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THE SENATE
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April 5, 2022

Alan J. York
Associate Director, Office of Water Quality
Division of Environmental Quality
5301 Northshore Drive
North Little Rock, AR 72118

RE: Discharge Permit Number AR0053210, AFIN 60-05010

Dear Mr. York,

I'm grateful that your office has re-opened the public comment period for a wastewater treatment plant to serve the proposed Paradise Valley subdivision near Lake Maumelle.

It was a prudent decision, considering the importance of protecting clean water for future generations as well as protecting the sanctity of Pinnacle Mountain State Park and the surrounding area as well as the Arkansas River.

It has been brought to my attention that the developer has accused the community of residents opposing the development as being "willing to lie and tell half truths to stop the development." I felt compelled to submit a public comment and respond to this accusation.

As a state legislator currently representing the area in question, I have been in communication with the residents for months regarding this project. They are certainly passionate about protecting their community, for themselves and for the region at large, and I find their passion inspiring. Beyond their passion, however, I have been very impressed with their professionalism, their diligence and work ethic, and their integrity in the work they have done related to this project. To publicly accuse them of telling lies and half-truths is uncalled for, in my judgment.

Rather than lies or half truths, their work has yielded important facts. First, the proposed sewage facility would discharge up to 50,000 gallons of sewer water per day into Mill Bayou. Mill Bayou, and the surrounding area, is a natural haven of biologically diverse habitat. Hundreds of thousands of people enjoy the affected natural habitat, in all four seasons of the year.

Second, Mill Bayou is not a stream that consistently flows. Rather, it consists of wetlands that stay stagnant for long periods of time. Given this, the sewage water would remain in the area for long periods of time, making the water toxic and contaminating the ground and surrounding wetland. The toxicity and contamination would only grow from there, as local wildlife, and ultimately, humans, ingest these toxins in one form or another, either by eating tainted fish or game or drinking contaminated water.

Third, this area, which has remained largely rural and natural, has already been subjected to another recent development, Waterview Estates. I understand that Waterview Estates has not complied with ADEQ requirements on at least eight occasions since 2011. The damage, and risk of further damage, to the community and the local habitat would be substantially amplified with the addition of another development of this size in this close proximity.

Given the importance of Mill Bayou to Central Arkansas, particularly given its proximity to Lake Maumelle, and the Pinnacle Mountain State Park to the entire state, it is difficult to overstate the possible impact this development could have. The proposed Paradise Valley development not only poses this risk to the local habitat and potentially even to the purity of our drinking water, it is also out of character with this rural portion of Pulaski County. Current and future residents of Central Arkansas—indeed of the entire state—should be able to enjoy the benefits of this beautiful part of Pulaski County.

In light of these facts that have been identified and other questions that have been raised, I believe a thorough review of this proposal is necessary. Thank you again for re-opening the comment period, and for thoroughly reviewing the facts in this case.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of further assistance on this matter.

With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clarke Tucker". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Clarke Tucker

Senate District 32