

Donald Silawsky  
Office of Petroleum Reserves  
U.S. Dept. of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20585-0301

SUBJECT: SCOPING FOR THE STRATEGIC PETROLEUM  
RESERVE, RICHTON SALT DOMES, SUPPLEMENTAL EIS

April 10, 2008

Dear Mr Silawsky:

I serve as Alderman At Large for the City of Ocean Springs. My constituents have asked me to speak on their behalf in opposition to the present plans for the Richton Salt Dome. The City of Ocean Springs recently passed a resolution asking for changes to the plan.

I believe that if water is used from the Pascagoula River to flush out the salt domes that irreversible harm will be done to the Pascagoula River System. In addition, I believe that the Mississippi Sound will suffer irreversible environmental harm if the salt slurry is piped into the Sound (or several miles south of Horn Island).

Specific questions include:

- 1) Given that many Southern Mississippi streams are already below normal water flows, what happens if there is a drought in the Pascagoula River? Will the DOE stop withdrawing water? Who will get the water if there is a low flow, the DOE or industry in Jackson County that currently uses river water?
- 2) What impact will the reduced water flow of the Pascagoula River have on the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and National Wildlife Reserve which are both already experiencing problems due to high salinity?
- 3) Why hasn't the Department of Energy done a study or been willing to fund a study to determine the minimum in-stream flow requirements that are necessary to protect the fish, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and plants that currently live in or depend on water flows of the Pascagoula River?
- 4) Fisheries experts are saying that this kind of project will have an impact on endangered species that live in the Pascagoula River, including the gulf sturgeon, yellow blotched map turtle, and pearl darter. Will the DOE enforce the Pascagoula River designation as habitat for endangered species and protect the primary habitat for Gulf sturgeon? How?
- 5) How does the DOE intend to mitigate for over 1,600 acres of wetlands that would be destroyed? Where will they find mitigation sites in the Pascagoula River Basin?

How will they address the fact that they will be destroying protected wetlands that are already part of a mitigation bank run by the Nature Conservancy?

6) What is the potential for pipeline spills due to terrorism or accidents such as a runaway log truck? How will the DOE protect the hundreds of miles of pipeline?

I look forward to hearing your responses to these questions.

Thank you for the opportunity to express these concerns,

Julia Weaver  
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