

# HARRIS COUNTY

## OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ENGINEER

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August 15, 2016

Ron Curry  
Regional Administrator  
United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Region 6  
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200  
Dallas, Texas 75202-2733

**SUBJECT: San Jacinto River Waste Pits**

Dear Mr. Curry:

Harris County is a unit of local government that serves more than 4.5 million people. The Harris County Engineering Department (HCED) is responsible for planning, study, property acquisition, design and construction of buildings, roads, bridges, traffic signals, drainage improvements, parks, and other architectural and maintenance projects in and for the County. The Harris County Engineer is an appointed official that, by law, supervises the work of the HCED. The San Jacinto River is one of the major features of Harris County and in my official capacity as County Engineer, I am very familiar with the River's features and the natural forces at work at the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site (the Site). The site is within the jurisdictional boundaries of Harris County.

I am deeply concerned that the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) would consider any proposal for cleaning up the Site short of removal of the waste. The highly toxic paper mill waste that is currently stored at the site in the floodway of this major river, where it will continue to be subject to extreme forces of flood flow and tidal and storm surge, should not be allowed to remain there.

As a professional engineer, I have been responsible for the design and the construction of many roads, buildings, parks and drainage improvement projects in my 29 years with Harris County. Based upon my experience, I am of the opinion that if best engineering and construction practices are followed, the waste in question may be safely removed.

It is my opinion that allowing the waste to remain on site is not safe and removal of it is the only acceptable remediation.

Sincerely,



John R. Blount, P.E., LEED AP  
County Engineer

JRB/ed