

BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE

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PRESS RELEASE

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LEAGUE CALLS FOR ALAMANCE COUNTY TO EMBRACE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Today at a press conference in Elon, the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League released its report *The Importance of Sustainable Development in Troubled Economic Times*. The new report provides a blueprint for community planning. The League also presented a list of recommendations for economic development which protect the health and quality of life of present and future residents and the natural and cultural resources of Alamance County.

Therese Vick, League community organizer and author of the report, said, "In these troubled economic times, government and citizens alike may view their future as bleak and be tempted to accept less than desirable businesses and polluting industries which would not ordinarily be welcomed. It would be wrongheaded to assume that community visioning cannot occur in a bad economy." Vick detailed the costs of pollution to human health. For example, nationwide the medical costs of pollution on children are \$76 billion per year. Vick concluded, "Making poor choices now regarding economic development would be felt for years to come."

Dr. Carole Troxler, a member of BREDL and Professor Emeritus of history at Elon University, said, "The last part of the U.S. to undergo suburban sprawl, the Southeast, is the section being polluted the fastest. Its generally lax standards appeal to careless businesses, even while what remains of its uncluttered look and sense of place draws outsiders to relocate here." She encouraged residents to attend the county's Economic Development Summit on May 19.

The League's Communications Coordinator, Beverly Kerr, said, "There are many essential needs for our county, but more pollution is not among them." She urged residents to voice their concerns at upcoming public hearings hosted by the Alamance County Planning Board.

BREDL supports the High Impact Land Uses and Polluting Industries Ordinance that has regulated polluting industry locations since 2006. However, there is a real concern that the ordinance is under attack. In April, Alamance County Planning Board said that the current 2,000-foot requirement could limit or drive away businesses and are now meeting to rewrite the ordinance. A subcommittee of the Alamance County Planning Board is meeting and holding public hearings every Wednesday through June 8th. The committee meets at 2:30 p.m. on Wednesdays in a conference room at 217 College St., Graham. Copies of the existing ordinance are available on the Alamance County website at www.alamance-nc.com.

The High Impact Land Uses and Polluting Industries Ordinance prevents junk yards, race tracks, swine mega-farms, medical waste incinerators, chemical manufacturers, mining operations, cement and concrete manufacturing and suppliers, landfills, chip mills, galvanizing plants and asphalt plants from locating within 2,000 feet of a school, child day care center, nursing home, church or residential development.

The League supports the 2006 Alamance County Land Development Plan, which encourages quality development that reflects community values of preserving farmland, open space, greenways and trails. The plan recommends discouraging industries producing excessive noise, odor, air and water pollution or other harmful impacts. The League also recommends building upon Alamance County's important existing features and making certain that they are preserved for future generations.

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