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MAY 26 2023

Letter and questions regarding proposal: Project File Number CU-23-00001 3 BR Custom Cuts
Kittitas County CDS

Dear Ms. Bacon,

You must know the devastating consequences of the proposed commercial slaughterhouse to be built in the Wilson Creek community of families, farms, and nature reserves. The proposal threatens the security and confidence of families and businesses investing their lives and livelihoods in Kittitas County. It will destroy the economic future and environment of the local neighborhood and area.

Dozens of homes, businesses, the City of Ellensburg and Central Washington University are within two miles of the proposed location. Economic studies show certified animal feeding operations (CAFO) decrease rural housing value within three miles and can decimate those within one mile. Local families and farms will hedge homes and investments at huge losses and move out of the community.

Environmental studies prove animal slaughter and meat processing have many dangerous pollutants. The air becomes unbreathable for miles. The nitrogen and phosphorus in animal waste runoff causes toxic algae blooms in local water systems. These toxic algae blooms become "dead zones" harmful to people, pets, and wildlife. The proposed location is literally on top of Lyle and Wilson Creek. Waterways and nature reserves that feed into the Yakima River and flow through the university and downtown Ellensburg. The devastation from water, waste, air, and chemical pollution will ruin the area for generations of people and wildlife. The potential of polluting the Yakima River, Lyle and Wilson Creek is an unconscionable risk.

The proposal deceptively files itself as a "niche" USDA certified meet processing facility. Niche, yet capable of holding, slaughtering and processing several species of animals. Producing enough meat and waste to require almost daily removal out of the one-lane neighborhood. The unanswered questions the community and I raise about the magnitude of operations and ramifications suggest negligence and/or deception.

If the proposal is approved however, there will be even more difficult questions:

- I. How was this obviously ill-conceived proposal and location approved with such apparent catastrophe for the city and county, environment and real estate, local families and businesses?
- II. Why would families and businesses invest lives and livelihoods in Kittitas County? Where leaders allow out-of-state funders to build industrial slaughterhouses next door to families, farms and their futures?
- III. What value to which individuals is worth risking our county's shared prosperity; and our public health from polluting the Yakima River, Wilson and Lyle Creek?

Thank you for answering the dozens of questions and concerns myself and many in our community have over this proposal. I know you will do what's right for our shared home of Kittitas County and protect the current and future prosperity for all its families and businesses.

Alexander Whitman

Question for the proposal:

1. How will all pollution: air, water, noise, chemical, animal waste etc. be kept from homes, farms, Lyle and Wilson Creek, the Yakima River, local salmon breeding grounds and nature reserves?
 1. How will animal blood, the largest slaughterhouse polluter, be properly managed?
2. How is "niche" officially classified in such a proposal?
 1. "Niche" enough to hold and slaughter several types and species of animals (beef, pork, lamb, goat or "game"), and need "state-of-the-art" equipment to process and remove meat and waste out and through the community several times a week?
3. What studies have been done to show there will be no environmental impact to Wilson Creek, which passes through Central Washington University and downtown Ellensburg? Or the Yakima River?
4. How will traffic be managed from Wilson Creek Road to the location through the one-lane road past families, farms, children, pets and livestock?
 1. The road will become unusable as massive amounts of resources are trafficked in for construction; then the constant flow of meat and waste from the facilities.
5. How will the noise from animal slaughter, industrial meat processing, HVAC systems and more be managed in this community of families, farms, livestock and pets?
6. What is the maximum number of slaughters that will be performed in week?
7. What is the proposals' water pretreatment standard?
 1. Studies show without a clear pretreatment standard, some slaughterhouses discharge to public waste water treatment plants without treating waste, worsening overflow at treatment plants.*
8. What are the proposals plans for expansion?
 1. What is the maximum number of livestock expected on the property, at current and full expansion?
9. What guarantee do other Kittitas county families and businesses have that similar CAFOs will not be placed near, and destroy, their livelihoods?
10. Is Central Washington University aware they have university buildings and student housing within less than 2 miles of the proposed location? Or that the water systems of Lyle and Wilson Creek, which flow through university land, may become polluted?
11. Slaughterhouse wastewater can contain antibiotic-resistant strains of E. coli, fueling the spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. How will this be addressed?

Sources:

Animal Feeding Operations and housing values: Summary of literature. University of Missouri Extension. (n.d.). <https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/mp748>

- The closer a house is to an AFO, the more it is expected to decrease the house value. An Iowa study on the rural-urban fringe indicated it would decrease house value an average of 17 percent within 2 miles
- Economic studies find the negative impact of an AFO on rural housing values stops within three miles. Further than three miles from an AFO, there is little evidence that the AFO would negatively affect a rural residence. However, one study found houses within a town further than three miles from the AFO had diminished housing values.

The effect of Cafos on Neighboring House and land values. Midwest Environmental Advocates. (n.d.). <https://midwestadvocates.org/the-effect-of-cafos-on-neighboring-house-and-land-values>

- A 2015 publication found that properties located within three miles of a CAFO lose up to 26% of their value and neighboring houses, those within .25 miles, lose up to 88%.² In fact, it is estimated that CAFOs around the United States have reduced property values by twenty-six billion dollars as of 2008.

The environmental impacts of slaughterhouses: Fact sheet. (n.d.). https://biologicaldiversity.org/programs/population_and_sustainability/pdfs/slaughterhouse_factsheet.pdf

- Nitrogen and phosphorus from slaughterhouse waste can cause the growth of algae that depletes the oxygen in water, creating dead zones in streams and rivers.
- Compounds found in slaughterhouse wastewater, such as chromium and chemicals from cleaning products, cause changes in aquatic ecosystems that endanger fish and plant life.

Slaughterhouses. Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper. (2021, May 24). <https://lowersusquehannariverkeeper.org/educate/issues-2/slaughterhouses/>

- Wastewater from slaughterhouses contains nitrogen and phosphorus that contribute to toxic algal outbreaks and dead zones.

Environmental Protection Agency. (n.d.). EPA. Retrieved March 28, 2023, from <https://www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution/effects-dead-zones-and-harmful-algal-blooms>

- When some types of algae blooms are large and produce chemicals, or toxins, the event is called a harmful algal bloom. Harmful algal blooms can occur in lakes, reservoirs, rivers, ponds, bays and coastal waters, and the toxins they produce can be harmful to human health and aquatic life. Harmful algal blooms are mainly the result of a type of algae called cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae.
- Elevated nutrient levels and algal blooms can also cause problems in drinking water in communities nearby and upstream from dead zones. Harmful algal blooms release toxins that contaminate drinking water, causing illnesses for animals and humans.