

# OPINION

## Letters

### City needs to deny Pike expansion

Living in Westbrook for the past 15 years, I've seen many positive changes in our city. The paper mill smell is gone. The parks and riverbank are better than ever. Clean businesses have opened downtown while major employers and large taxpaying businesses have located in the Gateway Commercial and Five Star Park areas. Westbrook has

been on a positive track away from reliance on a heavy industry and towards a cleaner and more diversified economy.

I also work at Artel in the Five Star Park. Artel manufactures and calibrates scientific equipment that is used in medical testing and other bio-tech laboratories worldwide. Artel is located near Idexx, employs about 50 people and makes the world's most sensitive equipment for measuring microscopic liquid droplets. Artel's business has quadrupled in the past 10 years, with 95 percent of our employ-

ees coming from Maine.

The Pike proposal for a 32-acre quarry pit with asphalt plant on Spring Street would have a serious negative impact on Artel's operations and the city of Westbrook. Underground vibrations from blasting are incompatible with precise scientific measurements, and even the presence of such a heavy industrial operation so close to our calibration lab would create doubts for customers about the reliability of our measurements. Worse than the impact on Artel, approval of the Pike project would be a step backward for all

of Westbrook – away from a technology future and back towards a heavy industrial past.

The Pike proposal for an asphalt plant on Spring Street is incompatible with nearby businesses and residences and the quarry operations do not conform to the land use zoning for Pike's property. To continue on a positive path towards the future, Westbrook needs to deny the Pike expansion proposal.

**George Rodrigues,**  
*Artel,*  
*senior scientific manager*  
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