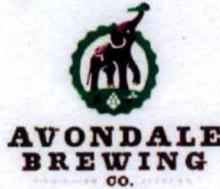


Hunter Lake
Avondale Brewing Company
201 41st South
Birmingham, AL 35222
www.avondalebrewingcompany.com



Dear Dr. Witt,

As the owner of the Avondale Brewing Company, a Birmingham-based business which relies heavily on the public water supply in order to produce a high-quality product, I have written this letter to express strong concerns over the proposed Shepherd Bend Mine. Though there are many ways that irresponsible development might result in a negative impact to our city's drinking water, it may be safe to say that constructing a coal mine that will discharge wastewater into the river only 800 feet from the Birmingham Water Works Board's Mulberry Fork intake may be the worst and least responsible development project possible.

The Mulberry Fork intake supplies drinking water to over 200,000 citizens in the Birmingham area. Our business is one of those clients, and as our operations continue to increase and expand, so does our reliance on Birmingham water. In order to provide our customers with the best product possible, we require access to a tap water supply that is of similar quality. The comments of the Birmingham Water Works Board and several scientists illustrate very clearly the impact that wastewater discharges from the Shepherd Bend Mine would have on our water. The subsequent introduction of toxic pollutants and sediments are expected to result in increased treatment costs for all customers, a marked decrease in water quality, and potential adverse health risks.

In addition to these concerns, as a member of the historic Avondale neighborhood, our company plays an important role in current revitalization efforts within that community. In the late 19th century, the Avondale community was founded on a freshwater spring regarded by most historians as offering the sweetest waters in the region. Though that spring is no longer present, its past example demonstrates a clear link between the environmental, economic, and social conditions of our community, and all communities in the City of Birmingham. It requires no great leap of logic to assert that any unnecessary decrease in the quality of our public water supply will inevitably result in an even greater negative impact on the quality of life for all Birmingham residents.

If the UA System chooses not to participate in this project, it may not be cost effective for the mining company, Shepherd Bend LLC, to mine at Shepherd Bend at all. On behalf of our company, we implore you not to allow the selling or leasing of UA property or mineral rights at Shepherd Bend for mining. Our community's drinking water, and our continued presence within our community, depends on your decision. Any increase in water quality or costs will strongly hinder our ability to serve our community, state, and region with excellent products.

Our company is dedicated to the people and communities of the central Alabama region, and we know that the UA System feels that same level of commitment. We believe that the UA System will make the right choice in preserving the sanctity of our freshwater drinking supply on the Black Warrior River.

Sincerely,

Hunter Lake

Avondale Brewing Company

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Hunter Lake", written over a horizontal line.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in dark ink, likely representing the Avondale Brewing Company, written over a horizontal line.