

BUFFALO RIVER COALITION
PRESS CONFERENCE RE: C&H HOG FARM

JUNE 24, 2016

IN TODAY'S MEETING OF THE ARKANSAS POLLUTION CONTROL & ECOLOGY COMMISSION, THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ANNOUNCED THAT IT HAS DECIDED TO EMPLOY INDEPENDENT EXPERTS TO ASSESS LINER INTEGRITY OF STORAGE PONDS AT C&H HOG FARMS.

IN APRIL OF THIS YEAR, THE BUFFALO RIVER COALITION PRESENTED EVIDENCE TO ADEQ AND THE COMMISSION IN THE FORM OF ELECTRICAL RESISTIVITY IMAGING (ERI) INDICATING THE EXISTENCE OF A POSSIBLE RELEASE OF HOG WASTES FROM THE C&H HOG FARM.

THAT ERI DATA HAD BEEN COLLECTED BY THE BIG CREEK RESEARCH AND EXTENSION TEAM (BCRET) IN MARCH, 2015, BUT NOT MADE KNOWN BY BCRET TO ADEQ FOR REASONS NOT YET FULLY EXPLAINED. THE BUFFALO RIVER COALITION OBTAINED THE INFORMATION THROUGH FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS, AND HAS SINCE URGED THE DEPARTMENT TO UNDERTAKE AN INVESTIGATION OF A POSSIBLE RELEASE OF HOG WASTES AT THE HOG FARM.

WE ARE PLEASED THAT ADEQ HAS DECIDED TO FOLLOW UP ON THIS INFORMATION BY EMPLOYING INDEPENDENT EXPERTS TO CONDUCT FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS. THIS IS THE FIRST STEP IN PROVING OR

DISPROVING WHETHER THERE IS A RELEASE THAT COULD BE DISASTEROUS TO THE BUFFALO RIVER.

HOWEVER, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER IMPORTANT DECISIONS THAT MUST BE MADE BY THE DEPARTMENT ABOUT THIS INVESTIGATION. FOR EXAMPLE, WHO ARE THE INDEPENDENT EXPERTS WHO ARE TO CONDUCT THE INVESTIGATION? WHAT ARE THEIR QUALIFICATIONS? WHAT WILL BE THE TYPE AND SCOPE OF THE INVESTIGATION, AND THE PROTOCOLS AND TECHNOLOGY TO BE USED? THE COALITION IS VERY INTERESTED IN THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS AND OTHER RELATED INFORMATION THAT HAS YET TO BE MADE KNOWN.

“TRANSPARENCY” IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT IN THIS CASE BECAUSE OF ITS HISTORY. THE PUBLIC IS VERY DISTURBED ABOUT THE PRESENCE OF A FACTORY HOG FARM IN THE WATERSHED OF THE BUFFALO RIVER, AND ADEQ IS PROPERLY BEING HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT. IT IS TO EVERYBODY’S ADVANTAGE THAT THE COALITION AND OTHERS OF THE PUBLIC BE GIVEN FULL OPPORTUNITY TO COLLABORATE WITH THE INVESTIGATION TO HELP ENSURE OBJECTIVITY AND IMPARTIALITY. THAT INCLUDES BEING FULLY INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS AND RESULTS.

ADEQ HAS COMMITTED THAT THIS INVESTIGATION WILL BE CONDUCTED IN AN OPEN AND TRANSPARENT MANNER, AND WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO COLLABORATE WITH OTHER SCIENTIFIC EXPERTS FROM BCRET AND THE BUFFALO RIVER COALITION. THE COALITION LOOKS FORWARD TO THAT OPPORTUNITY.

**THE DECISION OF ADEQ TO FURTHER INVESTIGATE THE POSSIBLE
RELEASE OF HOG WASTES FROM THE FACILITY DEMONSTRATES THE
NECESSITY FOR AND VALUE OF GRASS-ROOTS CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION. WITHOUT THE BUFFALO RIVER
COALITION'S INVOLVEMENT, ADEQ WOULD NOT HAVE MADE THE DECISION
IT ANNOUNCED TODAY.**

**WE HAVE A BEAUTIFUL ENVIRONMENT IN ARKANSAS, AND THE
PRESERVATION OF THAT ENVIRONMENT DEPENDS IN LARGE PART ON THE
INVOLVEMENT OF CITIZENS AND ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE COALITION.
WE ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO BECOME ACTIVELY INVOLVED.**