

BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE

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Public Hearing NC Division of Water Quality City of Burlington Permit Renewal to Spread Sewage Sludge in 6 Counties

Press Conference
Alamance Community College Auditorium
Tuesday, May 13, 6 p.m.

Statements from speakers

*Sue Dayton, Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League
NC Healthy Communities Coordinator
Saxapahaw, NC
Contact: 336-525-2003*

“Farmers aren’t being told the whole story about what’s in sludge. Residents of rural communities do not know when, where or how much of this stuff gets spread on land on adjoining their properties. There is no public notice announcing new or renewed applications for WWTP permits to spread sludge. There is no opportunity for residents of rural communities to comment or request a hearing. There is little or no communication between the state and county governments concerning land application of sewage sludge. There is no effective program in place to report potential violations or illnesses. The public - including farmers - has a right to know about potentially harmful substances that might affect their health and their environment.”

*Barry Tomlinson
Snow Camp, NC
Contact: 336-376-1699*

“We moved here from Durham in 2007 to find our little piece of paradise. We thought we had found it until we discovered we had sewage sludge being spread on properties next to us. The sludge burns your eyes and gags you. The public has a right to know about the health risks of bringing sewage from the city and dumping it on us here in the country.”

*Kevin Meehan, Turtle Run Farm
Alamance County, NC
Contact: 336-376-3313*

“There are a lot of reasons why I don’t use it [sludge]. First of all, I know what it smells like when I drive by it on a country road. When it doesn’t smell right, it’s not wholesome. Of course, I also read about the unknowns in it. Most of what’s in sewage sludge is not tested. I don’t want a lot of unknown variables in my fields.”

(over)

Nancy Holt
Orange County, NC
Contact: 919-563-3670

“Sludge induced illness is not a reportable incident in North Carolina. However, people have reported sickness and illness from breathing in the bioaerosols from sewage sludge sprayed near their homes. The local health departments, the state boards of health and the US-EPA have refused to investigate, track or record these complaints. When people are hospitalized with reported sludge-related illnesses, doctors and hospitals are not required to report to the state board of health.”

Matthew Diehl
Graham, NC
Contact: 919-602-0296

“We don’t want it [sewage sludge] here. If sludge is so safe why isn’t sewage sludge being spread around schools and parks in urban areas? At least then everyone can share the problem equally.”

Charles Sydnor, Braeburn Farm
Snow Camp, NC
Contact: 336-376-6542

“I started using it [sewage sludge] some 10 years ago, and stopped using it over the past five years. I found there were some major problems with using it as a fertilizer. First, the heavy equipment used to spread it caused erosion and compacted the soil. I also felt there was a drop-off of fescue after awhile. They [Synagro] poo-pooed it, so I just said, ‘thank you,’ and told them to stop. Second, I really didn’t know the full content of things in it, and it was fairly noxious soon after it was put out. The precautionary principle says, ‘If you don’t know about it, don’t do it.’ What am I going to find out ten years down the road? So I stopped. And I’m glad I did because I am now moving towards sustainable farming and this is not a sustainable practice, in my opinion.”