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Group Targets Iowa Economic Development Authority Records on Proposed Prestage Hog Packing Plant for Mason City

Public documents sought on state agency's "regulations, procedures, oversight, financing, support, and other activities of the Prestage Facility" as hearing to approve massive animal operation looms

MASON CITY, IA—APRIL 29, 2016—[Socially Responsible Agricultural Project \(SRAP\)](#) has submitted a request for public documents per Iowa's Open Records Law regarding the role of the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) in the proposed siting of an industrial-sized Prestage Farms hog processing and packaging plant in Mason City. The request asks for "...access to or copies of, any and all records relating to the operations and activities of the proposed Prestage Packing Facility of Cerro Gordo County." SRAP represents local residents concerned about the public health risks, environmental harm and long-term community damage that the unprecedented Prestage operation threatens to bring to Mason City and the county.

When at full capacity, the proposed mammoth facility will slaughter 20,000 hogs per day, use approximately 1 million gallons of water daily from the overtaxed Jordan Aquifer and strain local social services, housing, businesses and basic infrastructure with the possible addition of 1,800 low-paying jobs to the area.

The request asks that documents be made available before a pivotal Tuesday, May 3rd city council meeting where final resolutions will be read and a vote will be taken on the future of the project.

"The city council is walking into this decision either blind or asleep," said Chris Petersen, an independent Clear Lake farmer, former head of the Iowa Farmers Union and regional representative for SRAP. "This is a crisis moment for the well-being of Mason City and Cerro Gordo County. As people elected to serve the best interest of the public, the city councilmen needed to ask what the facts are. And since they haven't asked -- SRAP has."

The IEDA information will allow residents to better understand the state's participation in oversight, compliance and enforcement efforts for one of the Iowa's largest hog operators, and its role in the proposal to locate an industrial animal facility near Clear Lake, one of the state's natural treasures and tourism hallmarks.

"Too much is at stake to let a business agreement become a death warrant for the quality of life and a healthy future of this area," said Petersen. "Shouldn't we find out what the facts are before a decision is made?"

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About Socially Responsible Agricultural Project

SRAP is a national nonprofit organization working in rural communities across the country on the front lines of factory farm expansion. SRAP provides no-cost legal, engineering, organizational and communications support, assisting citizens in the protection of their homes and the preservation of responsible family farming and ranching. For more information, go to www.sraproject.org.