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Renée Hoyos, Tennessee Clean Water Network
STORMWATER PRESS CONFERENCE

We have called you all together to discuss a problem that has been ongoing in Knox County for years. That problem has been increased flooding to areas that have normally not received flooding due to over development. Flooding has ruined property values and has caused increased pollution in Knox County. The TN Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) labels sediment as the state's **number one source** of pollution into our rivers, creeks and streams.

Sediment carried in water increases flooding, impacts water supplies and navigation, degrades aquatic habitat and transports chemicals.

Knox County's solution was to start work on a new stormwater ordinance 2.5 years ago. Knox County and its team of consultants have yet to produce an ordinance that meets State and Federal requirements. We ask the County to put this issue on the front burner once the County Charter is resolved.

- The county started work on the ordinance 2.5 years ago. However, the ordinance that was passed as an interim ordinance was not found to be satisfactory to the public who participated in its creation. At the last minute the Homebuilders Assn lobbied for less strict standards and won.

- June 6, 2005 TCWN met with Mayor Ragsdale and his staff to discuss this ordinance and ask him to help us resolve the issue. The Mayor said there was nothing he could do to help us.
- On July 5, 2005 we met with Chris Granju to discuss problems with this ordinance. As a consolation, he agreed to allow one of our members to join the site planning roundtable.
- On January 18, 2006 we met with Knox County Engineering and their consultant team to discuss the new ordinance that they were creating. We determined 11 areas in which the new ordinance was not in compliance with state and federal regulations.

The county never responded to our 11 points.

We have been trying to get the Mayor's attention on this issue for a year now.

Knox County deferred to the State and the state has responded in a 25 page Compliance Investigation Letter that echoed our warnings.

Still no response from the County.

We gave Mayor Ragsdale and his administration over a year to be proactive and get in front of the flooding issue. In one year's time we could have received relief from flooding which damages property and impacts our beautiful water resources.

Knox County has been ineffective in preventing the pollution of Knox County's streams for years. We know this because the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation released their list of the states most polluted and impaired waters earlier this year and Knox County has 35 streams with 360 river miles on this list.

Our clean water laws are effective tools to protect our water and our property. But, the values of these tools is proportional to how often they are enforced. Enforcement of our clean water laws means that no community has to suffer from water pollution.

If Mayor Ragsdale intends to continue growing Knox County, the Mayor must assume the responsibility for protecting our water and individual property.

We are asking Knox County to put a protective stormwater ordinance on the highest priority as soon as the County Charter is resolved. Thank you