

Formal Statement of Position

To: Allen County Board of Zoning Appeals & Allen County Plan Commission

From: Lorie L. Ailor, Chief Executive Officer, Lutheran Hospital
Amy Hochstetler, Chief Administrative Officer, The Orthopedic Hospital

Date: May 19, 2026

RE: Comprehensive Public Health Objection and Request for Independent Technical Impact Assessment Regarding the Proposed Southwest Quarry Project (Homestead Quarry)

Executive Summary of Position

As the Chief Executive Officer of Lutheran Hospital and the Chief Administrative Officer of The Orthopedic Hospital, we are writing to formally declare our profound public health concerns regarding the proposed Homestead Quarry and industrial complex. As a trusted member of this community providing exceptional care for the past 121 years we are of the opinion that the technical, operational, and environmental risks introduced by a 710-acre open-pit mine situated just 2.8 miles from our Lutheran Hospital main campus and The Orthopedic Hospital present threats to public health and the stability of tertiary healthcare delivery in Northeast Indiana.

Because our mission allows zero margin for error when public health and life-saving operations are compromised, Lutheran Hospital and The Orthopedic Hospital firmly object to any project advancement or zoning approvals until independent surveys can prove zero impact to local health and medical infrastructure.

Non-Negotiable Clinical and Operational Vulnerabilities

Our position is rooted in documentable clinical realities. The intersection of heavy open-pit mining and tertiary healthcare creates severe points of friction that cannot be minimized by simple coordination:

1. Threat to Health and Sterile Environments

- **Vulnerable Populations:** The crystalline silica dust and fine particulate matter (PM2.5) generated by asphalt and concrete production pose immediate risks to developing children and asthmatic patients in the SACS district. We cannot support an industrial placement that threatens regional respiratory health.
- **Surgical Environment Integrity:** Clean air is a clinical necessity, not a comfort. Airborne industrial dust places an unsustainable mechanical workload on the ultra-clean HEPA filtration systems servicing our operating rooms and Intensive Care Units, introducing unacceptable risks to sterile surgical fields.

2. Interruption of Surgical Precision and Advanced Diagnostics

- **Zero-Tolerance Seismic Zones:** As a Level II Trauma Center, our teams perform micro-vascular repairs, neurological interventions, and complex orthopedic reconstructions 24/7. Unpredictable seismic blasting is fundamentally incompatible with surgeries where millimeters dictate patient outcomes.
- **Diagnostic Degradation:** High-field MRIs and precision imaging suites are acutely sensitive to substrate vibrations. Even minor, deep-earth seismic waves propagating through the shared limestone table can cause severe image artifacts, jeopardizing the integrity of critical diagnostic data.

3. Encroachment on Life-Saving Emergency Transit

- **Time is Critical:** For patients experiencing a health emergency, including trauma, stroke and cardiac emergencies, transit time determines survival.
- **Logistical Bottlenecks:** Integrating heavy freight traffic and a heavy rail spur across Homestead Road creates an immediate risk of gridlock. The synergy of industrial detours and blocked rail crossings will add catastrophic minutes to emergency transport windows, directly threatening patient outcomes.

4. Hydrological and Structural Risks

- **Dewatering Risks:** Continuous open-pit mining requires extensive dewatering, which can lead to regional water table shifts. Such shifts threaten the foundational stability of medical facilities and the operational efficiency of geothermal infrastructure.

Request for Binding Regulatory and Technical Prerequisites

The 2016 Southwest Allen County Land Use Plan and the "Plan-It Allen" Comprehensive Plan intentionally designated this corridor for high-value residential and medical-commercial development.

Lutheran Hospital and The Orthopedic Hospital will represent these concerns during the joint public hearing on May 26, 2026, at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum. We request that the Board of Zoning Appeals and the Plan Commission mandate the following comprehensive, independent protections before any further consideration of this petition:

1. **Independent Health Impact Assessment (HIA):** A mandatory, third-party public health study (fully independent of the developer) to evaluate the cumulative long-term wellness impacts on local students and residents.
2. **Certified Medical-Physics and Structural Audits:** A rigorous, independent geological simulation verifying that baseline blasting vibrations will remain entirely below medical-grade thresholds at our campus boundaries.

3. **Continuous Seismic Monitoring:** The permanent installation of public-facing, boundary-level monitors tracking air quality and seismic waves, with automatic "stop-work" triggers if safety thresholds are breached.
4. **No-Quench Financial Guarantee:** A legally binding liability agreement for any damage to sensitive imaging equipment or structure resulting from seismic events.
5. **Dewatering Volumetric Limits:** Stringent prohibitions on water table extraction that exceeds historical seasonal variances.
6. **Guaranteed Emergency Transit Mitigation:** A legally binding, fail-safe traffic and rail agreement developed alongside local emergency management agencies to guarantee zero delays for emergency vehicles and school buses.

We urge the Board of Zoning Appeals and the Plan Commission to uphold the integrity of the 2016 Land Use Plan and protect the residents, patients, schools and medical infrastructure that serves our entire region.

Respectfully submitted,



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