

~ CALL TO ACTION ~

URGENT NOTICE

to Area Residents Regarding a Proposed Infrastructure Project

Loudoun County Proposed Interconnected Water/Wastewater System
between Waterford and Paeonian Springs

Dear Clarkes Gap Road Residents,

We hope this letter finds you well. We are writing to inform you that Loudoun County is proposing an interconnected water/wastewater system between Waterford and Paeonian Springs (“Project”). Although the primary goal of the Project is to expand the water and wastewater availability in certain areas, it will also likely result in significant disruption and increased real estate development in Waterford, Paeonian Springs, and all areas in between.

Project Overview

The County’s proposed community **water** system includes: (a) drilling up to five community wells along Clarkes Gap Road (“CGR”); (b) installation of a watermain along CGR; (c) construction of a water storage facility along CGR; (d) construction of a water treatment facility along CGR; and (e) construction of a booster pumping station near Paeonian Springs.

The County’s proposed community **wastewater** system involves: (a) expansion of Waterford’s existing wastewater treatment plant; and (b) installation of two wastewater mains between Waterford and Paeonian Springs along CGR.

The County’s estimated price tag for this Project is **\$60,200,000**, which, if completed, would serve a total of **345** parcels within Waterford and Paeonian Springs (approximately **\$174,000** per parcel). An illustration of the proposed Project is attached as Attachment #1.

In order to effectuate this Project, the County will need to acquire land along CGR to: (a) drill at least five community wells; (b) build access roads to the community wells; (c) install a watermain; (d) construct a water storage facility; (e) construct a water treatment facility; and (f) install two wastewater mains.

On November 19, 2024, the County’s Board of Supervisors approved a \$4 million request by the Department of General Services (“DGS”) to, among other things, acquire land or obtain land use approvals along CGR for the installation of the proposed Project. The County may use its power of eminent domain to obtain the necessary property for this proposed Project if CGR property owners do not voluntarily sell their property to the County.

Proposed Geophysical Study Areas

The success of the proposed Project rests entirely on the County's ability to find sufficient water along CGR to send to Waterford and Paeonian Springs. The County has identified five areas where it believes sufficient groundwater may exist. The County refers to these areas as "PSDs." There are four PSDs along CGR and one PSD adjacent to Paeonian Springs. A map of the PSDs is attached to this Notice as Attachment #2.

If you own property within one of these PSDs, it is likely that the County will seek to enter your property (***with or without your consent***) to determine whether sufficient groundwater exists to support the proposed Project. The viability of the proposed Project rests solely on the County's ability to locate a water source of at least 596,160 gallons per day (gpd). This flow rate is equivalent to an Olympic-size swimming pool per day being extracted from the CGR area and being pumped to Waterford and Paeonian Springs.

Impact on Clarkes Gap Road

As set forth above, the properties along CGR will be most affected by the proposed Project.

First, the County has stated that ***traffic will be stopped or severely limited*** on CGR during the estimated ***eight-month*** duration of construction. A current schedule for the Project is attached as Attachment #3.

Second, in order to install the watermain and two wastewater mains – which must be separated both vertically and horizontally – along CGR, ***it is likely that the trees along at least one side of CGR will need to be removed***. VDOT has stated that it will ***NOT*** allow these mains to be installed within the CGR pavement area.

Third, the County estimates that it will need to acquire approximately 20 acres of property along CGR to install the proposed Project. This property will be acquired either voluntarily or through ***the County's power of eminent domain***.

Fourth, the County plans to extract at least 596,160 gpd of groundwater from the CGR area, which will likely lower the aquifer in the CGR area and ***may cause adjacent private wells to run dry***.

Last, with ***zero input*** from the CGR residents – the County is taking the position that no one other than the residents of Waterford and Paeonian Springs will be permitted to utilize the proposed community water and wastewater systems. In other words, the CGR residents bear of all the burden and reap none of the benefits of the proposed Project.

Environmental Concerns

It is anticipated that the County's proposed Project will have a substantial impact on the Catoctin Creek, which runs along CGR. In a recent letter, the Catoctin Creek Scenic River Advisory Committee stated that the proposed Project has the potential to: (a) "dry up" sections of the South Fork Catoctin Creek south of Waterford for many months throughout the year; and (b) decimate the health of the South Fork of the Catoctin Creek north of Waterford due to daily wastewater discharges that would likely exceed stream baseflows at times.

Conclusion

The County's proposed Project is fraught with unintended consequences that will change Paeonian Springs, Waterford, and everything in between – ***forever***. Indeed, the issues that the County is attempting to address can be resolved in a more cost-effective and less impactful way, but those solutions do not support the agendas of Loudoun Water, Dewberry, and the County.

Despite the County's rhetoric, once an interconnected community water/wastewater system is installed, real estate development will follow soon thereafter. If you enjoy the rural character of the CGR area, we respectfully ask that you become involved. ***THIS IS A CALL TO ACTION.***

Lack of Public Outreach

If this is the first time you've heard about the County's proposed Project, you are not alone. In fact, the County has done virtually nothing to reach out to the public about this Project.¹ Why? Because the County knows that residents who enjoy the rural nature of western Loudoun County will not support it. Instead, the County has decided to quietly push this Project forward with little to no public outreach.

If you would like more information about the County's proposed Project, send your contact information to: waterfordpreservationgroup@outlook.com.

If you would like to inform the County's Board of Supervisors about your opposition to this Project, we would encourage you to send an e-mail to: BOS@Loudoun.gov.

We are committed to keeping you informed and engaged throughout the process, but you need to take the first step. Your feedback and concerns are important to us, and we encourage you to share them. Thank you for your attention and for your cooperation as we navigate this matter together.

Sincerely,
The Clarkes Gap Road Preservation Group
The Waterford Preservation Group

¹ During the Board of Supervisor's meeting held on November 19, 2024, DGS's Project Manager admitted that DGS could have done a better job keeping the CGR residents better informed about the proposed Project.