

Statement from R.A. Yancey Lumber Company:

We want to let our neighbors and the larger Crozet community know that we have confirmed that the noise that is disturbing some Crozet residents is coming from the exhaust stack of our wood drying operations that heat our kilns, which are part of the lumber mill business. We want to express to our neighbors our sincere apology for the disruption this has caused, and to let everyone know that we are working diligently to solve the problem.

In late March, we began refurbishing the sawdust-fired boiler for the kiln that we have been using at the mill since 1992, which required that it be shut down for several months. During that time, we worked with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality to obtain a permit that allowed us to use a diesel boiler to power the kiln on a temporary basis. That boiler did not make much noise. Once the refurbishment of the original boiler was complete in August, we brought it back on line, and soon thereafter we began to hear about noise complaints.

At the time, we sincerely did not believe the mill was the source of the noise, for we had not installed any new equipment that we had not previously used. But given the community's concerns and our desire to be a good neighbor, we hired an acoustical consultant to investigate and measure the sound levels both at the mill and from the properties of several neighbors who had contacted us.

Now that we know that the mill is the source of the noise, we are working with our acoustical consultant to invest in and install sound muffling equipment, which must be custom designed and manufactured. While we originally thought that equipment would take several months to install, we have been able to find a company that is able to have the equipment designed and constructed on a rush basis, and we hope to have the equipment in place within two weeks.

In the meantime, we are making adjustments to our equipment to try to reduce the noise as much as possible. Unfortunately, resuming use of the quiet diesel boiler is not an option, for the DEQ permit only allows it to be used for a limited number of days, which were all used during the refurbishment period. We have been dramatically reducing the drive frequency of the boiler fan to reduce its speed, which our consultant tells us should reduce the amount of sound being generated. While it appears, based on recent noise reports, that those methods are not working as well as hoped, we continue to work hard to find a solution to reduce the noise as much as possible until the muffling equipment can be installed. Our consultant is also working with several residents to measure the sound at their properties so we can determine how well these methods are working. Our consultant is putting together a report of his measurements, and we will release that report as soon as possible.

Our family-owned company has operated the mill in Crozet since 1949, and we are committed to being a good neighbor and community member. We are deeply sorry to realize that our operations have disturbed the community, and we pledge to continue to work to find a solution as soon as possible.

If you have questions, please email us at info@rayanceylumber.com