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February 10, 2011

The Honorable David Norris, Mayor, and Members of City Council
City of Charlottesville
P. O. Box 911
Charlottesville, Virginia 22901

Dear Mayor Norris and City Councilors:

At the January 18th joint Albemarle County Board of Supervisors and Charlottesville City Council meeting to discuss the water supply plan, the Board considered the possibility of inviting representatives of Black & Veatch ("B&V") engineering firm to give a presentation on their concrete dam design at an upcoming Board meeting. Since then, we have individually and collectively reviewed the information prepared and presented by B&V at various times, including their most recent presentation to Council on February 7th in which they outlined cost estimates for constructing a phased pool elevation. After reviewing all available information including B&V's reports and presentations, the Board has a number of concerns with adopting the concrete dam approach laid out by B&V.

- The price difference between the earthen dam and concrete dam has narrowed substantially, making the construction of a new earthen dam built entirely to today's modern engineering standards a more attractive alternative.
- We are on a strict and ambitious timeline to address the safety issues of the Upper and Lower Ragged Mountain dams. The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board gave our community a deadline of April 30, 2011, to complete final design of a dam, with a deadline of May 31, 2011, to have in-hand approved construction permits. We are not optimistic that those deadlines can be met by B&V.
- The Independent Technical Review Team reviewed B&V's concrete dam design and provided a written report describing numerous concerns with building on the existing 100 year old dam. The report states, "The cost required to remediate the existing dam will be high and funds would possibly be better spent in constructing a new dam using modern engineering and construction technology, provided that the respective costs are comparable."



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- We have concerns with the substantial safety risks and transportation impacts to residents along Reservoir Road due to the increased volume of aggregate and cement trucks needed for the construction of a concrete dam. The earthen dam will require fewer truck trips along that road without the inconvenience caused to local residents.
- There is significant cost savings associated with advancing the project rapidly in order to take advantage of the current favorable construction market. Further delays could mean increased costs of construction.
- We feel that the earthen dam will be visually less obtrusive than a concrete dam in the context of the surrounding woods and lands at Ragged Mountain.
- The Albemarle County Service Authority has completed 60% of the design for an earthen dam, expending over \$458,000 toward the ultimate dam design effort.

While we appreciate Council's offer that B&V provide a presentation at an upcoming Board meeting, for the reasons outlined above and many others, the Board feels a presentation is no longer necessary and reaffirms its commitment to the construction of a new earthen dam at Ragged Mountain. We hope that the City Council will take up this issue at its next meeting and adopt a similar position.

Sincerely,



Ann H. Mallek
Chairman

AHM/dbm
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Pc: The Honorable Albemarle County Board of Supervisors
Mr. Thomas C. Foley, County Executive, Albemarle County
Mr. Maurice T. Jones, City Manager, City of Charlottesville
Mr. Thomas L. Frederick, Executive Director, Rivanna Water & Sewer Authority
Mr. Gary B. O'Connell, Executive Director, Albemarle County Service Authority