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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Claudia Steiner
Assistant Director of Communications and Strategic Development
claudia@rachelcarsoncouncil.org
<https://rachelcarsoncouncil.org/>

**RACHEL CARSON COUNCIL URGES ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
CONCERNS BE CONSIDERED IN FURTHER ENVIVA AIR QUALITY
DEBATES IN AHOSKIE**

WASHINGTON, February 23, 2023– On February 2nd, 2023, the North Carolina Department of Air Quality (DAQ), housed under the state’s Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), renewed Enviva Pellets LLC - Ahoskie Plant’s Title V Air Quality [permit](#) with modifications to its pollution control requirements. The adapted permit mandates the wood pellet producer install new air pollution control equipment intended to significantly reduce volatile organic compound (VOC) and hazardous air pollutant (HAP) emissions and aids Enviva’s plans to expand their output from 481,800 to 630,000 oven-dried tons of wood pellets per year.

The agreement was seen as the result of continuing investigations and monitoring of Enviva's activities by local, regional, and national groups in North Carolina, including the Rachel Carson Council, which has provided public comments and published comprehensive reports on Enviva's [wood pellet production](#) and [business practices](#).

The Biomass industry giant announced, “We are pleased to have received the Air Quality Permit for our Ahoskie plant following a thorough review by North Carolina’s Department of Environmental Quality, the EPA, and a public engagement process.”

The Environmental Justice and Equity Advisory Board (EJEAB), formed in 2018 by DEQ however, [cautioned](#) DEQ Secretary Elizabeth Biser about numerous environmental justice concerns regarding the Ahoskie plant’s extant operations and expansion after holding its November 2022 special session on biomass. In its letter (linked above),

EJEAB relayed a catalog of concerns raised by Dr. Ruby Bell, member of the Impacted Communities Against Wood Pellets Coalition and professor at Mount



Olive College and La'Meshia Whittington, Deputy Director for Advance Carolina and the North Carolina Black Alliance Deputy Director of Programs at the special session regarding DEQ's failure to enforce air quality regulations, its overlooking of disproportionate industrial impacts on communities of color, the absence of a Continuous Emissions Monitoring (CEM) system (rather than just a commitment to reduce emissions) of VOCs at the Ahoskie plant, and many more.

RCC President & CEO, Dr. Robert K. Musil said, "we welcome the progress in this permit renewal, but share the continuing concerns of the affected communities in North Carolina that it does not go far enough. Air pollution is not the only serious environmental and health problem caused by wood pellet production. It contributes to water pollution, the destruction of important forest ecosystems, and is a contributor to global climate change."

In response to EJEAB's initial letter, Enviva [responded](#) by committing to become acquainted with the Meherrin Tribe (native to Hertford County, in which Ahoskie is seated, and surrounding areas) and keep them abreast of their operations and hear their concerns; revisit and consider adjusting the Ahoskie plant's fugitive dust plan; identify and partner with a local non-profit organization who could review and provide feedback on Enviva's Ahoskie operations pre- and post- expansion; and convene a leadership meeting to address EJEAB's letter to DEQ.

DEQ also responded to the EJEAB's letter before issuing the modified permit. Regarding the Board's request for CEM, DEQ responded that "DAQ does not currently have the resources to install a new regulatory air monitoring site. However, DEQ is exploring alternate sources for monitoring resources to better address the concerns of the community." DEQ assured the board that the (then draft) permit for Enviva Ahoskie includes several changes expected to scale down emissions and its environmental and community impact in comparison with the plant's current operations. They reiterated Enviva's voluntary commitments though none have been incorporated as mandatory in the final permit.

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The Rachel Carson Council is the national environmental organization envisioned by Rachel Carson and founded in 1965. The RCC educates, organizes, and advocates for climate justice, environmental health, and the promotion of Carson's environmental ethic of empathy for all living creatures.