

[DATE]

Dear [To the Elected Government Officials]:

I urgently request from our government officials that the construction of the hot blend asphalt plant in Birzeit be halted, the licenses for the plant be revoked, and the zoning of the land be changed from industrial to one that matches the residential nature of the area.

A robust body of scientific evidence both from Birzeit University and on an international level, document the countless negative health outcomes associated with working in or living around hot blend asphalt plants. Emissions of toxic gases into the atmosphere from asphalt plants can be directly inhaled and indirectly deposited through rain and air/water gas exchanges. When people inhale or ingest these toxic chemicals it increases the risk for cancer, central nervous system problems, liver damage, headaches, skin rashes, asthma, fatigue, reduced appetite, throat and eye irritation and coughing. Animal studies indicate that ingestion of toxins from asphalt plants can also cause reproduction problems, birth defects, and may impact the immune system. These conditions require intensive and long-term health care interventions which are costly to both the individual and society. These conditions also greatly reduce quality of life and may result in premature death.

Furthermore, the few jobs that this type of plant might create in the local area do not justify the potential health costs to our people. The workers themselves are the first victims of the health hazards listed above. This will place a financial burden on individuals, the local government agencies, and the Ministry of Health. This is a burden that the plant itself will not carry.

The creation of an asphalt plant in Birzeit will also negatively impact the local environment by polluting air and water, creating a foul odor that permeates local towns and villages, and reducing the health of local flora and fauna that make Birzeit such a beautiful place to live and visit. More specifically, the creation phase of hot mix asphalt includes depletion of minerals, depletion of fossil fuels, contributes to global warming, and causes acidification of surrounding environments. As you can see, the negative impact of the asphalt plant on the local economy and the health of the town far outweighs the meager benefits.

For the above reasons, I am advocating for the construction of the plant to be halted, the licenses for the plant be revoked, and the zoning of the area as industrial be changed to match its close proximity to residential neighborhoods and the university itself.

Most respectfully,

[NAME]

City, State, Country