

For Immediate Release  
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## **The Aransas Project (TAP) Files Water Quality Complaint About Sinton, Texas, Steel Mill Construction**

The Aransas Project (TAP) has filed a water quality complaint with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) about the Steel Dynamics facility currently under construction near Sinton, Texas. Additionally, TAP has sent a letter to the company's attorney in Indiana complaining about the construction of the wastewater treatment plant and asking the company to cease and desist all construction on the wastewater plant pending appropriate authorization.

In documents filed with the TCEQ, TAP complains that the Steel Dynamics website contains video updates on the Sinton steel mill, and that the most recent video update, labeled October 2020, expressly identifies a waste water treatment plant that appears to be under construction about 27 seconds into the video clip. Under the Texas Water Code, Chapter 26 Water Quality Control Section Sec. 26.027(c) "A person may not commence construction of a treatment facility until the commission has issued a permit to authorize the discharge of waste from the facility, except with the approval of the commission." A review of TCEQ records failed to identify any such approval.

According to Jim Blackburn, President of TAP, "This is a serious situation. TAP is very concerned that the proposed wastewater permit, which has not been issued, will cause substantial water quality issues in Chiltipin Creek. This creek is a beautiful natural waterway that flows eastward from the Sinton area into the Aransas River and Copano Bay. It is full of freshwater and then saltwater species, including shrimp, crabs, redfish and speckled trout. This creek and Copano Bay need to be protected."

The water quality concerns arise from the type of pollutants to be generated by a rolling mill using a hydrochloric acid pickling process to remove scale. The pollutants to be discharged include copper, lead, chromium, cyanide, naphthalene, nickel, tetrachloroethylene, zinc and a number of unidentified,

propriety compounds. To date, no detailed information has been provided to the public about these proprietary compounds.

“We are also concerned about the impact of this discharge on whooping cranes” said Ann Hamilton, a TAP board member and an Emeritus Director with the International Crane Foundation. “Cranes winter in portions of Copano Bay and eat about 80 crabs per crane per day. Crabs bioaccumulate heavy metals such as those that this plant will discharge, and we are concerned that contaminated crabs will harm this wonderful endangered species.”

TAP is seeking to stop construction of the wastewater plant without the required permission. Again, according to Blackburn, “We have asked the counsel for Steel Dynamics to cease and desist from construction of this wastewater plant. This is not the way a major facility should be constructed. Appropriate authorization should be obtained before the wastewater plant is built. This situation does not make us feel very comfortable about how this plant will be run.”

Blackburn added that TAP is not opposed to the plant but only to the wastewater discharge. “We recommend that they use deep well injection for this wastewater or go to a zero-discharge wastewater permit and use large ponds or land application. This discharge does not belong in Chiltipin Creek or Copano Bay.”

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