-ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

 -ARKANSAS POLLUTION CONTROL AND ECOLOGY COMMISSION -

COMMENTS IN SUPPORT OF:

1. A PERMANENT MORATORIUM ON MEDIUM AND LARGE SWINE CAFOS (OR ANY OTHER MEDIUM OR LARGE CAF0S) IN THE BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER WATERSHED

2. PROPOSED CHANGES TO RULES 5 AND 6

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on all measures to protect and improve the water quality of the Buffalo National River, the nation’s first designated National River, truly a national treasure for all generations to enjoy. reg-comment@adeq.state.ar.us Dockets # 19-002-R and # 19-003-R

Referring to the extended extra 90 day comment period, once again I especially wish to thank Governor Hutchinson for his insight and thoughtful decision to close the controversial C & H Hog Farm, to thank DEQ Director Becky Keogh’s action to make the moratorium permanent. I wholeheartedly support the proposed changes to Regulations 5 and 6 toward a permanent moratorium on Medium and Large Hog CAFOS in the Buffalo River Watershed. This will help assure preservation of our beloved Buffalo River and its water quality.

Quoting from the top three benefits of the proposed rule changes:

1. Protection of cultural, historical and recreational significance of the Buffalo National River.

2. Preserve water quality in the Buffalo and it’s watershed tributaries.

3. General protection of human health and the environment.

While those reading/responding to public comments are aware of all the reasons to support the permanent moratorium, I want to mention several critical reasons:

Rule 5, The proposed changes on siting of a CAFO states that applicants for CAFOs must comply with recommendations of the Agricultural Waste Management Field Handbook and the Field Office Technical Guide when planning waste storage ponds. This is critical on thin soils where karst topography, with its porous limestone, fractures, caves and sinkholes are common, as they are in the Buffalo River Watershed. There is convincing scientific evidence that nutrient and E. coli levels are lower on Big Creek, upstream above C & H Hog Farm and significantly higher downstream below the Farm on Big Creek, adjacent to Fields 6 and 7. of swine waste leaking into groundwater, our springs and other water bodies.

Rule 6, with regard to the National Pollution Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES), I also support the proposed ban or moratorium on hog waste “land application only” permits in the Buffalo River Watershed

Over application of swine waste accumulates so that during heavy rain events, it runs off fields into creeks and rivers causing nutrient pollution, low dissolved oxygen, threatening aquatic biota, high levels of E. coli and algal blooms, therefore there are human health impacts of pollution and negative impacts to businesses dependent on the Buffalo River Watershed and Arkansas Tourism with more than 1.3 million visitors to the Buffalo River

In closing, I wish to quote the President of the Ozark Society, Dr. Peterson when he mentioned that” many conclusions of the final BCRET report are poorly conceived or inadequately supported but C&H operations produced a doubling of nitrate surface water concentrations over the 2.5 mile stretch that Big Creek flows adjacent to the farm and ever increasing nitrate levels in the house well and Ephemeral stream”. It will take many years for the Buffalo and tributaries to heal. So, the permanent moratorium is critical for the preservation of the Buffalo River Watershed’s water quality.

By reference, I also wish to incorporate all comments made that support a permanent moratorium on large and medium CAFOs in the Buffalo River Watershed, the changes to Rules 5 and 6 and especially the Ozark Society comments, authored by Drs. David Peterson, President and Dr. Alan Nye, Board Member

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