

Sheldon Slate Prod Co Inc.

March 19, 2019

State of Vermont

House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife

Chair: Rep. Amy Sheldon and all the Representatives of this Committee

Thank you all for allowing myself and the three other owners of Slate Companies your time to let us try to share details and facts that we deal with in owning and operating Slate Quarries and Companies.

Most of what I would like to share with you will be about our family business, Sheldon Slate Products Co., Inc., owned by Beverly and John Tatko, Jr.

We are incorporated in New York State by the Federal Government. Our main office is located in Middle Granville, NY. We also are registered and authorized to operate our business in Vermont and Maine. We do own property and slate quarries in all three states. We do comply with all State regulations, and file all necessary reports in each State. We are inspected frequently by the US Department of Labor (MSHA), and we have a very positive record.

Next, I would like to share a little of our history. My husband and I are the 3rd Generation of Tatko's to own and operate our Slate business. Our company also employs our 2 sons, the 4th Generation, and one granddaughter, the 5th Generation, in our office.

Currently we have a total of 36 employees, and of this number, 6 females work in our plant production; 2 reside in Vermont and 4 reside in New York. Eighteen males also work in our production plants, and 8 other males are located in our quarries in Vermont.

Our office employs myself, my granddaughter and my main Office female employee who has been with us 33 years, and lives in the State of Vermont. We also employ one part-time female in charge of photography, creation of our literature and Graphic Design; she resides in New York state.

We believe that Vermont State has been gifted by Nature with colored slate quarries and other deposits of beautiful natural stone, trees, mountains, lakes, rivers and all kinds of wildlife. We also believe that all of these gifts must be protected. But we also believe that we must be allowed as owners to extract our Slate and to manufacture beautiful products that are a "Green Building Choice", products that are praised all over the world for their superior quality, durability and beauty. Our main competition for our products is Imported Slate from 11 other countries. Statistics from 2019 Sone World Magazine show US Slate is also exported to approximately the same number of countries but in a much smaller quantity.

Scientists have explanations for how our deposits of rock formed in Vermont, and a very small vein continues into New York State. We acknowledge that our ancestors and past generations who discovered the rock and figured out how to extract it, split and cut it into usable products. We should recognize and praise them as we praise Columbus for discovering America.

We share your concerns to protect the environment and all of the residents, wildlife, waters and forests, and do operate our business with these in mind.

Beverly Tatko
3/19/2019

Water – We use water in every process in manufacturing our Slate products. However, we recycle using the water by piping it to run down into an unused settling pond on our property. We then pump it back up to our mills and are able to continue this process daily. This does require us to check the storage hole daily and weekend. Sometimes we need to shut off pumps depending on what the weather brings to us. We do not use any rivers or stream water; we have water discharge permits and are required to submit samples for testing, and reports with the results are forwarded to the State.

The Slate quarries that we operate have decreased from 7 to 2 that are run on a daily basis. At one time we had 70 employees; now, as I said, we have 36.

Because we can offer different colors with superior quality, we may move our employees and equipment to another of our quarries for a period of time. Again, we thank Vermont for earning the title of "The Colored Slate Center of the World".

As you can see, the Vermont Slate Companies have, and are, facing some very hard times financially to continue operating. Like many other types of industries like hospitals and colleges, etc. we must all spend wisely and pinch our pennies.

My last thought is as your committee looks 50 years into the future, so does our Company and all other business; we all need to survive. John & I have 2 sons, 1 daughter, 7 grandchildren (3 males, 4 females), and 3 great grandchildren. We married almost 60 years ago and I became a part of our family Slate Company. John was raised by his mother and father to learn and work in the Slate Industry. He did take 4 years after high school to attend and graduate from Clarkson College. Both of our sons attended and graduated with Business Degrees and returned to assist with our company.

To end my story you probably already figured out at my age of 84, and John at 82, we will not be around for 50 more years. However, we are currently both able to work each day and still have the desire to continue as long as our health and minds allow us to. We also believe our family will take over and continue to be in the Slate Industry.

I only have on last saying that gives me a smile, and I hope you also:

"Nothing is more overrated than natural childbirth and owning your own business!"

Thank you for your patience and interest in our information. Having served on many Committees and Boards – our School Board for 20 years, our Town Board for 14 years, and as Supervisor for almost a year – you have a lot of work and information to study.

I have faith that you will all make your decisions for the entire population involved.

SUBMITTED by Beverly Tatro + John Tatro
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