

CARE
Community Association for
Restoration
of the Environment

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2185 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
237 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Shimkus
Chairman
Committee on Energy & Commerce,
Subcommittee on the Environment
U.S. House of Representatives
2217 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Paul Tonko
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy & Commerce, Subcommittee on the Environment
U.S. House of Representatives
2463 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Walden, Ranking Member Pallone, Subcommittee Chairman Shimkus,
and Subcommittee Ranking Member Tonko:

I am 81 years young, have lived in the Yakima Valley of Washington for over 60 years, obtained my college degree while raising five children, taught school, and raised cherries and apples with my husband (now passed) for that whole time. The big dairies started moving into the Lower Yakima Valley in the late 1970's. They have since continued to expand, outstripping the ability of the land to handle the massive amounts of manure produced by the back end of the milk business. The big dairies use the land to get rid of their manure by overapplying to fields and putting their liquids in huge holes in the ground that leak to the groundwater we depend upon for life.

I am the president of Community Association for Restoration of the Environment (CARE) and have been since 1997. We have fought to protect our quality of life since before that time. We have about 80,00 dairy cows in a hundred square mile area. The federal and state agencies charged with protecting people and the environment have

failed us miserably. The only thing that has been effective in changing the dairies' practices over the years has been citizen enforcement of the Clean Water Act, and more recently, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). Now that we have used RCRA as it was originally intended, our own Congressman Newhouse seeks to take away one of the few tools we have to protect ourselves from the onslaught of manure pollution.

Over the years the dairymen have threatened me personally, run me off the road for exercising my right to challenge their unlawful practices, pressured employers to fire family members of mine, and tried to make life even more miserable for those us who speak out against their atrocious behavior. I have testified in federal courts and before national commissions about these abuses. Through it all, our only successes have been through the federal environmental statutes. We have tried to sit down with the dairy industry over the years, but they have, until the recent RCRA enforcement successes, only dug in their heels further. The problem is far from solved.

We expect that you will hear testimony from the Washington State Dairy Federation about how RCRA is being misused by us poor little citizens. Well let me tell you: if you take away our most effective means of holding these massive concentrated animal feeding operations accountable for their irresponsible behavior, then we have no hope of ever recovering the quality of life we once enjoyed in this beautiful farmland and in the scores of similar rural communities I have visited over the past few decades.

I grew up on dairy farm in Missouri, so I know what a farm smells like. These CAFOs are industrial operations, not the farms that we once knew. It is unfair and un-American that they are able to dump their manure on the community, poison our drinking water, and go on as if nothing is wrong. Any other industry doing this would be told to stop and if they couldn't, they'd be shut down. Magically resolving that manure is not manure WILL NOT solve this problem and taking what little control the public has over this filthy problem will not improve the situation.

After all these years and all the evidence we the people have collected, we still have hope that the government will protect us from getting dumped on. Please don't dash any remaining hope we might still have by taking away one of the few opportunities we have to try to protect ourselves while the bureaucracy continues to willfully ignore us. Please kick this bill into the trash heap where it belongs and send a message that people still matter.

Respectfully Yours,


Helen Reddout

President, Community Association for Restoration of the
Environment