

FROM: Cherokee Coalition for Responsible Growth (CCRG)

Dear Cherokee County Residents,

We face an issue in Cherokee County that could forever change this County. A **Sewer Plant** is proposed to provide sewer service to the North East Region of Cherokee County and areas of both Forsyth and Fulton Counties.

What does that mean?

Cherokee County Water and Sewerage Authority (CCWSA) has requested a permit from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to construct a **\$25 Million sewage treatment plant** on Cokers Chapel Road, off E. Cherokee Drive. This plant would provide sewer service to the North East region of Cherokee County (rural areas of Ball Ground, Mica, Free Home, Lathemtown, Macedonia, Union Hill and Buffington) and potentially Forsyth and Fulton Counties. According to the Metro North Georgia Water Planning District Plan, **this plant will also provide treatment for wastewater produced in the Etowah Basin portions of Forsyth and Fulton Counties** to effect regionalization. They will pipe raw sewerage from both of these counties all over NE Cherokee County to be brought to the plant off E.Cherokee Drive.

Why should you be concerned?

Cherokee County is struggling to serve its existing residents. Sewer could bring more population at a faster rate than what is currently planned through the year 2030, resulting in the following:

- ❖ 40,000 new, unplanned homes, town homes, condos and apartments to this area which is designated as low density through the year 2030;
- ❖ 30,000 more students to our already overcrowded school system;
- ❖ 80,000 additional cars to our roads;
- ❖ Increased property taxes to pay for the infrastructure to support all of this unplanned growth;
- ❖ Increased water & sewer rates to pay for this plant.

Do we have enough water for this explosive growth?

Are we willing to let Cherokee County become the next Cobb or Gwinnett?

What Can You Do?

You have a chance to help stop this plant from further polluting our water and becoming a springboard to unbridled growth, but only if you act by February 20th, 2008.

1. Sign the enclosed letter and print your name and address. Please have all members of your family, 18 years of age or older, sign this. We need to have all letters returned to us so we can deliver them to EPD at the meeting. **Please return signed letters by e-mail, fax or mail to:**

To Scan & E-Mail: flory@tds.net

Fax to: 770-735-1774

Mail to: CCRG at: 6175 Hickory Flat Hwy., Suite 110-324, Canton, Georgia 30115

2. Plan to Attend the Public Hearing. It will be held at Canton City Hall, located at 151 Elizabeth Street, Downtown Canton, 30114, on Tuesday, March 18th. At 7:00 PM

Directions: Riverstone Pkwy (Exit 20 on I575) Left turn onto Waleska Street which becomes W. Main Street. Turn right onto S.Church Street, and then turn right onto Elizabeth Street. Parking in rear and all along side streets.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & INFORMATION

If you would like to receive information & updates on this issue, please send email to lflory@tds.net. We will send you an email to remind you of the meeting, and we will let you know the final outcome once EPD announces their decision. We will also have this information posted on www.savecherokee.net & www.cherokeecrg.com

We are not opposed to sewer; however we oppose this plant for the following reasons (All information was obtained from open records requests to EPD, and CCWSA including the authority's financial statements.):

1. We oppose the construction of \$25 million in unnecessary infrastructure that is not compatible with the Cherokee Land Use Plan or Transportation Plan. The Land Use Plan designates this area as Rural, Agricultural, and Country Estates. There are no plans or budgets for roads, sheriff or fire services, schools, or other infrastructure required by high-density development. Cherokee County taxes would be raised to fund these unplanned projects.

2. We oppose the use of public money to increase the profit of special interest groups. The 2007 Financial Report of Cherokee Water and Sewer Authority specifically states that new sewage treatment plants are planned to give landowners the option of developing their property at higher densities. Citizens should not fund providing more development options to landowners.

3. We oppose the construction of \$25 million in unnecessary infrastructure in a time when there is no evidence of housing demand in the area. Although EPD is under Federal mandate not to issue any permits that would further pollute already impaired waters, EPD is opening back doors especially for developers in Cherokee. CCWSA has convinced EPD that developers are ready and waiting to develop as many as 40,000 new homes in this area over the next 10 years. There is no evidence of this with countless subdivisions at a complete standstill and the Metro Atlanta area currently with a 40-month supply of homes.

4. We oppose to the construction of \$25 million in unnecessary infrastructure that would cost Cherokee citizens continued increases in water and sewer rates as well as payments for debt service. Cherokee Water and Sewer has a track record of increasing rates far beyond need to cover expenses in order to fund infrastructure for developers. Current bond debt is **196.3 MILLION DOLLARS**, for which we will pay an additional 200.9 **MILLION DOLLARS** in interest charges. **A new \$25 million plant will increase debt and interest even more.**

For years 2006 and 2007 we received a total increase of 20.2% for water usage.
For years 2006 and 2007 we received a total increase of 28.3% for wastewater usage.

5. We oppose the ability of non-elected CCWSA board members to circumvent and overrule the land use planning of elected County officials. CCWSA is a public, not for profit authority. They are not governed by our Board of Commissioners. Cherokee consumers are not able to elect the people who sit on the board of directors with the exception of our County Commission Chairman. This non-elected board is able to make decisions that affect the future of our County and we, **as consumers have no recourse except to pick up the bill.** The non-elected board of Cherokee Water & Sewer Authority has authorized more debt than Cherokee County and all cities combined. **Their plans to add two additional sewer plants would increase their debt to approximately 286.3 MILLION DOLLARS.** This is a debt paid by every water & sewer user in the County.

6. We object to the construction of \$25 million in unnecessary infrastructure when CCWSA is not improving their abysmal record of raw sewage spills. In 2006, CCWSA had 13 reported incidents of spills which sent 186,000 gallons of raw sewage to the Etowah River and Lake Allatoona. This equates to 7.8 gallons of raw sewerage dumped into our lake from each Cherokee home connected to sewer. As CCWSA is only required to report to EPD when they have spills of raw sewerage over 10,000 gallons – the actual total of raw sewage spills is most likely far greater.

7. We object to the construction of \$25 million in unnecessary infrastructure when we do not have water resource infrastructure to provide adequate water to the citizens who are here or to protect our economy.
