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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS REPORT THAT THE TYGER RIVER DAM  
PROPOSAL BY UNION COUNTY IS DEAD.  
THE US ARMY CORP OF ENGINEERS PAS STUDY REPORTS THAT  
TYGER RIVER DAM PROPOSAL BY UNION COUNTY  
IS NOT ECONOMICALLY JUSTIFIED**

The US Army Corp of Engineers (ACE) has completed its long over-due study of the feasibility of a proposed dam of the Tyger River in Union County, South Carolina. The study, after examining the potential economic cost/benefits, legally required environmental studies, potential environmental impacts, demographics, water use needs, and geological studies concluded that the development of the lake is not supported economically. It also has noted that the proposed dam site is directly above 2 earthquake faults which, according to their geological study, may have had recent activity. ACE estimates the cost of the project to be \$187 million.

The reservoir would require the damming and flooding of over 3,000 acres of public lands of Sumter National Forest - lands destroying a free flowing river ecosystem and habitat for thousands of plants and animals, including some endangered species.

The study, contracted through the ACE (Planning Assistance to States) (PAS) program, was based upon an agreement entered into between Union County South Carolina and The US Army Corp of Engineers, Charleston District, dated August 19, 2004. The purpose of the study was a project concept analysis of creating a 5,000 acre reservoir as a regional water supply. The study assumed the creation of an earthen dam with a mean sea level of approximately 400 feet with a goal of producing 10 million gallons of water per day.

The study was funded completely with taxpayer monies with Union County paying \$175,000 and the US Treasury paying \$175,000. The project was to be completed by November of 2006. Environmental groups such as the Audubon Society, SC Wildlife Federation, Sierra Club, Native Plant Society, and Upstate Forever have been closely following and monitoring the process.

**DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE PROJECT HAS BEEN COMPLETED SINCE  
MAY OF 2007, THE US ARMY CORP OF ENGINEERS HAS REFUSED TO RELEASE  
THIS DOCUMENT. SIERRA CLUB, THE AUDUBON SOCIETY, SOUTH CAROLINA  
WILDLIFE FEDERATION, NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY AND UPSTATE FOREVER ALL  
JOIN TO ASK FOR THE RELEASE OF THIS DOCUMENT AND FOR THE NEWS  
MEDIA TO JOIN US IN THE FOIA REQUEST.**

In May of 2007, it was reported to environmental groups by the US Army Corps of Engineers Project Manager, Phillip Wolf, that the project study was finally completed. Wolf reported the study would be submitted to Union County for review and then released to the public. He further indicated that Union County would be allowed to submit comments but could not alter the report. As of early December 2007, Union County had not submitted their comments.

Dennis Chamberlain, legal counsel for Sierra Club as to the FOIA request, has stated: “Despite repeated requests for copies of the report from ACE, the agency has refused to officially release the document. On September 25, 2007, the Sierra Club made an official request to the USACE for release of the PAS report pursuant to the US Freedom of Information Act. (Copy attached). On October 23, 2007, the Office of Legal Counsel for ACE, through Michelle E. Crawford, responded with a denial and refusal to release the report claiming that the report was “working papers and attorney work product/privileged documents” and exempt under the Freedom of Information Act (Copy attached). In a phone conversation, Ms. Crawford did acknowledge the release of the study to some Congressional offices. I feel that the report is not protected or exempt in that it is merely a ‘conception’ analysis compiling facts and data related to the project and not a ‘working paper’ but a complete factual analysis awaiting comment from an unhappy Union County. Both the Project Manager and District Engineer have reported that the document was completed, except for comments by Union County. It is certainly not entitled to attorney-client exemptions which are intended to protect work product and preparations for a trial. We have two public entities holding back data to which the public is entitled. We hope that Union County is not asking for changes in the fact finding analysis and using political pressure to do so.”

The Sierra Club and Upstate Forever have contacted both Congressman Spratt's and Congressman Inglis' office for a copy of the report. As of this date, neither office has complied with that request.

It would appear that Union County has objected to the findings of this report. A review of the report was made by Dennis Chamberlain, attorney for Sierra Club. Although he does not have a copy of the report a copy was provided for his review by a confidential source.

“It is quite obvious as to why certain economic and development interests in Union County do not want this report made public. Although proponents originally claimed the project would provide water, electricity, and economic growth to Union County, the real benefactors would be a few private land owners and developers who envision the creation of lakefront resort developments made possible with public tax dollars and the transfer of public lands to benefit a few private citizens. This dam project is dead and should be put to rest.” said Chamberlain.

“I feel that Union County has a wonderful economic and natural resource in the free flowing Tyger River. It has provided family camping, boating, and hiking for generations. It has brought annual hunting revenues to Union County in the millions of dollars over the years. The corridor up and down the Tyger River includes beautiful Rose Hill Plantation State Park, homes from the antebellum and Civil War period, and the Blackstock Revolutionary War battlefield. A small investment in boat landings for canoeing, campgrounds, and picnic areas along with publicizing the Tyger as a recreation corridor could play big dividends for the local economy and save a precious resource.”

“A report included in Appendix C by Clemson’s Strom Thurmond Institute found that that the water needs of the entire region were currently met until the year 2030. The region includes Union, Cherokee, Fairfield, Laurens, Newberry, and Spartanburg counties. The report, citing US Census Bureau statistics, conclude that Union County is expected to have a decrease in population over the next 2 decades. There are 21 water districts in the region with each having an excess supply for their respective counties.”

Chamberlain went on to cite the report. “The PAS report concluded that the project was not economically feasible. The ACE estimated the costs as follows:

Engineering and design	\$15 million
Geotechnical studies	\$12 million
Environmental studies	\$10.6 million
Construction	\$150 million
TOTAL COST	\$187.6 MILLION

“The report also estimated an annual expenditure of \$2 million for maintenance and upkeep.

The report acknowledged that it did not take into consideration the cost of the water treatment facility and the delivery system. With over 50 businesses, government entities and municipalities that currently have Federal discharge permits into the Tyger River, a state of the art water treatment facility costing tens of millions of dollars will be needed to turn Tyger River water into drinking water capable of complying with the Clean Water Act and the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control regulations.”

“The delivery system would be comprised of pumps and piping necessary to distribute the water to the ultimate users. It would also include acquiring right of ways and possible condemnation of private property. Again, the ACE report acknowledged that it did not include the costs of delivery of water. I feel it could also add millions to the project.”

“In addition, estimates did not seem to include monies for movement of roads, power lines, bridges and other infrastructures. There would also be a loss of over 1,600 acres in fresh water wetlands. The cost of mitigation of wetlands damage will be extensive.”

“Litigation will be inevitable. Some private lands will be ‘taken’ by condemnation as the project envisions over 1,000 acres of private property being flooded. The land owners will have to be paid. The Sierra Club, Audubon, SC Wildlife Federation and Native Plant Society have all come out publicly against the proposed dam. It is certainly reasonable to expect a national outcry as public lands are converted to benefit a few private economic interests. Most of the flooded lands are public lands in a national forest and belong to all of us and to future generations. It is simply not possible at this time to put a price on the total cost of litigation.”

“The economic analysis looked at the possibility of generating tax revenues from the development of residential lake homes. It estimated approximately 250 homes could be built on private property and that another 250 houses could be built on public national forest lands ‘exchanged’ with private interests. The report estimated tax revenues of between \$1,275,000 and \$2,500,000 from 400 homes. The report suggested these funds might be applied towards the annual

cost of maintenance and repairs on the dam. The report did not indicate how the tax revenues used for the dam would be replaced that would be needed for roads, schools, and infrastructure necessary to deal with the new residential developments. The report did not mention the legal actions needed to put public lands into developers' hands.”

“I feel that it is not unreasonable to expect the entire project to cost between \$400 million and \$500 million. Most critically, the report failed to mention where any of the money would come from to pay their estimated \$187 million for the dam. This would be “pork barrel” economics and politics in its purest form. The ACE report concludes that even with their figures the development of the lake is not ‘supported economically.’”

“The proposed dam would sit directly on top of two earthquake faults. A geological and geotechnical study appears in Appendix B of the report. It indicates the proposed site also shows accumulations of soil along the river that indicates the earthquake faults may have had recent activity. The geological examination also indicated that the soil composition in the region would be highly susceptible to erosion and that seepage at the dam site through the soil and bedrock would have to be closely studied. Dam safety was also briefly looked at by the study and concluded that State regulations would classify the dam as a ‘high hazard dam.’ “

“Appendix D of the report dealt with the need for environmental studies and environmental impact. The study includes comments, letters, and reports from federal agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Forest Service. It includes input from SC State agencies such as: the SC Dept of Natural Resources; SC Parks, Recreation, and Tourism; and the South Carolina Dept of Health and Environmental Control. It also received volumes of data from SC Audubon, SC Wildlife Federation, Sierra Club, The Native Plant Society, Upstate Forever, residents across the State of South Carolina and local residents.

“The report concluded that to complete the environmental studies would require over \$10.6 million over a 9 year period. I feel the delays caused by condemnation and other litigation would be difficult to estimate, but could add years to the project.”

[end]