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## Communities should have more say in Superfund process

Mar 15, 2021

It is rare in our polarized political landscape to find an issue where every leader is on the same page. Recently, one issue had city and county leaders in lock step with our state delegation and our congressman – the consent decree on the Terry Creek Superfund landfill cleanup.

In 2019, the city and county governments agreed with local business leaders, the local health board and environmentalists that the cleanup plan for the creek didn't go far enough. They asked that the Environmental Protection Agency and Hercules agree to a full cleanup. As it turns out, what the community overwhelmingly wanted didn't matter much to the EPA.

The agency and Hercules agreed to the least-expensive option out of a number of potential actions they could have taken. Instead of a full cleanup of the Terry Creek outfall, the plan called for a geotextile fabric to lie over what's left of the contaminated sediment while a new "concrete-lined conveyance channel" would reroute current discharge for a cost of about \$4.5 million.



You would think that the community that lives around the Superfund site would have more sway instead of having its opinion dismissed without much consideration.

That might be changing soon. The Terry Creek problem has sparked Rep. Buddy Carter, R-1, to take action.

Carter was among the political leaders calling for the EPA to reconsider doing a full cleanup on the site. Now he wants to make sure that communities aren't ignored again when it comes to Superfund sites.

Carter recently reintroduced the Community Cleanup Act in the House. The act seeks to improve outreach and public access while also making sure the needs of the community are respected when Superfund sites are under remediation.

The bill would also ensure elected officials are made aware of the proposed plans for any site so they can work with the EPA to address concerns ahead of time.

While this act will apply to all the contaminated sites around the country, make no mistake it was the way Terry Creek was handled that led him to push for a better system. It will be put to good use in Glynn County considering our area has four Superfund sites.

We applaud Rep. Carter for advocating that communities have a bigger say in what happens at these sites.

After all, we have to live with and around the consequences of whatever decision is made.