

Petition for Concerned Citizens

Preserve Vernon County Natural Resources

Drafted by Concerned Citizens for Smart Growth

Vernon County, and the cities of Westby and Viroqua, in the beautiful southwest corner of Wisconsin is a destination for tourism, trout fishing, organic family farms, and locally owned small businesses.

Currently, Premium Iowa Pork (owned by Lynch Livestock, Inc.) has purchased the Driftless Meats property with the stated intention of enlarging the facility to handle slaughtering 700 hogs/day - to start!

Driftless Meats was an asset to the local community, offering animal processing to family farmers as well as organic processing and a gift shop with locally made goods. The proposed facility will reject our local farmers and only benefit the developer's out-of-state business, bringing additional pollution and economic issues to our community. The proposed facility will generate wastewater at a volume of 30,000 gallons/day, requiring large quantities of water from the local water table and a municipal waste treatment system to take on the burden of treating it. As economics dictate, the Premium Iowa Pork slaughter plant is also likely the precursor to swine CAFOs** moving into the area to avoid shipping the hogs long distances for processing.

There are over one hundred residential homes within a ½-mile radius of the current facility, and a multi-use/bike trail within a few yards, built at an overall cost of over \$1,000,000 that will be impacted by this expansion and the potential problems it will bring.

We cannot let industrial agriculture threaten the water, health and safety of local residents, and destroy the local tourism, including the \$1.6 billion annual impact of the trout fishing industry. We do not want to end up like Kewaunee County where, after permitting 16 CAFOs** on similar karst* geology, over one third of the water from tested wells is unsafe to drink or use, due to high levels of nitrates, bacteria, or both.

The Town of Viroqua comprehensive plan is not in alignment with industrial agriculture***. The sensitive karst* geology, pristine trout streams and recreational quality land and water will not support the waste, the air and water pollution, and the road traffic created by this type of industry. If **you** are a concerned citizen of Vernon County, or any ally in nearby counties or a tourist who may be affected by this, and if you support **only** smart growth for our beautiful area, sign this petition and let our representatives on the city council and the county and town boards know!

Sign now to let our local representatives know we want them to permanently refuse the wastewater from this facility at the Viroqua, Sparta and Lacrosse treatment plants.

* **Karst geology** refers to carbonate bedrock that has developed widespread interconnected fracture patterns which can create direct conduits to groundwater. Caves, sinkholes, disappearing streams, underground rivers, and springs are common features in karst landscapes.

** **CAFO – Confined Animal Feeding Operation.**

A **concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO)**, as defined by the [United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#) is an [animal feeding operation \(AFO\)](#)—a farm in which animals are raised in confinement—that has over 1000 "animal units" confined for over 45 days a year. An animal unit is "an animal equivalent of 1000 pounds live weight and equates to 1000 head of beef cattle, 700 dairy cows, 2500 swine weighing more than 55 lbs, 125 thousand broiler chickens, or 82 thousand laying hens or pullets".

A CAFO is also an animal feeding operation **of any size** that discharges its waste into a waterway.

*** The initial version of this petition referred to a draft version of Vernon County's comprehensive plan. This petition refers to the Town of Viroqua's comprehensive plan, which was officially adopted. Revision date 8/14/17.

The Petition:

We the undersigned of Vernon County and surrounding communities hereby petition the Vernon County Board, the Viroqua Town Board and the Viroqua City Council to permanently refuse the wastewater from the hog slaughtering facility owned by Lynch Livestock, Inc. and located at E7342 3 Chimney Rd, Viroqua, WI.

Reasons:

- * Potential well and groundwater contamination. (See Kewaunee County where nitrate and bacteria contaminate 1/3 of the wells and, more locally, the Towns of Holland and Onalaska.)
- * Draining of aquifer at the rate of 30,000 gallons per day.
- * Waste water treatment of 30,000 gallons per day.
- * Potential increase of large hog raising operations in our county.
- * Potential odors from manure spreading and pond/lagoon system for onsite wastewater treatment and/or pre-treatment.
- * Labor force from outside our county with no affordable housing available.
- * Community deterioration, e.g., Pine Valley Meats of Norwalk, Wisconsin.
- * Pollution of area trout streams.
- * Air quality affecting the Coon Prairie Bike Trail and park
- * Potential decrease in value of real estate property.

For more specific information, see the complete petition text (attached) or go to our website at www.citizensforsmartgrowth.com

