



For Immediate Release:

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More Cost, Less Savings:

Report Validates WINC Concerns About Proposed Sewage Plant

A recently released report validates concerns previously raised by the West Indianapolis Neighborhood Congress (WINC) that a proposed wastewater treatment plant would have cost too much to build and forced ratepayers to pay much more a month for service.

The report, commissioned by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), found a series of significant discrepancies in estimates the Ben Davis Conservancy District (BDCD) provided the state as justification for construction of the plant at 900 S. Tibbs Ave.

The report found the BDCD underestimated how much the proposed plant would cost to build, overestimated how much its customers would save on their monthly bills, and neglected to include the cost of maintaining their current wastewater infrastructure.

The report indicates that construction would likely cost between \$13-29 million more than BDCD assessed at the outset of the project. The report also shows that rates in the district are already more than \$7 higher than BDCD's initial final proposed rate, and concludes that rates would likely continue to climb up to \$20 more/mo. (or \$64-77/mo. for the average user).

The report was compiled without the help of the BDCD, which refused to provide flow data and evidence of actual cost of Citizens Energy Group (CEG) wastewater treatment for 2021 and 2022. The auditing firm instead used publicly available data to conclude that "the cost-benefit analysis favors the district remaining a wholesale customer of CEG."

The report validates testimony provided by WINC at zoning hearings, in letters to our City Council, at the IDEM public hearing, and in our public comments. At the time, local elected officials that supported the BDCD's efforts accused us of "spreading misinformation."

This report raises questions about how many other Conservancy districts are attempting to take advantage of ratepayers, and we hope elected officials are giving due diligence to proposals from such entities before supporting them.

The BDCD has since withdrawn its application for a NPDES permit, essentially preventing the construction of the plant unless it reapplies. If the BDCD renews its attempts to build the plant, WINC will once again stand up for its residents and oppose its construction.

We hope every single neighbor who took the time to sign and share the petition, submit public comment, protest, and attend public meetings can see that their voice matters, and that we *can* make a difference when we stand together. We sincerely thank the Hoosier Environmental Council (HEC), Sen. Andrea Hunley, Rep. Justin Moed, Sierra Club, and the hardworking folks at IDEM for all of their support throughout this process.

Contact us at winc@westindy.org with any questions, or visit our website at [West Indianapolis Neighborhood Congress](https://www.westindianapolisneighborhoodcongress.org) to learn more about our organization.