

Governor Asa Hutchinson
State Capitol, Room 250
500 Woodlane Avenue
Little Rock, AR 72201

March 28, 2017

Dear Governor Hutchinson,

I am writing again to express my dismay at the actions (and nonaction) of the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality, whose members you have appointed, so far as I know. Who are these people, why are they not representing the interests of environmentally conscious experts and citizens, and why are they ignoring the thousands and thousands of Arkansans who want to know why a permit was ever issued for the disgusting C&H factory farm?

The fact that the permit was ever issued at all is appalling, and the fact that it was done sub rosa without notifying the public, the Fish & Wildlife Service, or the Department of the Interior and other involved Buffalo River officials is unforgiveable. This national river is one of the gems of our state and brings millions of dollars in revenue to the state annually. If the Buffalo is contaminated by—let us call it what it is: pig shit—this beautiful river will never be the same.

Now you have the opportunity to undo this environmental blight once and for all. The requested new permit for the hog farm, which would ensure its legality forever—and even INCREASE the number of animals and the amount of polluting animal waste allowed—must be denied.

This farm is not a boon to Arkansas in any respect. It supports very few jobs, the profits go to one family, and the products of the farm are now being sold to a Brazilian company and do not benefit our state in any way.

Why is it that the AEQ continues to support this operation and to deny or ignore all scientific evidence—and ordinary common sense—showing that contamination is already occurring, and is likely to increase catastrophically in the event of a severe weather situation such as a flood? Who is being paid off? The entire situation smacks of corruption. That is the only conclusion an ordinary citizen can draw from the way this situation has been handled from the start.

The people of Arkansas are outraged and will not be satisfied until this ugly, smelly, and basically illegal (no satisfactory environmental impact statement has ever been done!) operation is GONE from the Arkansas landscape.

Your predecessor says the creation of this blot on the landscape was his greatest regret as governor. You now have the chance to undo this misguided and unwelcome permit and earn the gratitude of all Arkansas outdoorsmen and women, hunters, fishermen/women, hikers, floaters, campers, and nature lovers who want the Buffalo to remain in its pristine beauty for our children and grandchildren to enjoy its clean, unpolluted waters in perpetuity.

DENY THIS PERMIT and save the Buffalo again!

Yours truly,



Nancy L. Baxter
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Encl: Mike Masterson's column from the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* containing the letter of a Madison County farmer who shares these views

✓ Cc: Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality

To the governor

★ Great letter!

A farmer's letter

The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (wheeze) has extended its public comment period until April 6.

That means those who haven't expressed thoughts about issuing that proposed new operating permit, which would allow C&H Hog Farms to continue spreading tons of raw waste in our Buffalo National River watershed, still have an opportunity to write the agency and our governor.

Here's a lightly edited letter recently sent to the governor from a Madison County farmer who shared a copy. His message speaks for many.

"Governor Hutchinson, You are caving to obvious special interests for the economic gains of a few while potentially ruining the crown jewel for tourism, our state's No. 2 industry. This is a huge mistake and a terrible legacy to leave for future generations. How can you justify doing this? You allow a corporation from another country to continue to take advantage of what little we have in Arkansas, likely polluting our air and water, to raise meat and ship the meat back out of the country.



Mike Masterson

any sense. Explain that this is an outside corporate "taking" of our state's assets while devastating communities, further lowering the water quality of the state, and it is was a bad decision to allow this factory to go in there in the first place.

"Governor Beebe said it was his biggest regret during his tenure. You can leave a better legacy by being the governor who stood up to corporate farming on the Buffalo while protecting the crown jewel of Arkansas. You can do this. You need to. Do not let this new permit with less stringent

guidelines be approved. Stand for the people and the better good of our entire state.

"Finally, know I've farmed here on family acreage for 35 years. I've milked a cow every morning, raised and butchered three hogs every fall, have



"We've lived with this for generations now with the poultry industry, and the creeks and rivers have been inundated with phosphorus and nitrogen to where we can no longer swim in some streams during the summer. Now you are going to risk this happening by supporting the hog industry in the Buffalo National River watershed?

"What on earth, Governor? You, and only you, can stop this. Governor Huckabee stopped the Hobbs Mountain Landfill that would have drained into the White River after 10 years of little people holding pie suppers, quilt raffles and other fundraisers to stop that likely disaster from unfolding. For those long years people near that mountain with little power fought for their right to be able to continue to live where their families had been for generations with a simple yet high quality of life.

"Now you can stop the possible carnage of animal factory waste causing a dramatic decrease in water quality of the Buffalo River.

"How can you sleep? People shouldn't have to live with this. Tourism shouldn't have to take a hit because of corporate factory confined animal production. Asa, this is not farming! This is akin to the rape of our state by outside corporations arguing that factory confined animal production is good for Arkansas.

"The few jobs these factories create can only have menial tax benefits for the state's coffers and create a handful of jobs. Factory farming helps a few at the potential expense of many. Meanwhile, the water and air of Arkansas that belongs to everyone take a hit while having such a negative economic impact for tourism. It simply doesn't make sense.

"You, our Governor, have the ability to stop this. It's not beyond your powers. You need to step up, explain that this is not traditional farming in

a small cow/calf operation, put up 500 quarts of food, raised chickens for meat and eggs and goats for brush management.

"All the while all I've preserved water quality on prime Arkansas land with nine springs creating a year-round creek running through it. I know good land stewardship can be accomplished while farming and producing food. You do too. Step up, stop what I believe is the inevitable corporate degradation of our state's air and water. Step up for the rural people who want to continue to live on their property with a quality of life that we've had for the history of our state. We all must eat, but don't have to destroy our environment to do so.

"Step up to big business and protect our natural areas that have proven to improve our economy with tourism by maintaining the highest quality of

air and water. Step up for the little people, who don't have enough money and power to fight these big corporations. Do the right thing and stand for what's best for Arkansas in the long term. You can do this.

"It's a huge moment for you to make a statement of the kind of man you are. Let it be known forever that you stood with Dr. Neil Compton, Senator Fulbright, Senator Bumpers, Congressman Hammerschmidt, Ken Smith and with all the common people of Arkansas to protect the glorious Buffalo River.

"Step up, Governor Hutchinson, and be one of Arkansas' heroes. I believe in my heart if you are true to yourself and to the people of our state, you will do the right thing here. Show us what you stand for. Thank you."—Larry Karigan-Winter

Mike Masterson's column appears regularly in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. Email him at mmasterson@arkansasonline.com.



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