

# The Buffalo River Coalition

Mr Mike Luker  
President  
Cargill Pork  
151 N. Main St.  
Wichita, KS 67202

August 28, 2014

Dear Mike,

We are encouraged by Cargill's voluntary commitment to a permanent moratorium of any new swine facilities or expansion of C&H and other existing swine facilities in the Buffalo National River Watershed. To make this commitment meaningful, we encourage you to immediately express this commitment and support for the ongoing rulemaking to the legislative committees and APC&E Commission currently considering the proposed rule change.

We are deeply disappointed in your decision to continue supporting C&H's operation in its current location. Nevertheless, we appreciate the time you and Jeff have spent in an effort to resolve the concerns surrounding C & H, and we welcome open and transparent communication in an effort to constructively move forward in a direction that is most protective of the Buffalo National River's resources.

At our two meetings we have discussed in detail our concerns about the location of the C&H hog operation and the risk it poses to the Buffalo National River and the community of Mt Judea. At our initial meeting Jeff admitted that, in retrospect, Mt Judea was a poor site choice for the C&H facility and you and Jeff both apologized for the location

and committed to do your part to attempt to correct that error. Unfortunately, at our subsequent meeting you reversed this position and have now decided to fully support the facility in its current location. We understood you to say that there were no discussions with the C & H owners about what their price would be to close or move the farm. That is a particular disappointment.

We have made it clear, as have many other stakeholders across Arkansas, that this facility is sited in the worst possible location, atop karst geology, immediately adjacent to the school and town of Mt Judea, and just a few miles upstream on the banks of a major tributary of the Buffalo National River. Our position has been, and remains, that the only acceptable solution to this error of judgment is the closure or relocation of the facility. We are therefore extremely disappointed that Cargill has chosen instead to continue operation of the facility in its current location. While we recognize that the mitigation measures proposed in your commitment letter appear to be an attempt to respond to the many concerns expressed by citizens regarding pond leakage, compromised air quality, nutrient runoff, bacterial contamination and other negative impacts on Mt Judea and the Buffalo, we find these measures to be inadequate and unacceptable for a number of reasons, including the following:

- 1) The "new, leading edge technology for nutrient management", specifically the Plasma Pyrolysis process proposed by the Plasma Energy Group, is a pilot program and is an untested and unproven technology for handling liquid swine waste. The data provided by the company to

ADEQ contain significant errors and miscalculations, and the composition of the byproducts of the process, both airborne emissions as well as any liquid or solid waste, are unknown. Essentially, C&H, Mt Judea and the Buffalo National River will become a research laboratory for a private company to test a new application for a process heretofore used for medical waste and other solid material disposal. While this technology could have potential for swine waste disposal, the Buffalo River watershed is not the place to carry out such risky experiments. A location well away from human habitation and without risk to a national treasure should be found. For example, Cargill's own Dalhart, TX pork facility would be a more appropriate location to carry out such testing.

2) While synthetic membrane pond liners can provide added protection against waste leakage, published information by USDA and others indicates that installation must be done with great care and that a method for leak detection is highly desirable. Avoiding damage to the liners due to agitation and sludge removal is difficult. The fact remains that millions of gallons of swine feces and urine will be sitting atop karst geology and still poses a risk to both surface and underground water.

3) Covering of the "settling pond" (WSP #1) is intended to contain some of the odor and airborne toxins emanating from the pond. The accumulating gas will be "flared" off into the atmosphere. It is unclear what the components of this combusted material will be and what threat it may pose to the health of nearby residents and the town and school of Mt Judea. Will the byproducts have a possible impact on surrounding soils or the water of Big Creek? It is unclear at

this time whether ADEQ will require an air permit for the flare and/or the airborne discharge of the Plasma Pyrolysis process. If not, who will monitor the possible impact on air quality? Why is WSP #2 not also covered?

Each of us, as members of the Buffalo River Coalition, is committed to continue our efforts to monitor the impacts of C&H on Big Creek, Mt Judea and the Buffalo River. This includes nutrient and bacteriological monitoring as well as tracking of odor complaints. We will also continue to educate the public about the unacceptable risks posed by the inappropriate location of this swine CAFO and we will encourage Cargill as well as state agencies and governmental bodies to recognize the true costs of allowing this risk to continue. We support nothing short of closure or relocation.

Sincerely,

Gordon Watkins, Buffalo River Watershed Alliance  
Bob Cross, The Ozark Society  
Emily Jones, National Parks Conservation Association  
Bob Allen, Arkansas Canoe Club