



Commonwealth of Virginia

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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November 15, 2021

Rev. Dr. Samuel Weddington
First Presbyterian Church of Bristol, TN
701 Florida Avenue
Bristol, TN 37620
(423) 764-7176

Dear Rev. Dr. Samuel Weddington and co-signature members,

Thank you for your letter regarding the Bristol Landfill, as well as your leadership within the community on this important topic.

As you are aware, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VADEQ) has issued three (3) notices of alleged violations to the City of Bristol, Virginia (City) for the landfill, including allegations regarding temperature and operational standard issues, and is working with the City to resolve these issues as part of that on-going enforcement action. We appreciate your concerns and will continue to be open about discussing the issues associated with the Bristol area landfill, participate in any way we can to add value to the conversation, and help rectify the situation as quickly as possible, and within our authority to do so.

As an effort to ultimately reduce odors and return to compliance, the City has now completed the drilling of twenty-one (21) new landfill gas collection (LFG) wells, and are currently in the process of connecting those new LFG wells into the existing LFG system to capture, transport, and destroy landfill gas from strategic areas of the landfill. Unfortunately, in the near-term, with such activity and weather patterns this time of year, there will likely be an increase in odors until all of the LFG enhancements are complete and fully functioning (currently estimated to be mid-December 2021).

Additionally, I appreciate and share your concerns with the elevated landfill temperatures. During the drilling of the new LFG wells, VADEQ staff were onsite, and noted very wet conditions within the new LFG wells. Plastic components removed from the new well drillings were observed to have maintained their original color and appeared unaffected by any heat. Nevertheless, elevated temperatures can be a basis of concern. Therefore, these 21 new LFG well enhancements, along with the existing LFG well system, are imperative to improve landfill

gas capture, reduce odors, and better inform this elevated temperature question. Again, these new LFG wells were strategically placed, and data from these LFG enhancements will inform any future landfill requirements or future paths forward as we continue to work within our authority to resolve these issues.

VADEQ has been very active with the ambient air sampling efforts within the community, on both sides of the state line, in conjunction with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). As you know, community ambient air studies were conducted during the Summer of 2021, and again in October 2021. The latter study was with direct input from community members within the most affected areas of Bristol. We understand that ATSDR is still evaluating those studies, and we hope to know more soon.

In the meantime, I can assure you that VADEQ takes these matters very seriously. VADEQ is undertaking formal enforcement actions at this time, and although revocation of permits is permissible, the conditions of this operation has not yet reached that stage. It is the Department's position that all regulated entities must have due process, and an opportunity to return to compliance, prior to revocation proceedings. Therefore, at this time, the City is working to resolve the alleged non-compliance, and will be required to control and operate their facility in accordance with their permits and other applicable regulations within VADEQ's authority.

I understand there is a virtual meeting scheduled, on November 16, 2021, between leaders of *HOPE for Bristol* and VADEQ, and I encourage these continued communications with the community, to ensure information exchange, as we proceed.

Again, thank you for sharing your concerns and your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,



David K. Paylor

Director

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

cc: Rev. Dr. Kris Aaron, Senior Pastor, First Baptist of Bristol, VA
Rev. Jackie Nophlin, Pastor, Household Faith Community Church, Bristol, VA
C. Donald Evans, PhD., PE
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Joel Kellogg
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Randy Eads, City Manager and Attorney, Bristol, VA
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