People's Forum

Warren County dumping stirs more debate

The recent PCB episode in Warren County has forced us all to evaluate our position on important issues. Mostly, people would like to forget what has happened or pretend there was nothing wrong. As landowners in Warren County, my husband and I cannot allow ourselves that luxury. Perhaps the demonstrators cannot turn back events and undo what has been done. It is truly a blight on both Warren County and the state.

As I tried to sort through my anger at this terrible injustice, something at least as vital as the PCB dangers came to mind. Something very valuable to us as American citizens is about to be lost, the right to control our government when the very safety of our lives and our land is at stake.

We need to ask ourselves how much power we are willing to give our governments, both local and federal. If we choose to be indifferent, we will lose our rights to the land.

What happened in Warren County can happen in any county. If we do not let our elected officials know now that we will not tolerate this tyranny, it will most certainly come to pass. No one ever said that democracy was easy. We have the responsibility to future generations of providing a safe world for them.

SHIRLEY COBB DAVIS
Louisburg

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The call by The N&O for calm in Warren County would become, unhappily, a call for apathy. All is not as rosy with the PCB dump site there as reporters and editors seem to suggest.

EPA leader Albert Hanke is quoted in your news article as saying that current technology assures that landfills do not leak. That is a false statement. Four New Jersey landfills, all built within the last four years and all using the latest and best techniques to prevent leaking, including double liners, are now leaking. Peter Montaque, administrator of Princeton University's hazardous waste research progam, told a congressional committee this year that we would be better off "if we simply admitted that there is no such thing as a secure landfill."

William Sanjour of the Environmental Protection Agency, in an address in Moore County in January, said, "Landfills will ultimately leak." EPA's Rita Lavelle, pro-landfill in all her other statements, when asked about the New Jersey landfills in an interview for the National Journal said, "Everything will leak."

When seen in the light of these uncertainties about the security of any landfill, the Warren County demonstrations seem appropriate. These demonstrators are not misguided or angry, but concerned and frustrated by real dangers unacknowledged by our state officials.

CATHERINE M. CAMERON
Chairman
Chatham Chapter, Tri-County Alliance
Goldston

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Every day lately I read about the PCB affray in Warren County. I wonder just how many of these people would be out there if it were not for all the publicity. Not one would be out creating all this fuss to express his convictions if it were not for the fantasy that they might just happen to get on television.

There must be some concern, but not nearly so outspoken and emotions so fake if it were not for just these reasons. This chemical has been by the roadside for four years. Why wouldn't these people much rather have it buried and in a controlled and protective environment in one location than just to leave it along the road where we walk and work? They have these little children brainwashed to the point of panic. All the talk will possibly do them far more harm than the chemical itself. I saw one little girl on TV crying frantically that if the PCB was moved that all the trees and plants would die and that all the people will die.

How many of the leaders really believe what they are out there for? Do they have a real heart-felt cause for which they struggle?

Most of them you will see at any kind of a protest that will afford them any publicity. I doubt if they give a cent for the masses they are stirring up. They are just out to feather their own nests.

Why don't we cut down on this publicity? It is newsworthy and should be covered, but it does not have to be billed as the social event of the year.

D.L. PAXTON
Gaston

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It has always been my understanding that the governor of the state should be accessible to the people who elected him. Governor Hunt has proven that understanding false by his treatment of the good citizens of Warren County in their fight against the PCB dump.

Hunt was much more accessible to the people and more understanding of their problems during 1978-80 when he was campaigning for re-election. I cannot help but wonder if the outcome of the PCB controversy would have been different had this been an election year.

JOSEPH O'BRIENT DUNCAN
Raleigh

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