Message

From: Bennett, James [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=85A48024939647D7981D5C93688E23F6-JBENNE05]
Sent: 3/28/2018 2:37:05 PM
To: rogers, rick [rogers.rick@epa.gov]
Subject: FW: Mountaire - the saga continues

From: Ides, Nan
Sent: Wednesday, March 28, 2018 10:13 AM
To: Bennett, James <bennett.james@epa.gov>; Cohen, Amy <Cohen.Amy@epa.gov>; Riccio, Roberta <Riccio.Roberta@epa.gov>
Subject: Mountaire - the saga continues

Lawyers threaten federal lawsuit to hold Delaware chicken plant accountable for pollution

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL Since late last year, people living in the shadow of Mountaire Farms' chicken processing plant in southern Delaware have wondered how long their drinking water has been polluted by one of the area's largest employers. Fifteen years ago, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency discovered the plant was the source of high levels of nitrates, a contaminant increasingly affecting drinking water sources across the country, in groundwater and nearby wells. Around that time, the first truck rumbled down a dirt lane to deliver pounds of salt for water softener systems the company had provided to a few homes. A handful of residents reluctantly ran those noisy machines, hauled in the heavy salt and switched to bottled water. They thought the situation was under control because government officials were taking water samples and monitoring operations at the plant. Then they learned that Mountaire had been spraying highly contaminated wastewater containing up to 41 times the legally permit amount of nitrates as recently as the summer of 2017, while state and federal officials seemed to be doing little more than filing paperwork since the government first found nitrate pollution in 2003. The plight of those Delawareans and problems at the plant have caught the attention of Washington, D.C.,-based nonprofits Food & Water Watch and Public Justice, which say there is a radical legal solution to years of water contamination. A team of local and national lawyers and experts are fighting for Mountaire's neighbors' right to safe, clean drinking water by turning to a decades-old federal law governing waste that includes provisions for citizens to step up when governments fail to enforce their own laws. "Nobody comes to me with one of these cases until they've been fighting for 20 years and everyone has failed them," said Public Justice Food Project Attorney Jessica Culpepper. "Every scenario breaks my heart. By the time I'm here, they are completely dragged down. They don't believe anybody is going to help them. They don't believe anybody cares about their situation."...

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