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ENVIRONMENTAL

Hundreds of Tarrant residents turn out to decry landfill ‘fiasco’ near Lake Worth

by Haley Samsel
December 6, 2023 9:52 pm



Hundreds of people filled the Brewer High School auditorium for a public meeting about BAP Kennor’s application to build a recycling facility on Silver Creek Road. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, which grants landfill permits, hosted the meeting at the request of state Rep. Charlie Geren, R-Fort Worth. (Haley Samsel | Fort Worth Report)

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After months of agonizing over the prospect of a [new landfill near Lake Worth](#), hundreds of northwest [Tarrant County residents](#) packed the Brewer High School auditorium Dec. 5 to hear from the developer and voice concerns about the proposal.

“My husband and I moved here a few years ago to settle down in a nice quiet environment, a safe environment,” Kelli Limbaugh, who lives in the Turtle Creek Ranch neighborhood, told the crowd. “Now what we’re feeling like it’s becoming is an environmental hazard, possibly, for us.”

BAP Kennor hopes to build a recycling center to accept up to 450 tons of construction and demolition waste per day, including metals, wood, lumber, green waste, plastics and concrete. Before it can move forward, the company must [obtain a permit](#) from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

The site on 3411 Silver Creek Road, down the street from recycling plant Silver Creek Materials and an RV resort, previously operated as a gravel quarry and landfill. The landfill permit became inactive in 1985. BAP Kennor’s proposal would reactivate the permit and establish a 6.6-acre recycling center in far west Fort Worth, near White Settlement and Lakeside.

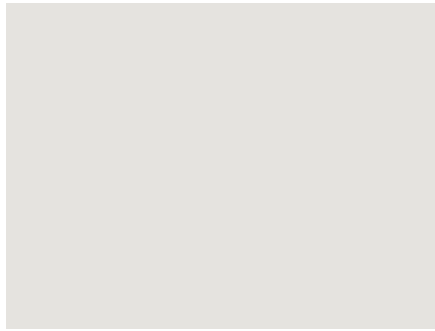
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After fielding concerns from constituents, state Rep. Charlie Geren, R-Fort Worth, asked the environmental commission to host the Dec. 5 public meeting.

Geren is among several elected officials — including Tarrant County Commissioner Manny Ramirez, Fort Worth Mayor Mattie Parker, Fort Worth City Councilwoman Macy Hill and Tarrant Regional Water District board member James Hill — who have spoken out against the permit.

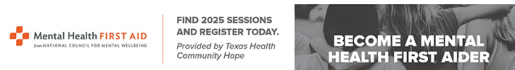
They cite concerns about the possibility of landfill waste contaminating nearby water sources and the company’s lack of detailed procedures to fight fires, screen for unauthorized waste and control air pollution at the site. Macy Hill also sees the potential for traffic congestion and road repair headaches on Silver Creek Road, which narrows to two lanes as it approaches the proposed landfill site.

“It is already taxed from increased traffic and needs maintenance as it is,” she said.

Frank Pugsley, who delivered a presentation on behalf of BAP Kennor, said rapid population growth will require more landfills and recycling centers in and near Tarrant County. He pointed to a 2021 North Central Texas Council of Governments study that projected the western half of North Texas [will run out of landfill capacity](#) by 2036 without the construction of new facilities.

BAP Kennor’s recycling center would reduce the amount of material headed to landfills and decrease illegal dumping by giving companies another location to bring waste, Pugsley said.

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“We’re providing a convenient option for commercial recycling efforts in the region so that it doesn’t end up on the side of the road, and it doesn’t consume the landfill space that we are running out of,” he said.



Frank Pugsley, a principal at consulting firm Parkhill, gives a presentation on BAP Kennor’s landfill proposal on Dec. 5, 2023. He pointed to higher demand for recycling facilities as the western half of North Texas runs out of landfill space. (Halley Samsel | Fort Worth Report)

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Ramirez said he’s not unsympathetic to the landowners trying to build their business, but he believes the property is ill-suited for a recycling plant. The negative impact on quality of life could last for generations, he said.

“I think that it’s exposed a pretty fatal flaw in the permitting system where a permit can be approved in perpetuity, not acted upon for 40 years and then activated,” Ramirez said. “It’s a significant concern, not just for this project, but I’m certain for projects across Texas.”

Traffic associated with the facility is projected to be less than 3% of background traffic on Silver Creek Road, Pugsley told the crowd. He assured residents that the facility is engineered to protect human health and the environment. Rainfall will be collected

before it can run off into the surrounding area, and any trucks dropping off hazardous waste or other unauthorized material would be turned away, he said.



BAP Kennor wants to turn a former quarry into a landfill to store and recycle demolition waste materials. The company has filed two applications: one to register a new facility and another to transfer an existing landfill permit. (Emily Wolf | Fort Worth Report)

But many residents were not convinced. Garry Wilson, a former White Settlement City Council member, had one word to describe Pugsley's explanation of the company's proposal: "Fiasco."

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"They only tell you what you want to hear," Wilson said. "That's our drinking water. It would only take one little leak to get into it. And you're not going to know that you've been drinking contaminated water for a long time. They say they're going to test it on a regular basis, but they won't."

More than 50 people spoke to oppose the permit, with many questioning how they would be notified if a contamination incident or fire were to occur at BAP Kennor's facility. The state environmental commission said they would investigate any complaints made by residents.

The complaint system hasn't worked for Robert Sterling, the owner of [Silver Creek RV Resort](#). He and his customers, whose mobile homes overlook the former gravel quarry, have filed complaints about odors at existing recycling facility Silver Creek Materials.

"They go nowhere at all," Sterling said. "Nothing's going to happen with complaints. We've got to stop this now."



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Environmental staff will issue a response to all comments before making a recommendation on the permit, which will head to the desk of the agency's executive director for a final decision.

If residents disagree with the permit decision, they can apply for a [contested case hearing](#), which is similar to a civil trial in state district court. The state environmental commission can grant a contested case hearing to people who claim they will be adversely affected in a way not common to the general public.

The process is far from over, Geren told the crowd.

"I can promise you that we've learned a lot of things tonight," Geren said. "We're not giving up on this. This fight is not over."

Haley Samsel is the environmental reporter for the Fort Worth Report. You can reach them at haley.samsel@fortworthreport.org.

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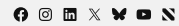
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