



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Media Contacts:

Linda Butler, STOPP Inc.  
623-214-5328 | [linda.butler2014@gmail.com](mailto:linda.butler2014@gmail.com)

Steve Masar, Socially Responsible Agricultural Project  
415-420-7527 | [media@sraproject.org](mailto:media@sraproject.org)

## Groups to EPA: Investigate Hickman Egg Operations, Enforce Pollution Rules on Exploding Arizona Poultry Industry

*Complaint cites Clean Air Act violations & flawed Maricopa County permit process create unchecked environmental risks, serious public health threats to surrounding communities*

**Tonopah, AZ—October 8, 2015**—Local Arizona citizens' groups [STOPP Inc. \(Save Tonopah Oppose Poultry Plant\)](#) and [Don't Waste Arizona \(DWA\)](#), and national nonprofit group [Socially Responsible Agricultural Project \(SRAP\)](#) have jointly filed a formal complaint with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9 (EPA) requesting an investigation of suspected federal air pollution violations related to industrial poultry giant, Hickman Family Farms, and its two Hickman's Egg Ranch facilities in Tonopah and Arlington, Arizona. The combined operations currently house more than 12 million laying hens and 4 million additional pullets (less than one-year old laying hens) in conditions meeting the federal definition of concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs).

Both Hickman facilities are sited in a federally-designated "8-hour Non-Attainment Area for Ozone" -- a classification that puts the enormous egg laying operations in direct conflict with existing EPA air pollution control regulations.

"All we're asking is that the EPA work with us to uphold its rules and steer our community and this state away from an out of control health and environmental disaster," said STOPP Chairman, Linda Butler. "Our local authorities cleared a path for Hickmans, and they've taken advantage of it in a dangerous and irresponsible way. Without federal intervention, we see a harsh and unhappy future for our lives, our land and our health."

Hickman Family Farms is an Arizona corporation that owns and operates the two Maricopa County egg-laying and processing facilities, in addition to a fertilizer manufacturing operation. The company has a history of receiving public complaints involving foul odors, significant air emissions, fly swarms, rodent infestation, feather and insect proliferation, and noise pollution.

"Hickmans Family Farms is not a family farm as we picture them at all," said SRAP Executive Director, Danielle Diamond, "EPA needs to see this massive corporate agribusiness for what it is and enforce the environmental and public health rules they appear to routinely break. Large-scale industrial agriculture is blitzing the political, legal and regulatory environment in unprecedented ways across the nation. Hickmans is right at the front of the pack."

The size and scope of the Hickman operations produce huge amounts of poultry manure, overwhelming odors from numerous layer buildings and open waste ponds, and the hazard of potentially bacteria-laden feathers blowing through neighboring properties, residential neighborhoods and local businesses.

The complaint also requests that EPA revoke the “Non Title V Air Quality Permits to Operate and/or Construct” for both Hickman facilities if their investigation finds evidence of noncompliance. Grounds for withdrawing the permits include:

- the Arlington and Tonopah operations should be considered as one source under the Clean Air Act, given that they share equipment, feed, waste management systems, employees, process and production codependency, and financial interests; and
- the Hickman operations exceed allowable volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions in the 8-Hour Ozone Nonattainment Area, requiring a Clean Air Act Title V permit.

The joint filing also highlights that current Hickmans egg production operations may not be complying with Sections 304 and 313 of the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA), and request EPA to investigate. Under EPCRA, industries are required to report ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) emissions greater than 100 lbs. per day to regulatory authorities, and also report to the Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) if certain thresholds of ammonia are produced or manufactured each year. Calculations submitted to EPA by the groups estimate that at its current size the Hickman Arlington facility alone produces 7,471 lbs. of ammonia per day which would exceed TRI reporting thresholds, as well.

“We looked to our County authorities to support us. They didn’t. We looked to the Hickmans to act responsibly. They won’t,” said STOPP member Dan Blackson. “Now we’re looking to the EPA to do what no one else is capable of doing: enforce the rules that all polluters need to follow.”

Earlier this year, Hickmans announced that it is planning to increase the Tonopah egg laying operation by six to eight million additional birds.

For a review of the STOPP/SRAP complaint filed with EPA, Region 9, please click [here](#).

To view recent videos showing the impact and effects of the Hickman operations on the residents of Tonopah, please go to the STOPP YouTube channel at [STOPP Hickman's](#)

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#### **About Socially Responsible Agricultural Project (SRAP)**

Socially Responsible Agricultural Project provides free, professional assistance to communities working to protect themselves from factory farms and their impact on local communities and populations, and to those who are trying to reclaim agriculture by producing and marketing sustainable agricultural goods. More information can be found at [www.sraproject.org](http://www.sraproject.org).

#### **About STOPP Inc. (Save Tonopah Oppose Poultry Plant)**

STOPP is a not-for-profit community organization working to protect the safety of their local community and the quiet use and enjoyment of residents’ property, as well as to encourage and maintain the financial health and growth of businesses in the Tonopah community. More information can be found at <http://tonopahstopp.com>.

#### **About Don’t Waste Arizona (DWA)**

Don’t Waste Arizona is a non-profit environmental organization created for the protection, conservation, and preservation of the human and natural environment in and around Phoenix, and the state of Arizona. The organization works on environmental issues across the board in environmental regulatory matters, including air pollution, water pollution, landfills, toxics issues, environmental justice, environmental education, anti-nuclear issues, and much more. We offer help to affected and poisoned communities.