

Dickson Water Authority chairman: Opposes terminal location, concerned for treatment plant

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The chairman of Dickson County's water utility said he's against the site of the proposed fuel terminal facility due to its proximity to a treatment plant as well as past environmental issues near the intersection of Interstate 40 and State Route 840.

Water Authority of Dickson County Board of Commissioners Chairman Kyle Ruf confirmed to The Herald that he is opposed to the terminal locating at the current proposed site in the Turnbull Creek watershed, a position that became public earlier in an email response to county Planning Commission member David Brogdon. In that email, Ruf wrote that he “I am personally not in favor of the location of this facility,” adding that “I am passionate about WADC and its mission to its ratepayers and our environment, and I am beyond proud of all the entity has accomplished in the past 20 years.”

Ruf said WADC is currently waiting for a Spill and Containment Plan for the fuel terminal from Titan Partners, which is the company developing the terminal. The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation is also waiting for the plan, and WADC is in communication with TDEC.

“I believe I am correct in stating that the SPCC is required by EPA/TDEC but is not a plan that gets “approved” by TDEC,” Ruf wrote in the email to Brogdon.

Titan Partners is currently going through the application process for an air pollution control permit with TDEC.

Ruf said the WADC had not initially been involved as much in early discussions with Titan Partners due to the terminal presenting "a unique challenge."

"There are no wastewater demands, no extraordinary water-supply requirements and therefore very little WADC input on its actual process," said Ruf, adding that the terminal has no wastewater and ordinary water demand.

However, Ruf said the WADC does "take a lead role in our service area for being aware of potential impacts to our streams, creeks and rivers."

"These are essential to WADC's ability to serve its ratepayers by providing clean water and by treating waste and safely discharging clean, treated water back in to the environment," Ruf said.

WADC is engaged in discussions with TDEC and will continue to be involved as more specific water quality-related permits are applied for by Titan/Buckeye.

Also, WADC officials have contacted an independent environmental engineer to assess the company's plans.

The WADC requested that the state and company provide details about containing a potential tank spill as well as pipeline integrity and monitoring, firefighting chemical compounds and containment, containment of potential vehicle overturns and any other containment and potential contaminant that could impact the Nails Creek/Turnbull Watershed.

The WADC needs to be the organization that "asks questions" about the county's "environmental concerns," Ruf told The Herald. He said the WADC is in regular communication with TDEC more than most other local entities and so is in the best position to ask questions.

Past environmental issues at I-40, 840

Ruf said environmental damage due from construction deeply affected that area 20 years ago when the roadbuilder for State Route 840, which crosses 11 streams that contribute to the Turnbull Watershed, "cut over 1,000 acres of land bare of any vegetation." The Tennessee Department of Transportation oversaw the construction of 840.

The state essentially fined itself, Ruf said, with TDEC issuing a \$350,000 civil penalty against TDOT for violation of state environmental laws regarding Turnbull Creek.

Silt in Turnbull Creek forced the Turnbull-White Bluff Utility District to stop drawing water from the creek.

"Because of the siltation and sediment it would cripple us for 24 to 30 hours at a time," said former WADC general manager Mike Chandler in 2002. "The

siltation still causes us problems. We've already had to rebuild pumps that were replaced in 1999."

Ruf said the years-long legal battle with the state still resonates.

“Not only were those acres stripped down to red clay, the project had essentially no environmental controls,” Ruff wrote to Brogdon. “The result was a catastrophic pollution of the watershed and Turnbull Creek and the worst water conditions ever experienced in the 37 years to that point that the Turnbull Water Treatment Plant had been in operation.”

“The experiences of the SR 840 disaster, and many, many other challenges, form the DNA of several of us who are a part of WADC,” Ruf added.

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