

Speech

Contrary to what is often said, CCSA is not simply a group which has only negative comments about landfills. We know that they are necessary. Our many members have thought very hard and agree with Conecuh Woods that some particular landfills have some positive attributes. But, not all, or even most.

Being in the financial sector, I will talk today about the financial aspect of the county's part in this proposed landfill. Please understand that my discussion concerns only this point, and not the other issues and questions. However, as a member of CCSA, you already know that I am opposed to this landfill.

First, let's all understand that getting an approved application for a landfill is financially very valuable to the holder of the application. And let's understand that if a county approves an application for a permit that almost always results in a permit being approved- ADEM approves more than 95% of the applications that are submitted to them. Since the application and the permit are so valuable, who should own them?

The landfill developers have shown pictures and videos, and have discussed a landfill in Riverview Michigan and numerous landfills in Florida. We agree that there are some positive aspects which these landfills provide to their cities and counties. I will discuss one financial aspect which is common to all of these landfills and for which CCSA is supportive.

It has been implied by the landfill developers that the county should not hold the permit since by doing so the county bears the financial burden and risks which accompany the permit. So, why do the Riverview Michigan and the Florida landfills highlighted by them own their permits? Could it be that by owning the permit Riverview Michigan and the Florida landfills make much more money from their landfill and have much more control over their landfill? Could the often-stated concern of the landfill supporters for the county's poor, its roads, and its debt be just camouflage for the developers's greed to own the permit themselves?

So, regarding permits, let me provide you documentation about the ownership of Timberlands' permit. This will show that the Escambia County Environmental Corporation (Fob James's company) received the landfill permit in June, 1993. Then in August, two months later, Fob James entered into an agreement for BFI to be the landfill operator. BFI is also responsible for closure and post-closure financial liability for **ALL** landfill costs. A separate letter of the "Financial Assurance for Timberlands" confirms this. Yet, the permit is still owned by Fob James. Now we know that since he holds the permit, he receives very large financial gains from this, each and every year- year in and year out with no financial costs or risks. Escambia County made a significant financial mistake by allowing someone other than the county to own the permit. If the county does decide on a landfill, we should not make the same mistake with Conecuh Woods.

CCSA is still researching the question of how much the James family has made from their permit. If we are successful in finding this information, we will share it with you. We would expect that it is larger than the host fee received by Escambia County. But, whatever the income to the James family, Escambia County's decision to allow someone else to own the permit was the wrong decision. The permit is valuable financially and it is valuable by allowing firm control of the landfill.

On another point related to finances, I want to briefly discuss the county's budget. As many of you know, the county has had deficit spending for years. It has been able to balance its income with its expenses only by increasing its loans, year after year.

The landfill developers have said that "... it will not cost the taxpayers a dime" for this landfill. It is partially true that that it won't cost us a dime. The whole truth is that if the developers or investors have the permit for a new landfill, it will cost the county a very, very large amount of money.

It has been suggested by the landfill developers that our county needs a nationwide landfill so that it can balance its budget and pay its loans. I find this statement to be quite offensive. We do not need "outsiders" coming in and "telling" us how we need to manage our

county. My question is why Conecuh County needs a new landfill now if it didn't need one before the developer came to town! Conecuh Woods stated that this opportunity just kind of fell in their laps so that tells me that Conecuh County was not actively seeking a company to build a landfill. Conecuh County would be better served to use our resources to attract new businesses that would not pollute our water and air supply. We can live without a lot of things but water and air are both essential for our survival. Is it possible that if we do approve the landfill for Conecuh County that this will be the only new business that we will ever get **because** of the landfill?

In closing, let me say that CCSA does not want to fight with our county government. We want to help make Conecuh County a place to be proud of and a safe place to live and raise our families. We are opposed to a gargantuan landfill in our county and we most definitely do not want to make the people involved with Conecuh Woods wealthy off of our precious resources. They have nothing to lose and everything to gain – we have nothing much to gain and everything to lose. What will it profit us to amass a fortune and not have the health to spend it? Please give this some serious thought. Thank you.