

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**STATEMENT: Settlement agreement reached between Ogeechee Riverkeeper and Savannah Harbor-Interstate 16 Corridor Joint Development Authority**

On Friday, December 27, 2024, the Ogeechee Riverkeeper (ORK) agreed to dismiss its challenge to the groundwater withdrawal permits issued to Bryan and Bulloch counties on October 7, 2024, after reaching a settlement agreement with the Savannah Harbor-Interstate 16 Corridor Joint Development Authority ("Savannah JDA").

Pursuant to the terms of the agreement, the Savannah JDA agreed to facilitate a reduction in a long-term surface water or alternative water solution for the Bryan County Industrial Megasite and associated developments from 25 years to 15 years and to provide for additional water quality sampling from the permitted groundwater wells.

The Ogeechee Riverkeeper and the Savannah JDA remain committed to being responsible stewards of the region's natural resources while ensuring industrial water needs are met to sustain southeast Georgia's dynamic economic development climate.

"The Savannah Harbor-Interstate 16 Corridor Joint Development Authority will continue to bring better opportunities to those that live in the Savannah region. This includes well-paying jobs and preserving the natural resources that make our region such a wonderful place to live," said Trip Tollison, Savannah Economic Development Authority President and CEO and Savannah JDA Secretary/Treasurer.

"This Agreement demonstrates that environmental protection and smart growth are not mutually exclusive," said ORK Executive Director and Riverkeeper Damon Mullis. "Indeed, this Agreement is a critical first step in ensuring safe and secure water supplies for people, agriculture and industry. Specifically, the shortened timeline and increased monitoring are important first steps in responsible management of our pristine aquifer and prioritizing drinking water and agricultural needs. ORK will continue to work with all regional stakeholders on responsible long range regional water planning."

**About Ogeechee Riverkeeper:** *Ogeechee Riverkeeper 501(c)(3) works to protect, preserve, and improve the water quality of the Ogeechee River basin, which includes all of the streams flowing out to Ossabaw Sound and St. Catherine's Sound. The Canoochee River is about 108 miles long and the Ogeechee River itself is approximately 245 miles long. The Ogeechee River system drains more than 5,500 square miles across 21 counties in Georgia. More at [ogeecheeriverkeeper.org](http://ogeecheeriverkeeper.org).*

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