

For Immediate Release: March 17, 2017

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Riverkeeper Asks ADEM and Uniontown to Stop Catfish Processor from Disrupting Sewage Lagoon

Uniontown, AL – Black Warrior Riverkeeper is asking the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (“ADEM”) and the City of Uniontown to stop allowing local catfish processor Harvest Select to disrupt the sewage treatment process at the failing Uniontown Lagoon and its Sprayfield #1. Harvest Select, owned by Paul W. Bryant, Jr.’s Greene Group, Inc., discharges hundreds of thousands of gallons of processing wastewater into the Uniontown Lagoon every day.

The Uniontown Lagoon has the capacity to treat 525,000 gallons of wastewater per day. At times, the catfish processor has discharged that much wastewater in a single day, leaving the lagoon no capacity to hold or properly treat Uniontown’s wastewater. Chronic overflows from the Uniontown Lagoon and Sprayfield #1 into area streams are direct violations of the Clean Water Act which put the health of locals, livestock, wildlife, and downstream users in jeopardy.

Despite the fact that ADEM and Uniontown have been in litigation for years over the lagoon’s failures, neither the city nor ADEM has ever sought to limit the large volume of wastewater Harvest Select discharges into the Uniontown Lagoon. Recently, ADEM drafted a renewal of Harvest Select’s wastewater permit and, once again, did not seek to limit the amount of wastewater the catfish processor sends to the lagoon. In addition, Uniontown did not change Harvest Select’s pretreatment requirements, even though the high concentrations of certain pollutants often present in the waste have similarly challenged the Uniontown Lagoon.

According to the letter, ADEM and Uniontown are missing an important opportunity to address some of the underlying causes of the Uniontown Lagoon’s failures and lessen the burden of pollution on local residents, the environment, and all who fish, swim, and recreate downstream. The letter calls on ADEM to revise the draft permit with more stringent limitations and for Uniontown to strengthen Harvest Select’s pretreatment standards.

Uniontown has been plagued by chronic raw sewage overflows and treatment failures at the lagoon and its sprayfield. Conservation groups have been fighting to get ADEM and Uniontown to address these and other pollution or public health issues for years, so far with little response from the City of Uniontown or ADEM.

To read the letter, [click here](#).

To share this release on social media, use this link: blackwarriorriver.org/harvest-select/

To view a high-resolution photo of the Harvest Select catfish processing facility owned by Paul W. Bryant Jr.’s Greene Group, Inc, [click here](#). Photo by Nelson Brooke. Flight by SouthWings.

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Black Warrior Riverkeeper is a citizen-based nonprofit organization whose mission is to protect and restore the Black Warrior River and its tributaries. We are advocates for clean water, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities throughout the Black Warrior River watershed. To learn more, visit BlackWarriorRiver.org.