



# The Senate of The State of Texas

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April 16, 2024

Mr. Jon Niermann  
Chairman  
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality  
Post Office Box 13087  
Austin, Texas 78711-3087

Dear Chairman Niermann:

I have great concerns about the permanent cement kiln proposed project in Grayson County. Business leaders, clergy, elected officials, community leaders, and an overwhelming majority of the public have all voiced their objections to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) granting a permit to Black Mountain Cement for this project.

I have studied the issue and spoken with my staff to learn as much as possible on the subject. I also traveled to the Sherman area to tour the potentially impacted area and visited with local officials, businesspeople, and the public. I hosted a town hall in Sherman on Monday, April 15. The huge crowd was unanimously opposed to granting a permit to build a cement kiln in their area.

This is not a personal attack on Black Mountain Cement by the citizens or by me. The citizens simply don't want a cement kiln plant near the heart of their community for many reasons.

I read the TCEQ analysis, including your conclusion that there is no air quality danger to the area. Grayson County residents believe the TCEQ numbers are not accurate, and the residents also have concerns about the project's impact on their water quality. Either way, it is clear to me from my visit that there is more to consider, and to move forward would cause the entire community great damage now and for the foreseeable future.

If the project goes forward, the negative economic impact on the community could be cataclysmic. GlobalWafers, a semiconductor manufacturing specialist that built a plant in the area, said they would not have constructed their plant in Sherman if they knew this site was going to be developed. This may limit future expansion in the area if the cement kiln is built. Other companies have said the same. The GlobalWafers spokesperson said if any issue arises that impacts their plant, they will have no choice but to go to court.

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These are smart people who work in complex and precise industries that are vital to Texas and the rest of the country. The Grayson County economy could lose billions of dollars of economic activity and hundreds, and potentially, thousands of high-paying jobs. This beautiful area and its robust economy could spiral downward and never recover.

I appreciate that TCEQ has a difficult job. You have a formula, and you follow it. However, as Lt. Governor, I must look at the bigger picture of what is best for our communities.

The survival and strength of our rural communities is vital to the future of our state. I believe in free markets in Texas. However, in certain situations, when dealing with businesses that can potentially hurt our communities, we also have to weigh what is in the public's best interest.

Due to these concerns, I cannot support the project. I ask you to immediately pause the permitting processes for all permanent cement production plants statewide until the legislature can weigh in. Under no circumstance should this permit be expedited.

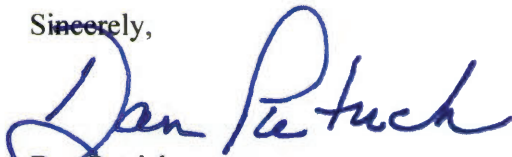
During the upcoming legislative session, beginning in January 2025, the legislature must be able to provide guidance on the permanent cement production plant permitting process and the location of new plants.

Based on everything I have reviewed and my time with the local community, I am firmly opposed to the granting of this permit. There is simply too much risk to the county and its citizens.

Economic development is key to Texas' future. It is not yet clear that permanent cement production plants located in close proximity to Texas communities further that mission.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Dan Patrick  
Lieutenant Governor