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September 8, 2018

Becky Keogh, Director
Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality
5301 Northshore Drive
North Little Rock, AR 72118

Dear Director Keogh:

For the last 40 years I have enjoyed living in Arkansas and enjoying the many outdoor activities we have here. I am a retired surgeon, cattle farmer and a member of the Farm Bureau.

My family and I have especially enjoyed the Buffalo National River. But recently I have become concerned about threats to this valuable asset of Arkansas and the USA.

Increased algae blooms and impaired water conditions leading to warnings about use of the river have lead me to believe this exceptional body of water needs exceptional action to save the it.

I support the decision to deny a new permit to operate the C&H Hog Farm. I support my fellow farmers and the right to farm, but this confined agricultural feeding operation was the wrong farm in the wrong place at any time.

I ask that you direct your agency to take decisive action to find out what other sources of pollution are hurting the water quality of the Buffalo River and its watershed.

I have studied the different stream classifications available to the Buffalo River, and encourage ADEQ to designate these impaired segments of the river as Category 5. By this status, I understand that you and your organization can legally track and enforce pollution limits to help improve the water quality.

I do not believe the Buffalo River will be the only river threatened by such CAFO's in our state. I believe Arkansas should be forward thinking and set up regulations and limits to such large scale farming operation (such as the proposed hog farm on the Arkansas River) before the situation reaches such critical and dangerous levels.

We only have to look at North Carolina to see what devastation can result from poor planning in the regulation of such farming operations. Since Hurricane Floyd in 1999, North Carolina has spent millions of dollars by purchasing and closing 43 hog farms in the state to prevent a recurrence of the pollution caused by flooding. I believe we should buy the C&H farm, and take steps to prevent this from ever happening again.

The decision by ADEQ will be far reaching. I hope my grandchildren will look back and realize decisions made in 2018 allowed them to enjoy the Buffalo National River with their children and grandchildren.

Sincerely,

Ray E. Stahl MD