

Former Mayor Paula Bacon

City of Kaufman

Kaufman, TX 75142

Dear State Legislator:

You will soon be asked to vote on ... legislation regarding the commercial slaughter of American horses of which you probably have very little firsthand knowledge. No doubt you have heard from lobbyists and organizations who want you to support the practice, but before you do, you should ask yourself why the residents of Texas and Illinois worked so hard to rid their states of their horse slaughter plants. The answer may surprise you.

As a mayor who lived with this plague in her town for many years, who knows what the horse slaughter industry really is and what it does to a community please allow me to tell you what we experienced. The industry caused significant and long term hardship to my community which was home to Dallas Crown, one of the last three horse slaughter plants in the United States.

All three plants were foreign-owned, and since the market for horsemeat is entirely foreign, the industry will always be dominated by these foreign interests. The corporations involved in this industry have consistently proven themselves to be the worst possible corporate citizens.

The Dallas Crown horse slaughtering facility had been in operation in Kaufman since the late 70's and from the beginning had caused problems both economically and environmentally. I have listed some of the specific issues below.

I will gladly provide you with detailed reports from my former City Manager, Police Chief, and Public Works Director regarding odor and wastewater effluence violations at the Dallas Crown horse slaughter plant in the City of Kaufman.. The reports reference "decaying meat [which] provides a foul odor and is an attraction for vermin and carrion," containers conveyed "uncovered and leaking liquids," there are "significant foul odors during the daily monitoring of the area," and "Dallas Crown continually neglects to perform within the standards required of them."

Therefore, in August of 2005, our City Council decided by unanimous decision to send the Dallas Crown issue to the Board of Adjustments for termination of their non-conforming use status. In March of 2006, the Board of Adjustments voted to order Dallas Crown closed, but the plant was able to tie the enforcement up in the courts until they were finally closed under state law in February of 2007.

Dallas Crown repeatedly described itself as a "good corporate citizen." I will be straightforward in asserting that they are the very antithesis of such.

- Dallas Crown had a very long history of violations to their industrial waste permit, 'loading' the capacity of the wastewater treatment plant.

- Dallas Crown denied the City access to their property for wastewater testing beginning October 1, 2004 until July 6, 2005 , despite requirement by city ordinance, city permit agreement, and court order.
- City staff reported that a \$6 million upgrade to our wastewater treatment plant would be required even though the plant was planned and financed to last through 2015.
- Odor problems resulting from the outside storage of offal and hides over several days persisted not only in traditionally African-American neighborhood known as "Boggy Bottom", but at the nearby Presbyterian Hospital , the daycare center, and surrounding areas.
- Transport of offal and fresh hides on City and state thoroughfares is conducted in leaking containers without covers.
- City documents reveal an extended history of efforts to have Dallas Crown address various environmental issues. Reports include descriptive language including such as "blood flowing east and west in the ditches from your plant," "It has been over 45 days [it had been 59 days] and no apparent cleanup has occurred," "Your system has not improved and subsequently it has gotten a lot worse," "Words cannot express the seriousness" of recent violations and the "adverse effects on the wastewater treatment plant," and "Please be sure trailers are secured before leaving your premises to prevent spills," noting also "bones and blood laying in front of the facility," problems with bones and parts in neighboring yards and the attraction of "dogs and other animals."
- In response to 29 citations for wastewater violations, each accompanied by a potential fine of \$2,000, Dallas Crown requested 29 separate jury trials, potentially causing yet another economic strain to the City's budget. We could, of course, not afford to litigate in order to extract the fines
- Dallas Crown took 11 months to submit a mandatory "sludge control plan" to assist efficient operation of the wastewater treatment plant though City staff requested it orally and in writing many times.
- The City Manager advised me that the City would have to spend \$70,000 in legal fees because of Dallas Crown problems, which was the entire legal budget for the fiscal year.
- During this period, Dallas Crown paid property taxes that were less than half of what the City spent on legal fees directly related to Dallas Crown violations.
- Generally, Dallas Crown has the economic ability to prevail, to exceed the constraints of the City's budget.

Dallas Crown had a negative effect on the development of surrounding properties, and a horse slaughter plant is a stigma to the development of our city generally. I have since learned that these problems were mirrored at the other two plants. Fort Worth's Beltex horse slaughter plant also violated Ft. Worth's wastewater regulations several times, clogged sewer lines, and both spilled and pumped blood into a nearby creek (San Antonio Current, June 19, 2003 ). Texas State Rep. Lon Burnam, D-Fort Worth, whose district includes Beltex, and Rep. Toby Goodman, R-Arlington, fought hard against legislation that would have legalized horse slaughter in Texas in 2003.

The horse slaughter plant in DeKalb , IL had a similar pattern. It was destroyed by fire in 2002, and rebuilt in 2004. It was charged and fined by the DeKalb Sanitary District almost every month from the reopening until its closing in 2007 under a new state law for consistently

exceeding wastewater discharge guidelines. I can provide you with the documentation of those violations. Like Dallas Crown, Cavel refused to pay their fines for years.

During this time, I learned that an estimated \$5 million in Federal funding was being spent annually to support three foreign-owned horse slaughter plants! And when the Dallas Crown tax records were exposed in the city's legal struggle, we found that they had paid only \$5 in federal taxes on a gross income of over \$12,000,000!

Moreover, the parent company of Cavel has since moved its operations to Canada and continued to slaughter American horses. In Canada they have apparently become even more blatant, dumping huge untreated piles of entrails onto open ground and even using a tanker truck to discharge blood and refuse into a local river.

I have mentioned only the pollution issue, but this is but one negative aspect of horse slaughter. I have subsequently learned of a USDA document containing 900 pages of graphic photos that show the horrors that the horses were subject to. Behind the privacy fences of these plants, trucks arrived continuously and on those trucks was every form of inhumane violation one can imagine from mares birthing foals to horses with eyes dangling from their sockets and legs ripped from their bodies.

The more I learn about horse slaughter, the more certain I am: There is no justification for horse slaughter in this country. My city was little more than a door mat for a foreign-owned business that drained our resources, thwarted economic development and stigmatized our community. Americans don't eat horses, and we don't raise them for human consumption. There is no justification for spending American tax dollars to support this industry at the expense of Americans and our horses.

Sincerely,

**Former Mayor Paula Bacon**

**Kaufman, TX**