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July 25, 2016

Dept of Agriculture Executive, Raymond Poe  
Dept of Agriculture Executive Offices, Warren Goetsch  
Dept of Agriculture Environmental Programs, Brad Beaver  
P.O. Box 19281  
Springfield, IL 62794-9281

**RE: Objections to proposed Runway Ridge, LLC livestock management facility proposal due to suspected regulatory siting violations, etc.**

Gentlemen:

This letter is to notify you that Michaeline D. Harrison and I, Stuart A Harrison, Sr., stand in opposition to the proposed Runway Ridge, LLC hog confinement to be located on Airport Road in Bernadotte Township. This proposed confinement would house 8,052 hogs over 55 pounds, plus 12,856 pigs less than 55 pounds (i.e. over 20,000 hogs total to be raised and harvested). Our family owns farmland across the road to the northeast of this facility. This is the wrong location for any hog confinement, let alone one of this size.

The proposed facility would be sited across from the residence of Paul Stoops, who has lived there 78 years. The site drawings submitted by the hog confinement applicant submitted to the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) designates Stoops' property as a "non-farm residence." It is not a "non-farm residence," per the regulations because Stoops owns around 180 acres of farmland there and has participated in its farming. Further, the measurements to the southeast corner of his home are within the 1,760' setback area. Therefore, the information provided by Runway Ridge is incorrect and therefore makes the proposed confinement out of compliance with IDOA rules and regulations.

Additionally, next-door is Rob Jockisch's horse farm, RJ's Riding Stable, TrailPark and Center. His potable well used for facility and living quarters is less than 100 feet from the confinement's land. This is omitted from the site drawings, along with an omission of two forks of the Tater Creek watershed. In addition, about a quarter-mile down the road is the Elrod Schoolhouse, a restored one-room schoolhouse, currently seeking historical status as Elrod Schoolhouse Community Center, insuring that Dr. Leland Ladd's original vision as a "museum/community service gathering place" continues in the future.

Both Michaeline and I are real estate brokers, and we are of the opinion that market values decrease for landowners with property near factory livestock confinements. No one wants to live next to a factory hog confinement, often including the owners of the confinements. There are a number of other reasons why we are opposed to this particular confinement. We outline and share these concerns with the acronym "W-A-S-H" below.

- 1) **Water-** It is fact that waste runoff has occurred at other confinements throughout the United States. Runoff has contaminated nearby streams. We are concerned about potential pollution of the Tater Creek watershed and the Fulton, and Mason County aquifers, which are part of the Mahomet Aquifer. Tater Creek drains into the navigable Spoon River into US Fish & Wildlife's Preserve, by Nature Conservancy's Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge, and lastly to Illinois River [see the attached MAP marked as "A"].
- 2) **Air-** It is a fact that other confinements throughout the United States that industrialized livestock confinements of this size have contaminated the air. Nearby air can be more than odoriferous, it is obnoxious. Just ask the residents of Ipava, Illinois who have dealt with the hog confinement to the west of the town for several years. During the past three weeks there, a horrible stench has



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- occurred off-and-on. And if this confinement is constructed, the Village of Ipava will be exposed to wind drift and potential pollution from three different directions, southwest, northwest, and easterly.
- 3) Soil- It is a fact that other factory livestock confinements have contaminated the soil beyond the land the facility themselves sit upon. We in Fulton County have dealt with a similar type of contamination issue with poor manure management and land application practices in the past.
  - 4) Health- Carmen Cordova stated in a blog that a CDC report released in 2013 highlights the growing public health crisis that threatens our health. Her article headline reads, *Where superbugs come from: CDC report reiterates that misuse of antibiotics in agriculture plays a role*. Another article from the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health reads, *Hog Workers Carry Drug-Resistant Bacteria Even After They Leave The Farm*. Moreover, an article in the Iowa City Veteran Affairs Research News suggests the increasing population of swine raised in densely packed facilities and exposed to antibiotics may raise the risk of drug-resistant germs such as MRSA transmitted to people. MRSA has been found in hog confinements and employees have been infected. We are concerned about these health risks of factory confinements. It appears that the issues may get worse since a New York Times article states, *Antibiotics in Livestock: FDA Finds Use is rising*. (See below for citations of these references.)

The absentee owners of the subject property, MPR Farms (tax deed to: Raymond Fayhee, Bushnell, Illinois), are selling the land to Runway Ridge Farm, LLC. Courthouse records show that taxes for Runway Ridge Farm, LLC; Bear Creek, LLC; Cedar Crest, LLC, Eagle Point Farm, LLC, and Grand Vertex, LLC are sent to Carthage Veterinary Service [c/o Gary Donley]. This suggests that the owners of the operation are not local. The IDOA has been approving these types of Illinois venture-capitalist confinement projects throughout the state with or without local county board support. Local communities should have a meaningful voice in making decisions on what projects are approved for their communities, particularly those proposed by non-local absentee owners or non-local businesses that will extract any economic benefit derived from the operation outside of the community.

We are very concerned with this. A state agency with appointed officials has the power to over-ride elected county-state officials who are entrusted to manage the "will of the people," and safeguard its communities "for the people." We are concerned that our 'inalienable rights' of living with clean water, air, soil, and the public's health will be compromised if this project is forced-upon us. With apprehension, we conclude that it appears the wisdom of the ages, the "Golden Rule," may no longer be the guidepost for many Americans. One thing is certain, Mother Nature's "Law of Compensation" remains in full effect.

We ask that the IDOA acknowledge the regulatory violations with the proposed Runway Ridge, LLC project and deny the application to the company.

Respectfully,

Stuart A. Harrison, Sr. and Michaeline D. Harrison  
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Cc: Illinois Governor, Bruce Rauner  
Fulton County Board Chairman, Robert Bucher, and its Board Members



Illinois Attorney General, Lisa Madigan  
Senator Richard Durbin & staff  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Havana  
Senator Mark Kirk  
Illinois Dept of Public Health Director, Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck  
Senator Dave Koehler  
Nature Conservancy, Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge  
Senator John Sullivan  
Representative Mike Unes  
Representative Noreen Hammond  
Miscellaneous: neighbors, et.al.

References cited in paragraph (4) above:

- 1 Cordova, Carmen *Where subbugs come from: CDC report reiterates that misuse of antibiotics in agriculture plays a role*; [www.nrdc.org/](http://www.nrdc.org/); Sept 16,2013
- 2 John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health news release, *Hog Workers Carry Drug-Resistant Bacteria Even After They Leave The Farm*, Sept 9,2014
- 3 VA Research Currents, US Dept of Veteran Affairs, *In Iowa City VA study, proximity to swine linked to higher MRSA rates*; February 12, 2014
- 4 Tavernise, Sabrina, *Antibiotics in Livestock: FDA Finds Use Is Rising*, New York Times article, October 2, 2014

MAP "A"

