Date:

(Representative’s name)

(address)

Email:

Phone:

Re: Urgent Community Health and Safety Crisis in Johnson Lane, Douglas County

Dear (Name),

I am writing to urgently request your assistance with a critical and growing threat to the health, safety, and well-being of residents in the Johnson Lane area of Douglas County, Nevada.

On October 3, 2024, the Douglas County Board of Commissioners approved an agreement allowing Knox Excavation to utilize Johnson Lane as the primary haul route for operations at the Painted Rock Mine, located on Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) land. The environmental assessment Finding of No Significance (FONSI) was recognized as flawed even by our own Board of County Commissioners but caved to the threat of lawsuit by Knox Excavation and withdrew their appeal and engaged in an agreement with Knox instead.

This agreement is deeply flawed, lacking any enforcement mechanisms or meaningful consequences for noncompliance. Environmental Justice laws are being violated in this situation, since the average age of our area is over 60 years, with a disability rate of 28% of people over 65, as well as the health and safety of children who wait for the school bus along Johnson Lane, there are two Executive Orders which are being broken (EO #14096, 13045).

 It has come to our attention that operations are not following compliance along haul routes, which are defined by the BOCC as any road in the county not specific permit roads, putting public safety at clear risk. In fact, in a near-miss accident last week on Freemont Ave., constructed with no heavy haul road base and being degraded rapidly since in a flood plain, two Knox vehicles almost collided causing a Knox gravel truck to careen off the road several feet and a multi-car backup ensued.

The negative impacts of this operation clearly outweigh the positive. They are severe and well-documented:

* Property Value Decline: Numerous studies confirm that properties near quarry and industrial haul route operations suffer substantial devaluation, harming not only individual homeowners but also our broader tax base, school funding, and public services.
* Traffic and Public Safety Hazards: Johnson Lane and adjacent residential roads have seen a marked increase by both smaller vehicles in neighborhoods avoiding heavy truck traffic, and direct truck traffic previously mentioned, posing serious risks to drivers, pedestrians, and schoolchildren.
* Air Pollution and Health Dangers: Fugitive dust has not been mitigated to such a great extent a formal letter from NDEP is currently being sent to both Knox and the county. The fugitive dust generated by quarry activity contains dangerous crystalline silica, arsenic, lead and mercury plus other hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) heavy metals, which are defined in the soil samples performed in the EA, while these HAPs can cause or worsen asthma, lung disease, and other respiratory conditions—especially affecting children and the elderly.
* Groundwater Contamination: Quarry operations may significantly increase arsenic and nitrate levels in our aquifer, threatening the safety of private wells and public water supplies. This is clearly shown in the USGS Carson Valley study. The EA forecasted that quarry activities will decrease the entire supply of the valley’s groundwater by 32%-assuming a net zero recharge. However, current USGS studies were presented to the BOCC this last month, show a clear drop in groundwater, regardless of snowpack levels, of an average 1ft/year, more so in the East Valley where the mine is located. This is a clear issue affecting the whole valley regarding sustainable water supply over time.
* Noise Pollution and Infrastructure Damage: Constant industrial noise and vibration are degrading our quality of life, while road wear and tear burden taxpayers.
* Environmental Harm and Recreational Risk: Wildlife habitats are being disrupted, including the endangered Sage Grouse and nearby recreational areas are no longer safe for public use due to the speeding that is occurring the BLM allowed access road, which OHV users share.

Despite ongoing pleas from residents, the Douglas County Board of Commissioners has refused to implement even the most basic ordinances to regulate haul routes or mitigate fugitive dust harm. They are even allowing Knox to perform blasting, which was never considered in the FONSI and clearly, with the nearest home only 1.5 miles from the quarry site, and no less than 10 equine-related businesses (including 2 veterinary businesses) within 5 miles of the quarry is an egregious disregard for the safety of humans and animals alike. Instead, they have prioritized avoiding legal disputes with Knox Excavation over protecting the constituents and other businesses they are sworn to serve.

As a resident, I am respectfully requesting your immediate attention and support in holding Douglas County accountable to its residents. We need your leadership to pressure the County to enforce environmental and traffic protections and to re-evaluate this dangerous and lopsided agreement.

 Overriding action is needed and I ask you to work with our other elected officials to appeal the flawed Environmental Assessment and request a more detailed EIS above the level of BIA (it has turned down Rep. Amodei’s request for an EIS prior to the quarry being operational). We have detailed information that can be used to complete an impact worksheet that would justify this request.

I invite you to visit our community to witness firsthand the situation we are facing. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you personally at your earliest convenience. You may also find additional documentation, videos, and supporting materials on our website at [www.protectjohnsonlane.com](http://www.protectjohnsonlane.com/).

Thank you for your time, and for standing with our community during this critical moment.

Sincerely,

(Your name and contact information)