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[www.ogeecheeriverkeeper.org](http://www.ogeecheeriverkeeper.org)  
*Working Together to Protect the Ogeechee, Canoochee and Coastal Rivers*

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August 15, 2023

**Via E-Mail**

Dawn Monaco, Planning Tech  
Bryan County, Community Development Division  
66 Captain Matthew Freeman Dr., Suite 111  
Richmond Hill, GA 31324  
[dmonaco@bryan-county.org](mailto:dmonaco@bryan-county.org)

Re: Ogeechee Riverkeeper comments on Bryan County Planning & Zoning Commission Public Hearing Items Nos. 4 and 5 concerning variances for the “Conley Tract” and “Davis Tract”

Dear Ms. Monaco:

Ogeechee Riverkeeper’s (“ORK”) mission is to protect, preserve, and improve the water quality of the Ogeechee River basin, including the Canoochee River and the coastal and tidal rivers of Liberty, Bryan, and Chatham Counties. ORK works with local communities to share and collect information on the ecological and cultural importance of rivers and streams throughout the Basin, and use that information to amplify the voices of those who speak for the watershed. One of ORK’s primary roles is as watchdog on new land development projects throughout the watershed that could pose a threat to water quality.

ORK urges the Planning & Zoning Commission to deny the requested variances for the Conley and Davis tracts that would allow building construction to begin prior to the necessary sewer and water infrastructure being installed and accepted by the County. Effective wastewater management is vital for ensuring that an industrial development does not negatively impact human health or the environment. This important preliminary step was rightfully made a condition to any subsequent building construction during the properties’ rezoning processes. Without the County’s determination that wastewater will be effectively and successfully managed, building construction and accompanying land disturbing activities should not begin.

ORK is concerned about a potential scenario where the County determines that wastewater cannot ultimately be successfully managed on these properties. If an issue like this arises, it should be resolved well

before construction begins, as already contemplated and required by the rezoning process. Once land disturbing activities and construction is underway with foundation laid and building construction begun, it becomes much more difficult to restore and remediate the properties if they cannot be utilized. This risks the properties being left with half-built structures that would ultimately need to be demolished and with land, trees, and wetlands potentially permanently lost. And with the wide range of activities allowed by the properties' I-2 zoning, ensuring that all of these potential activities' wastewater demands are properly met and managed is important for the long-term health of the area and should be carefully considered.

ORK urges the Planning & Zoning Commission to maintain the existing condition placed on these properties during their rezoning cases in order to ensure the protection of Bryan County, its residents, and its lands and waters.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. Please let me know if you have any questions, I would be happy to talk with you about this further: [ben@ogeecheeriverkeeper.org](mailto:ben@ogeecheeriverkeeper.org) or 866-942-6222 x9.

Sincerely,

Ben Kirsch, Legal Director  
Ogeechee Riverkeeper