

February 9, 2001

Mr. Doug Bellomo, PE  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street SW  
Room 423  
Washington, DC 20472-0001

Dear Mr. Bellomo:

Please find attached to this note a copy of correspondence to selected members of the Richland County Council (South Carolina) concerning the Congaree River levee project south of Columbia, South Carolina. A copy was sent to all members except for the District 10 representative who has expressed unconditional support for the project.

I believe you made a request that this type of correspondence be forwarded to you for your records as prescribed on your web page concerning this project.

As you may have done in the past with other correspondence, if the need to publish arises, please delete any names, addresses, and/or references to my authorship of all letters. If you need permission to publish this document in a specific project, please feel free to contact me at any of the addresses listed below.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted address]

Columbia, SC 29260 [Redacted]

Enclosures

February 9, 2001

Selected Members  
Richland County Council  
PO Box 192  
Columbia, South Carolina 29202-0192

Dear Sir or Madam:

As residents of Richland County we wish to express opposition to the so-called Green Diamond Project south of Columbia, and hereby petition you to vote against it in its current form. It is certainly the benchmark by which other developers will consider future projects.

We are not opposed to growth; we are opposed to things that do not make sense to us environmentally and fiscally. Agents of FEMA and other federal agencies have in the past expressed a desire to remove residents and businesses from flood-prone areas and to prevent future development of existing flood plains. The liabilities are simply too great, and the burden on the taxpayer is huge, ESPECIALLY since the federal government (i.e. the taxpayer) is the only current supplier of flood insurance underwriting.

Please, if you would, respond to the following:

1. Even if you build one thousand foot levees that are a quarter mile thick and made of reinforced waterproof concrete that will protect the project forever, where will the water go that would have flooded the Richland side today? Will the water back-up to Columbia? As of right now, I know of no study concerning this matter. Please inform me if one exists.
2. Will the owners of the unprotected land or the Federal Government Flood Insurance Program sue Richland County to recoup damages caused by flooding on the Lexington side of the river or upstream that might not occur had no levee been built? If so, how much liability is involved?
3. If rain comes such that flooding does occur in that section of the river adjacent to the new levees, who will pay for the pumps or the system that directs the rain water from behind the levees -- if required -- into the swollen river? Who will pay for the maintenance of these pumps and associated systems?
4. If the City of Columbia increases the rate of flow of run-off water during rains into the river (as they may propose with the request for drainage improvements), how much impact will this have on the current flood models?
5. Where in the charter, constitution, or the Code does it indicate that Richland County is in the business of levee construction and/or maintenance? Where is the fee structure for such maintenance for those protected by the levee?
6. Where in the charter, constitution or the Code is Richland County's role defined as underwriter for substantial flood loss in general?
7. Who will pay for road improvements and connections to the sewer and water systems?
8. Who will pay for the exit from I-77 and the added wear on the roads from additional traffic?
9. Who will pay for highway repair when too many cars arrive, the near-earth ozone levels exceed EPA standards, and federal funding is cut?
10. Who will be responsible for the creation, funding, and implementation of a plan for any or all evacuations in case of abnormal flooding and/or levee failure?
11. How many years will pass until the project repays taxpayers' investments?
12. Have any studies been conducted which show the impact of a Lake Murray Dam failure? Such a failure may occur from tornadoes, plane crashes, earthquakes, and terrorist attacks. Does the FEMA selected flow rate of 292k CFS take into account this or any other dam failure? Nothing is mentioned in the latest study.

With some of the bumpiest roads I've ever driven on, the slowest stoplight systems in existence, and the crumbling infrastructure that leaks water every time the temperature goes below freezing, what business do

we have approving more liability? I have found no documents that in any way reflect a positive tax flow from this project, perhaps because of the initial massive cost.

Let's encourage the developer to put a water park there, similar to Whitewater in Marietta, Georgia, and avoid huge liabilities. Develop kayaking, water skiing, swimming, and perhaps golf, tennis, or horse and jogging trails, but build nothing that will cause great liabilities in a flood.

The past few years have been utterly dry as a result of a ten-year, El Niño-like cycle in the Pacific Ocean. We are currently in year four. Surely this pattern will reverse and we will see the reemergence of wetlands and flooding.

Please look to the future and do not allow the developers to use taxpayers' money for short-term gains. Impact fees must be collected to cover all initial costs.

One needs only to look to the west to Gwinnett, Fulton, DeKalb, Cobb, and Forsyth Counties in Georgia to see how overdevelopment affects the quality of life. Many large companies have plans to relocate or have already relocated elsewhere as a result.

Because of what is at stake, we are organizing an additional group to litigate in case the decision goes in favor of this project. We may or may not join with other opposition groups, as our motivation concerns quality of life, monetary liability, cost to the taxpayer, and future growth.

If you require distribution of this document, please delete all names, addresses, and other identifying marks, below. If you require a soft copy, I will be happy to provide it.

Thank you for your careful attention to this matter and for your reply.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
Citizens for Sensible Development  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Columbia, SC 29260-[REDACTED]

CC: Selected Members of Richland County Council  
Mr. Doug Bellomo, PE FEMA