

Hi [name of representative],

As a resident of [name of town/county], I'm writing to respectfully express my concern about [name of ordinance]. This ordinance will cause more harm than good in our community.

Sealants are used in pavement maintenance programs to extend the life of a valuable—and costly—asset. They come in two types: asphalt-based sealcoat and refined coal tar-based sealcoat. Where both are available, the coal tar-based product dominates the market because of its longevity, its predictability, and its superior performance in protecting underlying asphalt pavement from oxidation, weathering, non-petroleum chemicals, and seepage of leaked or spilled petroleum products.

The type of coal tar used in sealants is a by-product of the steel-making process. It has a long history of safe use. It is classified as “generally regarded as safe” by the FDA, and among other things is the active ingredient in many dandruff shampoos. Refined coal tar-derived sealcoat (RTS) is formulated, distributed, and applied by thousands of local businesses across the United States, virtually all of which are small, family-owned enterprises. These businesses are often located in areas that have been hit hard by deindustrialization, and they often provide good-paying jobs that do not require a college degree. We need more, not less, of these kinds of skills-based jobs in the United States, and we need to make sure we put in place policies that allow them to flourish.

Activists point to the US Geological Survey (USGS) research to claim that sealants are the main source of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in the environment. However, the USGS has been shown to have manipulated data and used circular reasoning in their sealant studies. Independent studies contradict the USGS conclusions.

Because they have been thoroughly tested, studied and analyzed, the risks thought to be associated with exposures to PAH-containing materials are understood by the scientific community. Those risks are low—whether evaluated from the point of view of real world exposures, such as happens in the workplace, or from the perspective of studies of laboratory animals exposed to individual PAHs.

For the sake of [name of town]'s community, please vote “no” on [insert meeting date].

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you,

[name]

[business name if applicable]

[business address if applicable]

[phone]

[email]