

From: Justin Taylor [mailto:arkanseno@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 14, 2014 5:45 PM
To: Reg-Comment
Subject: CAFOs on the Buffalo River

Greetings,

I am not sure who will read this message at the Department of Environmental Quality, but I hope that it makes it into the hands of someone that cares. I grew in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and enjoyed spending my summers floating the Buffalo and marveling at the wonders of the bluffs and caves along the river. I imagine that millions of American and people from other countries have had the same experience. I have many issues with the confined animal operations on the Buffalo, but perhaps the most poignant question that I can ask is: what is it worth for millions of people to enjoy recreational activities on the Buffalo River and the surrounding area? And secondly, what if the quality of the water deteriorated to such a point that we were unable to swim, fish or float in this river due to the pollution generated by animal feces from nearby farms?

I find it difficult to believe that anyone who enjoys spending time on the Buffalo and has enough knowledge about the way watersheds drain through the porous Karst topography of the area can honestly tell themselves that increasing the number of pigs and the waste would not effect the quality of the water. This leads me to the conclusion that those in favor of the CAFOs in the area are either extremely misinformed, care more about the proposed economic benefits of the CAFOs (which go mostly to those that have nothing to do with the actual "farming" operations), or both.

Can we not take something away from the lessons that have been learned in North Carolina where CAFOs leaked 26 millions gallons of manure into the New River, killed 10 million fish and closed 364,000 acres of coastal wetland? This is a shameful way to run an agricultural operation.

In addition, much of the argument made in favor of the CAFOs is based on economics. So where is that money going and how much of it stays in the local economy? I have not investigated this facet of the issue deeply, but I can surmise that most of the money goes to those at Cargill that do not work with the hogs on a daily basis at the C&H facility. The "farmers" that run the facility are not paid much, have no benefits and are liable for any problems that arise as a result of the confined animal operations. This is a far cry from traditional American farming. It upsets me that Cargill representatives have used the "it's a way of life" argument to defend the CAFOs because raising thousands of hogs in confined spaces where disease breeds and conditions are miserable is a long way away from a traditional American farm in my opinion. I urge to to consider the short and long term impacts on the area's economy, water quality, tourism on the Buffalo and air quality when you make decisions about this rulemaking process. Remember, Arkansas's motto is "The Natural State" not "The CAFO State."

Sincerely,

Justin Taylor

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