

ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY PROJECT
IOWA CITIZENS FOR COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT
SIERRA CLUB
ASSOCIATION OF IRRITATED RESIDENTS

**CITIZEN, FARM GROUPS CHALLENGE EPA FACTORY FARM
“SWEETHEART DEAL” PERMITTING UNCHECKED POLLUTION**

WASHINGTON, D.C.///June 1, 2005///Four organizations – the Environmental Integrity Project, Sierra Club, Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement and the Association of Irrigated Residents – released the following statement today:

“Acting on behalf of tens of thousands of family farmers and rural residents, our organizations have been forced to file a lawsuit in the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals to challenge the sweetheart deal under which the Bush administration has abandoned America’s rural communities, leaving them to suffer dangerous factory farm pollution without any hope of relief.

The lawsuit filed on May 26, 2005 challenges the deal struck between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the livestock industry allowing factory farms across the country to continue polluting the air without threat of prosecution by EPA, in exchange for a commitment from a handful of concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) to study the problem for a number of years.

The agreement with the meat and milk industry was drafted without consulting those who suffer from the pollution caused by large livestock operations, and with only minimal input from the scientific and environmental communities. We object to the sweetheart deal because of the sweeping nature of the purported liability shield, the scientific flaws in the monitoring program, and the lack of public participation in the process to date among other concerns.

The deal with the livestock industry will put many communities at risk. The American Public Health Association and the National Academy of Sciences have stated that pollution from massive animal factories jeopardizes public health in rural communities across the nation. Bearing no resemblance to the traditional family farm, these facilities pack thousands of animals into small spaces, produce as much waste as a small city, and spew toxic gases and other pollutants into the air. Livestock production is the single largest contributor of ammonia gas release in the United States (ammonia is both a toxic gas and a fine particulate matter precursor), and giant animal factories also emit hydrogen sulfide, volatile organic compounds (smog precursors), and fine dust particles—all of which are linked to respiratory illness—in dangerous quantities.

In addition to jeopardizing public health and the environment, the Bush administration's deal undermines efforts by states like Iowa and California that are working to address the CAFO air pollution problem. EPA’s notice of the agreement, published in the Federal Register on January 31, 2005, purports to strip citizens of their rights to hold polluters accountable under federal clean air laws.

This agreement is just wrong in so many ways. Family farmers and rural residents are suffering the impacts of factory farm air pollution. We need the EPA to protect our health and well being instead of giving factory farms immunity.

EPA should use its existing legal authority to gather emissions data and to enforce clean air laws. Furthermore, there should be a moratorium on new or expanding CAFOs until EPA can gather the emissions data it says it still needs to quantify harmful air emissions from factory farms.

We are open to working with all stakeholders to lessen air pollution from factory farms. However, we were forced to file the lawsuit to preserve our legal options because the Bush administration has failed to make meaningful progress in cleaning up factory farm pollution.”

The statement was issued on behalf of the four groups and their members by: Michele Merkel, senior counsel, Environmental Integrity Project; Barclay Rogers, attorney, Sierra Club; Mark McDowell, independent hog farmer and member of Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement; and Tom Frantz, president, Association of Irrigated Residents.

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