



## SB 550 Threatens Public Drinking Water Reservoirs

SB 550 presents a threat to the health and well-being of the people of Arkansas. If enacted, this bill would completely change the way liquid animal waste disposal systems, which are used primarily by large swine farms to dispose of liquid swine waste, are regulated in Arkansas. Although characterized by supporters of the bill as an effort to achieve greater efficiency in the permitting process, SB 550 has the potential to expose some of the state's most important natural resources including public drinking water reservoirs to liquid animal waste.

Currently, ADEQ is charged with issuing permits and conducting oversight of liquid animal waste disposal systems. ADEQ's process is effective and fair. It balances the needs of swine and dairy farmers with the right of the public to a safe and clean environment. It ensures the involvement of well-trained, knowledgeable professionals with years of experience.

SB 550 would wipe out the current permitting process and oversight of these facilities and gut current regulatory protections. Public notification requirements would be eliminated. Minimum distance setback from neighbors, streams, and lakes could be lost. Subsurface investigation requirements to determine suitability for waste lagoons would no longer be required. Anonymous complaints would not be accepted or investigated, and public reporting necessarily would be deterred. Established, effective enforcement protocol would go by the wayside. As a result, swine farms would operate in a much more permissive environment, and the prospect of liquid animal waste entering the water reservoirs of our great state would become a much greater threat.

Many Arkansas water systems produce some of the purest, healthiest, and most savory water in the world. That reality is the result of many years of devoted commitment by the State of Arkansas to protecting and preserving the state's public drinking water reservoirs. While swine farms serve a role in the state's economy and culture, that industry should not be bolstered at the expense of the state's water systems and all of the state's people, who rely on clean, healthy drinking water every day. As a result, Central Arkansas Water urges each member of the House and Senate to vote to preserve the current liquid animal waste permitting regimen by opposing SB 550.