
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: BOYD
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: DEQ-RELATED 1-ON-1 ISSUES
DATE: 8/18/2003
CC: FILE

1. Rebecca Comeaux has a problem with DEQ and the Corps of Engineers. (NOTE: Her husband has a separate issue with the Department of Health. Wanda is working on that issue.) According to Comeaux, the Corps issued a permit to a gentleman to build a 2-span bridge across a creek on her property without her knowledge. The man has only built 1 ½ spans. The work has caused severe erosion and flooding. Comeaux contends she has lost 8 acres because the creek is dammed up from the incomplete work. She provided the videotape to show the damage to her property.

The Governor explained that we have nothing to do with the Corps, as it is federal. He told her that we'd talk to Gene Taylor's office and then to DEQ. After her time with the Governor, she said that she had spoken to Chris Lagard in Taylor's office and to Richard Baker and Mike McNair at the Corps.

2. Wallace Clifford has a problem with DEQ and his being re-permitted for tire recycling on the Coast. His current permit expires in February 2004. Clifford says that DEQ doesn't want to permit him again based on past history, which Clifford admitted he had done some wrong and some right things. He said that Mark Williams of DEQ called him into DEQ's Permit Board last month and the Board took the matter under advisement. According to Clifford, he has the support of Mayor Ken Combs, the Harrison County Permit Board and Phil Bass with DEQ. Clifford is concerned that legislation allows his permit to be revoked without his having due process.

The Governor told Clifford that we'd talk to Phil Bass and Mark Williams and that we'd recommend that we all work together in a reasonable way.

3. Sheri Jones et al also has a problem with DEQ. Jones, who apparently came to July's 1-on-1 with the same problem (see documents provided at last month's; According to Eva, Isaac said that the matter has been referred to DEQ), brought 2 others with him this month and they actually presented 3 cases to the Governor. My notes are real scribbled on this b/c they were all talking about their independent problems at the same time:

James Rogers (1001 E. 7th St., Hattiesburg, 39401; 601-584-6111 (h), 601-606-3598)) contends that Kerr McGhee is doing work around 3 Hattiesburg apartment complexes that residents should have been relocated from before the work began. Rogers contends that the project overview given at a hearing said that work would be done

one the north side of a site and the work is actually being done on the south side by the apartment complexes (see color pictures provided by Rogers). He says that piles of dirt are being left that kids are playing on and that the dirt contains creosote. He wants the Governor to have the digging stopped, especially in the neighborhood areas or to have the residents relocated. Rogers says that DEQ won't come out and conduct a soil sample because they know it is contaminated and they don't want to have to fool with it.

Yvonne McSwain Powell (193 Stuckey Road, Columbia, 39429; 601-731-1898 (h)) contends that a well in Richton has poisoned citizens there for years and MDEQ is aware of the problem. She requested that the Governor bring doctors into the state and the area that are capable of quickly diagnosing the diseases of the citizens. She specifically requested a meeting with DEQ (especially Phil Bass who she has problems with) and she wants to know if any senators or representatives sit on a DEQ oversight committee.

The Governor said that he would pull DEQ in and get the straight story. He also said that he would work with Dr. Ami, the Health Department and UMMC to address the physician problem.

It appears as if Mr. Jones and others in the area have formed the Mississippi Community Environmental Support Team to bring attention to possible environmental issues. All 3 persons at 1-on-1 mentioned that they are ready to march on the capitol or to chain themselves to equipment at the apartment site in order to bring the needed attention to problems that they contend DEQ is ignoring. I explained that they had taken the proper course of action by coming to the Governor and requested that they give us some time. I think you could ask Chisolm to meet with the people to listen to them. He could then explain DEQ's position on the different situations.