



Friends of the Jordan River Watershed, Inc.

P.O. Box 412, East Jordan, MI 49727
Phone/Fax 231 536-9947

Website www.friendsofthejordan.org e-mail foj@friendsofthejordan.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

John Richter, President
Friends of the Jordan River Watershed
P.O. Box 412
East Jordan, MI 49727
(231) 536-3132

Contaminated Leachate Disposal: Resort vs. Rural Community

At the request of Friends of the Jordan River, a 30-day extension of the public comment period for a CMS Energy proposal to dispose of contaminated leachate from Bay Harbor Resort in an underground injection well 30 miles away in Alba has been granted by the US Environmental Protection Agency. Comments may be submitted until July 27. A similar request has been made to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

Friends of the Jordan River Watershed and Alba citizens are raising many questions and demanding answers. There was overwhelming concern expressed at the June 13 Alba public hearing, demonstrating the need to take additional time to ensure the proper information has been gathered, studies have been done, and that the people in the surrounding area are given time to fully understand the proposal and have their concerns addressed.

John Richter, President of the Friends of the Jordan River, objects to the proposal. "The Michigan State University professors we are working with on another project have identified the Alba area as a primary source of groundwater for the Jordan River. Any contamination of the ground water from this injection well would ultimately harm the Jordan River," stated Richter.

According to Dr. Warren Wood of the MSU Geological Sciences Department, "There must be hundreds or thousands of oil and gas wells in the area, any one of which might leak brine into the ground water if injection of fluids increases the hydrostatic pressure in the injection formation beyond the hydrostatic pressure in the overlying formations." The proposed injection well would be 2,200 feet deep, which is approximately 900 feet deeper than drinking wells in the area.

Alba is a valuable groundwater recharge area for many area trout streams, and there are also concerns about contamination of groundwater as a source of drinking water. Beyond the contamination issues, there are also concerns that Alba was chosen because it is not as affluent as the surrounding shoreline communities. Otherwise, the area's geology, hundreds of shallow gas wells, and the fact that the groundwater is the source for many trout streams do not sound like ideal qualities for the location of an injection well to dispose of contaminated water.

"The extended comment period is needed to provide local people enough time to learn more about the proposal and share their concerns with the US EPA and MDEQ," stated John Richter.

The Friends of the Jordan River Watershed are working with others to document citizens' concerns, collect information on the risks and alternatives, and facilitate public input within the 30-day extension period. ***END***