SOAH DOCKET NO. 582-22-02856 TCEQ DOCKET NO. 2022-0326-MWD

APPLICATION OF RESTORE THE	§	BEFORE THE STATE OFFICE
RESTORE THE GRASSLANDS LLC	§	
AND HARRINGTON/TURNER	§	OF
ENTERPRISES, LP	§	
(TPDES PERMIT NO. WQ0016003001)	§	ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS

EXCEPTIONS TO THE PROPOSAL FOR DECISION OF PROTESTANTS MOEBIUS, CLOUD, HERNANDEZ & HEMMIG

MAY 17, 2023

EXCEPTIONS TO THE PROPOSAL FOR DECISION OF PROTESTANTS CARROLYN MOEBIUS, DON WADE CLOUD, JR, LAURA HERNANDEZ AND RAY HEMMIG

I. INTRODUCTION

The Protestants agree with, and do not except to, the Administrative Law Judge's ("ALJ") recommendation in the Proposal for Decision ("PFD") that the Commission deny the application at issue and order the Applicants to attempt to reach agreement with NTMWD (either alone or through a customer city) to provide service. Failing to reach agreement would result in the Commission deciding on appropriate terms. This decision is in support of Regionalization (Issue E) in this case. We agree, and do not except to, that the ALJ's ruling that "Therefore, NTMWD has the obligation to provide service to Applicants, either on terms they agree to or on terms the Commission orders."

Protestants file an exception to the ALJ's alternative proposal of granting the Application with the additional installation of carbon scrubbers and a partial enclosure of the plant. The alternative recommendation is contrary to State of Texas's regionalization policy, the ALJ's ruling in support of Regionalization, Texas Water Code §§ 26.081 and 26.0282, and 30 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 351, Subchapter C. Protestants respectfully request that the ALJ modify the PFD to remove the alternative recommendation. This modification would be consistent with the regionalization policy of Texas.

Protestants believe that, contrary to the PFD, the preponderance of the evidence in the record supports the Protestants' position on issues relating to wildlife (Issue A); requesters' and their families' health and safety (Issue B); water quality (Issues F, G and K); accuracy and completeness of the application (Issue H); and whether the applicants are legal entities (Issue I) as well as the other issues addressed herein.

II. Whether the draft permit is protective of livestock, wildlife, and wildlife habitats (Issue A)

Protestants' take exception to the ALJ's ruling on issue A. We respectfully request the ALJ to reverse the decision that the draft permit is protective of livestock, wildlife and wildlife habitats. The record includes a preponderance of evidence that the Alligator Snapping Turtle is listed as threatened in Texas and the City of Murphy's Wildlife Expert, Dr Morrison stated "There have been multiple sightings and records of the Alligator Snapping Turtle in the Maxwell Creek watershed below the proposed wastewater discharge point. The State of Texas added the Western Alligator Snapping Turtle to the state list of protected species in 1987 (Texas Secretary of State, 1987), and in 2018 elevated its status to Imperiled (R2 15 rank)." (See Exhibit MLM-

3, Dr Michael Morrison's prefiled direct testimony of December 29, 2022, page 8, line 12 thru 15). Indeed the Alligator Snapping Turtle is included on the State Listed Threatened Species in Texas (See 31 TAC §65.175). Protestant respectfully assert that any finding or conclusion that the Alligator Snapping Turtle is not a protected species in Texas is against the preponderance of evidence in the record. Texas has deemed the Alligator Snapping Turtle deserving of protection as a threatened species. As noted, the only evidence in the record on this issue is the expert Dr. Morrison and he testified that "There have been multiple sightings and records of the Alligator Snapping Turtle in the Maxwell Creek watershed below the proposed wastewater discharge point".

Dr Morrison testified "the proposed wastewater discharge will have unknown and potentially adverse impacts on the **key wildlife species of concern and wildlife habitat** within Maxwell Creek below the proposed wastewater discharge point. These adverse impacts result from alterations of the naturally existing pH and DO levels in Maxwell Creek. The draft permit's minimum DO level of 4.0 mg/l is inconsistent with the "high aquatic life use" classification which has a goal of maintaining a DO concentration of 5.0 mg/l in Maxwell 19 Creek. The draft permit sampling limits on Total Phosphorus are inadequate to ensure compliance with the 0.5 mg/l standard set forth in the draft permit. These concerns are exacerbated by the presence of pooling within Maxwell Creek which promotes pH accumulations and the lowering of DO levels. Other adverse impacts on wildlife from the proposed wastewater discharge can be expected from unregulated contaminants (e.g., pharmaceuticals and personal care products) in the discharge and increased urban stormwater runoff from the proposed densely developed tract of land served by the proposed wastewater plant." (See Exhibit MLM-3, page 15, lines 14 - 27).

The ALJ did not take into consideration that TCEQ has not followed their Procedures to Implement the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards as required by the Supreme Court of Texas issued opinion of February 11, 2022, in TCEQ et al v Maverick County et al, 642 S.W.3d 537 (Tex. 2022). The Court noted that "once TCEQ promulgates rules governing the application process, it must follow them" *Maverick County*, 642 S.W.3d 537, 543). The Alligator Snapping Turtle is listed as a threatened species in Texas, a fact which the Executive Director inexplicably continues to ignore. The relevant inquiry is whether Texas (not the federal government) protects the Alligator Snapping Turtle. Texas does protect the Alligator Snapping Turtle as the Alligator Snapping Turtles included on the State Listed Threatened Species in Texas (See 31 TAC §65.175) as Dr. Morrison testified in pre-filed testimony admitted into evidence and made a part of the record.

III. Whether the draft permit is protective of the requesters' and their families' health and safety (Issue B)

Protestants' take exception to the ALJ's ruling on this issue. Protestant respectfully assert that the preponderance in the record does **not** support that the draft permit is protective of health and safety. We respectfully request the ALJ to take judicial notice that discharge flowing through and within mere feet of where humans reside is not protective of their health and safety. We ask the ALJ to reverse the decision that the draft permit is protective of requesters' and their families' health and safety. While the ALJ stated that expert testimony was not presented, the ALJ heard testimony regarding health and safety concerns from Protestants who live near the proposed discharge site and several reputable studies regarding wastewater treatment plants and the effects on homeowners living within a certain distance of the WWTP discharge were noted as well as effects on WWTP employees. See Exhibit C.12. Also, TCEQ never addressed the disinfection requirement and whether it protects nearby residents from exposure to pathogens (including enteric viruses and E. coli) in treated wastewater. The discharge point is adjacent Carpenter Farm's acreage and in close proximity to protestant Lance Caughfield's property (and other residences and parks further downstream), as well as the low flow conditions in the receiving stream and associated perennial pools (i.e., the stock ponds). (See Exhibit 5, Attachment 3, Affected Landowner's Map, Bates 67, Owners #2 - 6). See id. at pp. 21-22.

IV. Whether the draft permit it complies with applicable siting requirements in 30 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 309, including adequate prevention of nuisance odors (Issue C).

Protestants' take exception to the ALJ's ruling on his issue. We respectfully request the ALJ to reverse the decision that the draft permit complies with applicable siting requirement, including adequate prevention of nuisance odors.

1. Flooding

The addition of effluent from the wastewater treatment plant, will increase the frequency of flooding that is currently an issue in the area and along the banks of Maxwell Creek. *See* testimony of Laura Hernandez 582-22-2856_HOM_V1_020723 (Condensed) Page 15, line 17; All of pages 16 – 17 and Page 18, lines 1 – 10).

The record includes concerns regarding the **2009 FEMA map not reflecting current areas of flood danger**. The creek floods the small bridge that crosses Gregory Lane which is the only access to the Gregory Lane homes. (*See* Exhibit C- 10.4 and C-11). The wastewater treatment plant as planned will result adversely impact the residents of Gregory Lane and the respective properties of protestants Lance Caughfield and Don Wade Cloud, Jr which are located, in part, in the current Maxwell Creek flood plain.

2. Nuisance Odors

The proposed discharge route goes through Carpenter Farms and Lance Caughfield's property then through the City of Murphy's parks and trail system along Maxwell MOEBIUS, CLOUD, HERNANDEZ, HEMMIG EXCEPTIONS TO PDF

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Creek ("Preserve at Maxwell Creek, Waters Edge Park") as well as residential developments. Maxwell Creek has an established recreational standard that was not correctly noted on the application. No analysis of possible adverse effects of nuisance odors from the discharge were considered by either the Applicants or the Executive Director Staff as mandated by TWC § 26.030(b).

Texas Water Code § 26.030(b) mandates that the TCEQ "consider any unpleasant qualities of the effluent, **including unpleasant odor**, any possible adverse effects that the discharge of the effluent might have on the recreational value of the park, playground, or schoolyard." The record provides insufficient evidence whether the Application complies with TWC § 26.030(b). *See id.* at pp. 34-38.

V. Whether Applicants substantially complied with applicable notice requirements (ISSUE D)

Protestants' take exception to the ALJ's ruling on this issue. We respectfully request ask the ALJ to reverse the decision that the Applicants substantially complied with applicable notice requirements.

1. Publication Notice

The record noted the Applicants did not comply with the instructions for public notice. According to TCEQ-20244inst-NORI (03-2021), "You must publish the enclosed notice at your expense, at least once in the newspaper of *largest circulation* within each county where the facility and discharge point are located or will be located".

The record includes the paper chosen for the English worded notice was Collin County Commercial Record's circulation is approximately 50 (according to the Texas Press Association 2021 directory).

Carpenter Farms (CF), affected landowner #2, 4, 6 and 7 (property adjacent to the Facility), never received notice. See Applicant Exhibit 1 page 67. CF has filed a pleading to be considered as a party in the related MUD contested case hearing, SOAH Docket 582-23-01498.

The Applicants did not substantially comply with applicable notice requirements for the English worded notice.

VI. Whether issuance of the draft permit is consistent with TCEQ's regionalization policy and Texas Water Code §§ 26.081 and 26.0282, and 30 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 3 51, Subchapter C, including consideration of need for the proposed facility and designation of a regional entity (ISSUE E);

Applicants raise no exceptions to the ALJ's recommendation, based on designation of NTMWD as the regional provider, that the parties be instructed to attempt to reach an agreement on terms of service. The Protestants do raise exception to ALJ's alternative conclusion recommending granting the Application, with the additional installation of carbon scrubbers and a partial enclosure of the plant that Mr. Cox agreed to during the hearing.

This alternative recommendation is contrary to the Regionalization policy of Texas. In addition, not all relevant parties are currently participating due to improper notice. *See id.* at pp. 38-44. Accordingly, we except the ALJ's finding that the relevant parties are already part of this proceeding. Carpenter Farms, a relevant party as it owns land through which Maxwell Creek flows, is not a party to this proceeding.

VII. Whether the draft permit complies with the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards and is protective of surface and groundwater quality, including requesters' use and enjoyment of their property (ISSUE F);

Protestants' take exception to the ALJ's ruling. We ask the ALJ to reverse the decision that the draft permit complies with the TSWQS and is protective of surface and groundwater quality, including requester's use and enjoyment of their property.

The PFD does not provide reasonable assurance that it is protective of water quality and the existing uses of the receiving waters in accordance with applicable Texas Surface Water Quality Standards ("TSWQS"), including protection of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife.

The record before this court establishes that the WWTP will result in a condition, a legal injury or a nuisance that substantially interferes with Protestants' use and enjoyment of their property. (See Exhibits C-10.4; C-11. See also Crosstex N. Tex. Pipeline v Gardiner 505 S.W.3d 580 (Tex. 2016) in which the Texas Supreme Court issued a landmark opinion regarding nuisance law in Texas. We respectfully request the ALJ to take judicial notice that odors and noises emanating from a WWTP within a few hundred feet of established residential neighborhoods are actionable nuisances. This is a fact which cannot reasonably be disputed. Applicants have failed to prove that the Draft Permit is protective against the WWTP substantially interfering with Protestants' use and enjoyment of their property. See Exhibit 582-22-02856 V1 020723 pages 67, 215, 222; 582-22-02856 V2 020823 pages 308-311, 326, 328, 329, 334, 335, 401, 402; See id. at pp. 12-17.

VIII. Whether the antidegradation review complies with applicable regulations and the draft permit includes adequate nutrient limits (ISSUE G)

See responses to ISSUE A, B & F. See id. at pp. 22-27.

IX. Whether the Application is accurate and contains all required information (ISSUE H)

Protestants' take exception to the ALJ's ruling. We respectfully request that the ALJ reverse the decision that the Application is accurate and contains all required information.

a. Legitimate Applicant

As noted in the record, Per "10053 TCEQ's Instructions for Completing a Domestic Wastewater Treatment Application" (See Exhibit ED-JM-4 bates 0319 thru 0448), "For TPDES permits, whoever has **overall financial responsibility for the operation of the facility must submit the application for a permit as a co-permittee with the facility owner**. The facility operator is not required to apply as co-permittee if they do not have overall financial responsibility of the facility operations". (See Exhibit ED-JM-4 bates 0349)

Margaret Turner, Representative of HTE, stated that she will have no involvement in the wastewater treatment plant as owner, operator or in the related municipal utility district. (See Moebius's Exhibit C6 Margaret Turner's deposition, All of pages 136 & 137; page 138, lines 1-7 and lines 12-25; All of pages 139 - 141; page 142, lines 1-20; All of page 143; page 144, lines 1-8).

b. Real Party Interest

According to 10053 TCEQ's Instructions for Completing a Domestic Wastewater Treatment Application "A trust and an estate are not legal entities, but rather are fiduciary relationships governing the trustee/executor with respect to the trust/estate property. A Trustee and an Executor are considered the legal representatives of the trust/estate. Therefore, the Trust and Trustee or Estate and Executor must be identified as co-applicants/co-permittees.

The two Huffines family trusts have the financial responsibility as noted in John Cox Testimony (See Exhibit 10, Page 5, lines 12 - 15).

c. Plant Operator not named as required

The Record indicates The Plant Operator as TBD. No individual or entity has operational responsibility. There is no substantial evidence that RTG qualifies as plant operator or intends to go through the process of becoming an owner operational licensee.

Section 8. Facility Operator (Instructions Page 60)

Facility Operator Name: TBD

Facility Operator's License Classification and Level: TBD

Facility Operator's License Number: <u>TBD</u>

On February 11, 2022 the Texas Supreme Court issued a controlling opinion in TCEQ et al v Maverick County et al; Cause No. 19-1108. The Court confirmed that **30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE Section 305.43(a)** required both the operator of the wastewater facility and the owner of the wastewater treatment facility to apply for a wastewater treatment permit (see Maverick County at p. 2).

The record shows the court heard testimony from the representative of RTG, John Cox, that he will not operate the WWTP at issue. Also, Margaret Turner, landowner through her entity Harrington Turner Enterprises testified she will not operate the WWTP at issue. Therefore, the evidence before this court is that the application, failed to identify an operator, is fatally flawed as it **does not comply with 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE Section 305.43 (a).** In Maverick County, the Court identified an operator and an owner. In this proceeding, there is no evidence regarding the identity of an operator.

d. Application Issues CORE DATA FORM

As the record shows in Applicant's Exhibit, The Core Data Form for Restore the Grasslands LLC and Harrington/Turner Enterprises, LP excludes number of employees and whether it is independently owned and operated. See following pages for core data. This dictates who should sign the Core Data Form, which dictates acceptable signatories and potentially additional required forms.

Please see next page for Restore the Grassland LLC Core Data Form -





TCEQ Core Data Form

For detailed instructions regarding completion of this form, please read the Core Data Form Instructions or call 5
SECTION 1: General Information

New Permit, Registration or Auth		scribe in space provid Form should be subn		the program application	1.)	
Renewal (Core Data Form should be submitted with the renewal form)		Other				
2. Customer Reference Number (if issued)		Follow this link to search		3. Regulated Entity Reference Numb		
CN		for CN or RN numbers in Central Registry**		RN		
ECTION II: Customer In	<u>formation</u>					
4. General Customer Information	5. Effective Dat	ve Date for Customer Inform		mation Updates (mm/dd/yyyy) 5/1		
New Customer Change in Legal Name (Verifiable v		ate to Customer Inforr tary of State or Texas		☐ Change in l ller of Public Accounts)	Regula	
The Customer Name submitte Texas Secretary of State (SOS	•	•			rent	
6. Customer Legal Name (If an individ	ual, print last name firs	t: eg: Doe, John)	If ne	w Customer, enter previo	ous Cus	
			N/A			
Restore the Grasslands LLC				<u>.</u>		
7. TX SOS/CPA Filing Number 803409146	8. TX State Tax 3207183035		9. F	ederal Tax ID (9 digits)	10. [N/A	
7. TX SOS/CPA Filing Number	3207183035			ederal Tax ID (9 digits)	10. E N/A	
7. TX SOS/CPA Filing Number 803409146	3207183035	3	N/A	ederal Tax ID (9 digits)	10. E N/A	
7. TX SOS/CPA Filing Number 803409146 11. Type of Customer:	3207183035 ration	Individual	N/A	ederal Tax ID (9 digits) A Partnership: Gener	10. [N/A	

Harrington/Turner Enterprises, LP Core data Form (Next page)





TCEQ Core Data Form

For detailed instructions regarding completion of this form, please read the Core Data Form Instructions or call 5

1. Reason for Submission (If other is	checked please de	escribe in space provid	led.)			
New Permit, Registration or Author	orization (Core Data	Form should be subn	nitted with	the program application	n.)	
Renewal (Core Data Form should be submitted with the renewal form)			☐ Other			
2. Customer Reference Number (if issued)		ollow this link to search	3. Regulated Entity Reference Num			
CN	for	r CN or RN numbers in Central Registry**	RN			
ECTION II: Customer In	formation					
4. General Customer Information	5. Effective Da	te for Customer Info	rmation Updates (mm/dd/yyyy) 5/2			
New Customer	SHEDIN STON	late to Customer Inform		Change in	Regula	
Change in Legal Name (Verifiable v					10000	
The Customer Name submitte	d here may be	updated automati	cally ba	sed on what is cui	rrent	
Texas Secretary of State (SOS) or Texas Com	ptroller of Public	Accou	nts (CPA).		
6. Customer Legal Name (If an individu	ual, print last name fir	st: eg: Doe, John)	If ne	ew Customer, enter previ	ous Cu	
Harrington/Turner Enterprise	s, LP		N/A	A		
7. TX SOS/CPA Filing Number	8. TX State Tax ID (11 digits) 32038116466				10.	
0801038766					N/A	
11. Type of Customer: Corpor	tion Individual		Partnership: Genera		al 🛛 Li	
Government: City County Federal State Other		Sole Proprie	etorship	Other:		
12. Number of Employees 0-20 21-100 101-250			13. Independently Owned a Yes No		and C	
14. Customer Role (Proposed or Actual) – as it relates to the	Regulated Entity listed of	n this form	Please check one of the	followin	
⊠Owner □ Oper	rator	Owner & Ope	Owner & Operator			
	ponsible Party	Voluntary Cleanup Applicant Other:				
Harrington/Turne	e Enterneises I	D				

SEWAGE SLUDGE MANAGEMENT AND DISPOSAL

The record includes 10053 Instructions for Completing a Domestic Wastewater Permit Application, Section 9. Sewage Sludge Management and Disposal, a written statement or a copy of contractual agreements confirming the wastewater treatment plant identify who will accept and be responsible for the sludge from the plant for the life of the permit (at least five years). The Applicant did not provide the information required. The hauler's Sludge Transporter Registration Number was not provided. Please see below noting Applicant's answers. (See Exhibit ED-JM-4, bates 381).

X. Whether the Applicants' compliance history raises any issues regarding Applicants' ability to comply with the material terms of the permit that warrant denying or altering the terms of the draft permit (Issue L)

Protestants' take exception to the ALJ's ruling on this issue. We respectfully request the ALJ to reverse the decision that the Applicants' compliance history complies with the material terms of the permit.

The Operator of the Facility is marked TBD.

Section 8. Facility Operator (Instructions Page 60)

Facility Operator Name: TBD

Facility Operator's License Classification and Level: TBD

Facility Operator's License Number: <u>TBD</u>

XI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Wherefore, the Protestants respectfully request that the ALJ consider the exceptions asserted herein and modify the PFD, including all applicable findings, conclusions and recommendations to be consistent with the exceptions raised herein. In conclusion, Protestants agree with the ALJ's recommendation as set forth in the PFD that the Commission deny the application and order the Applicants to attempt to reach an agreement with NTMWD (either alone or through a customer city) to provide service. Failing to reach an agreement would result in the Commission deciding on appropriate terms. In addition, for the reasons discussed herein including, without limitation, regionalization. Protestants take exception to and respectfully request the ALJ to remove from the PFD. the ALJ's alternative recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,

<u>ls/ Carrolyn, J Moebius</u>

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INDIVIDUAL PROTESTANT, Pro Se

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that on May 17 2023, a true and correct copy of the foregoing transcript excerpt designations was filed with SOAH and TECQ and sent to the below-listed parties of record Via Email as shown below.

/s/ <u>Carrolyn J Moebius.</u>

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