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October 18, 2016

William D. Johnson  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Tennessee Valley Authority  
400 West Summit Hill Drive  
Knoxville, TN 37902

Dear President Johnson,

Thank you for attention to my recent correspondence dated August 29, 2016, in which I expressed concern regarding the Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) decision to pursue the use of water from the Memphis Sands Aquifer to cool the new natural gas generators at the Allen Plant. Although the TVA ultimately elected not to reopen its Supplemental Environmental Assessment (EA) for public comment, it was noted that TVA is continuing to discuss issues surrounding the Allen Plant with concerned citizens in Memphis and in Shelby County. I applaud TVA's clean energy investment in Memphis, and am pleased that it remains sensitive to the concerns of its customers, my constituents.

TVA's decision to pursue the use of water from the Memphis Sands Aquifer—specifically its decision to do so by installing on-site wells at the Allen Plant—has caused great concern among members of my constituency. As I have previously expressed, the Memphis Sands Aquifer is a precious interstate resource that provides Memphis with fresh, famously palatable drinking water. The aquifer's water quality is not only precious to individuals, but is also vital to the future of our city's economic development.

In a pending lawsuit, the State of Mississippi alleges that over-pumping of water from the Memphis Sands Aquifer has created "cones of depression" in the base of the aquifer. Although the lawsuit itself is a separate matter, cones of depression within the water table—which are said to be caused and exacerbated by excessive well-drilling and water-pumping, and can create vacuums within the aquifer causing surface water to be drawn rapidly into the aquifer, bypassing the natural filtration process—pose an immediate concern to leaders in the Tennessee environmental community and among members of my constituency. A 2005 study published in Memphis Magazine titled *Liquid Assets*, cited in the aforementioned lawsuit, confirms the existence of the cone of depression in the Memphis Aquifer, and details a number of pumping-induced contamination issues within the aquifer, including the intrusion of pollutants and "young water" that has not gone through the aquifer's natural filtration process.

Has TVA conducted or commissioned any research pertaining to the possibility of increased pollution of the Memphis Sands Aquifer brought about by the drilling of on-site wells at the Allen Plant, or by pumping in excess of 3,000,000 gallons of drinking water each day from the aquifer? If so, I would be grateful for the opportunity to review the results of this research, and would encourage TVA to make the information available for public review.


If TVA has not conducted or commissioned such research, would doing so impede progress on the environmentally-beneficial work being conducted to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions at the Allen Plant?

I am grateful for your attention to these concerns, and look forward to your reply.

Should you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Patrick Cassidy in my Washington, D.C. office at (202) 225-3265.

As always, I remain,

Most sincerely,



Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress