

**October 20, 2020**

**TO:** David Paylor, Director, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

**CC:** U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Historic Resources, Preservation Virginia, Cumberland County Board of Supervisors, Virginia Environmental Commission, and Matt Strickler, Secretary of Natural Resources

Dear Director Paylor,

We are writing you to express our serious concerns and hesitancy towards the potential approval of the Green Ridge Recycling and Disposal Facility, a 1,200-acre mega-landfill proposed for Cumberland County, VA, that is undergoing completeness reviews by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). As you move forward with your reviews, we strongly urge you to consider the unintended consequences of the Green Ridge mega-landfill will have on the health, wellbeing, and history of the Black Community.

Given the Green Ridge mega-landfill's close proximity to the Pine Grove Elementary School, a historical landmark and [Rosenwald School](#), we have grave concerns about the threats the mega-landfill poses to the local community's health and wellbeing, specifically Black Americans.

Black Americans are already subject to a lower quality of care, far less routine medical screenings, and experience higher rates of morbidity and mortality compared to white Americans. Building a mega-landfill in our backyard will only serve to exacerbate these problems and inevitably increase traffic and pollution for the community. Race is the [single biggest indicator](#) of an individual's proximity to a landfill in this county, and Black Americans are [two times more likely](#) to live without portable water and modern sanitation. Enough is enough.

Throughout history, our communities have faced the negative unintended consequences of policymakers and business leaders' decisions that further perpetuate our nation's socio-economic and health inequalities. Virginia does not need another mega-landfill, and the Black community certainly does not need another exacerbation of existing health disparities. Too many times, we have seen how business and policy decisions become determined without comprehensive and proper input -- resulting in socio-economic inequities that disproportionately impact our nation's Black communities.

However, we express optimism that the Virginia DEQ will take into account the important factors that we have raised and issue an order that prevents the Green Ridge Recycling and Disposal Facility from creating further socio-economic and health inequities in Virginia.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

**THE HEALTHCARE EQUALITY NETWORK**

*Frederick Douglass Foundation, Dr. Benjamin Chavis, Jr., Black Women's Health Imperative (BWHI), Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Dr. Julianne Malveaux*

**SIERRA CLUB VIRGINIA CHAPTER**

**AMMD PINE GROVE PROJECT**

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY LANDFILL ALERT (CCLA)**

