

January 16, 2013
10239 W. Sabin Ch. Rd.
Pearl City, IL 61062-9563

Illinois Pollution Control Board
C/o John Therriault, Assistant Clerk of the Board
1021 North Grand Avenue East
P.O. Box 19274
Springfield, Illinois 62794-9274

PC# 26

RE: In the Matter of CAFOs: Proposed Amendments to 35 Ill. Adm.
Code Parts 501, 502, and 504 (R-2012-023)

Dear Members of the Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you my concerns about keeping our water supply in Illinois protected from pollution from Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs).

I became a registered nurse at age 51 and I know the importance of good health and the need for clean drinking water. As you like to drink clean water, so do we. From what we have encountered with the proliferation of CAFOs in Illinois, we definitely need to update the laws regulating their discharges. We need to see new laws applied even-handedly to all CAFOs and to ensure environmental protections are upheld.

My late husband and I both grew up on dairy farms and Jo Daviess County is my home where I raised my family. I began to learn more about CAFOs when A.J. Bos proposed the Traditions Dairy, LLC in Jo Daviess County about five years ago. The facility was to be the largest dairy CAFO in Illinois and possibly east of the Mississippi.

It did not take us long to realize that the concentration of the amount of waste the facility would have produced would have impacted our drinking water. We know of fields in the vicinity of CAFOs that are so plastered with manure from years of application that they won't even grow a weed.

The County Board voted 11 – 5 against the megadairy being built because of the risks it posed, but the Board's decision became nullified by the Department of Agriculture who issued the construction permit for the facility. A.J. Bos then hired contractors and began to build.

My husband and I attended local community meetings organized by Helping Others Maintain Environmental Standards (HOMES) about the project. H.O.M.E.S. was formed by citizens who took up the pledge to protect Jo Daviess County and for over two years we supported HOMES' efforts.

HOMES and the Illinois Citizens for Clean Air & Water monitored the CAFO and even before construction was completed it was found polluting. The Attorney General's Office filed an enforcement action for its water pollution violations, but the Dairy continued to claim it didn't need a Clean Water Act permit because it was a "no discharge" facility.

I still don't understand how a CAFO can claim it will be a no discharge CAFO when it's polluting even before animals are brought onsite and it has to manage millions of gallons of livestock waste. Thankfully A.J. Bos has agreed to abandon the Traditions megadairy project, but it's very sad to think that if HOMES had not stood up for the rights of the local people, the floodgates of water pollution would have been opened.

Enacting sensible laws regulating CAFOs and upholding them will help keep the beauty in Illinois. Now visitors like you, the Illinois Pollution Control Board, can come to beautiful Jo Daviess County, where the 50 U.S. Governors convened their meeting several years ago at the Galena Territory's Eagle Ridge Resort, and enjoy the beauty and peacefulness of the rolling hills and vistas.

What sensible person wants to travel near the planned equivalent of 42 football fields of manure holding ponds, 20 feet deep that were predicted to leak 1,000 acres per acre per day by the AJ Bos engineer himself on the witness stand?

Yes, I am thankful that the AJ Bos megadairy threat to our water supply, running through vulnerable karst bedrock has been removed, but we do not want any repetition and we want water protection for you, our visitors, and for ourselves and for our posterity.

Thank you.

Betty Ann Gahm