

<http://www2.wspa.com/news/2011/feb/14/epa-deny-utility-permit-relaxing-water-waste-stand-ar-1463512/>



Published: February 14, 2011

[Home](#) / [news](#) / [local](#) /

## EPA: Deny Utility Permit Relaxing Water Waste Standards

By Robin Kanady



There's a fight in the Upstate over how much fecal matter can be released into your water. A creek that flows into popular Lake Hartwell is at the center of the controversy.

Easley Combined Utilities asked permission to allow more fecal matter than what DHEC says is acceptable to be released downstream from its wastewater treatment plant on Golden Creek in Easley.

Late Monday afternoon an EPA spokeswoman confirmed to News Channel 7 that the EPA denied Easley Combined Utilities' permit. This means the utility will not be able to relax its standards, which some people worried would allow more waste to pollute the Golden Creek.

Golden Creek flows into the 12 Mile River, which empties into Lake Hartwell. Tens of thousands of people swim in the lake each year and use it for drinking water.

Easley Combined Utilities applied for a permit to relax the amount of fecal matter that flows into

Golden Creek.

Joel Ledbetter, General Manager, of Easley Combined Utilities says some form of fecal matter in local waters is "naturally occurring."

Ledbetter says the utility has a good compliance record, but they were asking for the permit, so they would have zero violations on record.

That doesn't sit well with Upstate Forever, a non-profit organization, dedicated to keeping creeks and rivers healthy. Chris Starker says a permit relaxing the regulations would have a big impact on area residents.

Starker says, "By my calculations, that means 3 days per month the rivers may not be safe to swim."

In its denial of the utility's permit, the EPA says, "The proposed final permit includes an effluent limit for fecal coliform that is not stringent enough to ensure compliance with South Carolina water quality standards, including protection of designated uses."

The utility can appeal the EPA's decision.

---

WSPA © Copyright 2011 Media General Communications Holdings, LLC. A Media General company.