

JUST A COUNTRY BOY'S VIEW

We that live in rural areas, do so by choice. Many have family roots dating back to the time when this area was occupied by the American Indians. Many can trace their roots back to the time of original settlement when this was the American frontier. Others have traveled the world, lived in urban areas, and discovered they prefer the uncluttered, unencumbered, slower pace of the country life. Many, have dedicated their careers, and some their lives, defending our right to pursue the American dream. We accept the facts of lower wages and the inconveniences imposed by distance, time and travel necessary to perform the chores of daily living. It's where we want to be. It is home to our hearts.

Few things are more appealing to me, than arising in the morning, walking outside with a cup of coffee in hand, smelling and feeling the clean fresh air, and watching the faint glimmer of light appear in the east, and develop into full day light. Just as the light appears the faint chirping of birds and the rustling of leaves increasing in crescendo tells me the world is awake and alive, and I am part of it. These holding companies and big money groups are inanimate. They have no such roots. They are incapable of experiencing the feelings and emotions we have for this land; consequently, they see it only as place to dig a hole, fill it with garbage, cover it with dirt, pick up their money, and move on. They see it as place no one lives. A place they can abuse, exploit, and destroy to make money.

You know, we should have seen this coming. We should have realized we're sitting on the bull's eye of these opportunists. Look at Atmore...two prisons. Look at the dump in Escambia County...adjacent to our county line. And now they want it in our back yards. In fact all of southwest Alabama is in the bull's eye.

In the schools and colleges where rural economics is taught, the students are taught to locate dumps and prisons in rural undeveloped areas, but this is dead wrong. What about the people that live there? Are they second class citizens? Do they have less right in the pursuit of their happiness? I think not. I resent that perception.

Trash and garbage is a problem, especially in urban areas, and it will continue to escalate. It is my contention that it is the responsibility of the governing authorities to provide disposal services just as the fire and police services, that solves the problem locally and not just dump it in someone else's yard. Necessity has long been proven to be the father of invention, and until we slam this door, close this avenue to landfills, there will never be meaningful efforts to dispose of garbage at its source in an environmentally friendly fashion.

You and I know that at its inception this proposed dump is money making endeavor. I believe it is designed to be used to clean up New Orleans and the gulf coast. I am deeply sympathetic and have great empathy for those who have suffered and lost so much, but two wrongs do not equal one right. After that degree of devastation it is no longer "household trash". This is potentially some of the most hazardous material around. They will accept any garbage that is freight paid.

There is no guarantee it will operate as they proclaim. There is no guarantee they will be around when it ends to restore the land. In fact, I rather expect it will change hands several times and the last owner will be a "post office box company", a hidden subsidy of the previous owner or owners whose sole objective will be to make a play at running the dump, but ultimately declaring they are bankrupt.

The proposed dump site is at the origins of the Little Escambia River and Run Naked Swamp and that places everything from Conecuh County to Pensacola, Florida at risk for contamination. I have studied the soil maps of the area published by the United States Department of Agriculture and approximately 30% of the area is wet lands according to Corp of Engineer's definition, which is totally unacceptable for sanitary disposal. Approximately 60% consists of two soil types whose best ratings for the four processes of sanitary disposal are "moderate" and "poor". The remaining 3 to 10% consists of small islands of three different soil types that are no better than the wet lands. This is asking for devastating disaster.

In closing, let me say. I am opposed to this dump in Conecuh County, in fact, any dump of this magnitude anywhere, and to landfill dumps in general. I pray you, our Commissioners, will have the strength, the courage, and the conviction to soundly reject this proposed dump and a threat to our way of life.

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