to consider the impact its factory will have on local health, environment, and community during its site selection process.

"In our opinion, the Rockwool Russia story fits with a decades long corporate ethic that relies on opaque practices, greenwashing, and valuing of profits over the well-being of humans, and we are concerned to see the company continuing to operate in this manner." states Marie Uehling, President, Jefferson County Vision Board of Directors.

ABOUT JEFFERSON COUNTY VISION

Since 2018, Jefferson County Vision has worked to support sustainable growth, without heavy industry and ensure government transparency in Jefferson County, West Virginia. The organization partners with individuals and organizations to ensure that the Jefferson County its citizens know and love is protected for future generations. The group envisions a county with clean air and water, beautiful landscapes and farmlands, thriving tourism, and preserved historic treasures. Learn more at jeffersoncountyvision.com.

