



## THE GARDEN CONSERVANCY

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May 15, 2018

Commissioner John Reece  
c/o Secretary, Missouri Clean Water Commission  
1101 Riverside Drive  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Dear Commissioner Reece,

The Garden Conservancy, the nation's leading nonprofit organization dedicated to saving and sharing outstanding American gardens for the education and inspiration of the public, joins a growing number of organizations and individuals who oppose the proposed expansion of Valley Oaks Steak Company into a factory farm. This proposed expansion would be damaging to Powell Gardens, a significant and established, cultural and regional asset, located in Kingsville, Missouri and its surrounding community.

Powell Gardens was originally a farm, created in 1948, by George E. Powell, a prominent Kansas City businessman. In 1984, the Powell family partnered with the University of Missouri's School of Agriculture to further develop the site as a horticultural resource for the people of Kansas City and the surrounding region. Today, Powell Gardens is known as "Kansas City's Botanical Garden" and is visited by over 100,000 people annually. The garden is home to the nation's largest edible landscape, over 6,000 varieties of plants and a series of significant buildings designed by the renowned E. Fay Jones, a disciple of Frank Lloyd Wright. The garden hosts over 50 weddings annually and welcomes over 6,000 children for its popular educational programs. Their mission is "To be an experience that embraces the Midwest's spirit of place and inspires an appreciation for the importance of plants in our lives."

It is widely known that concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) produce air pollution in the form of particulate, odors, methane, carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulfide and ammonia as well as polluted water run-off, all of which is toxic to people, animals and plants up to six miles away. According to the National Association of Local Boards of Health, children with regular exposure to a CAFO have a greater risk of asthma symptoms. Powell Gardens is three miles from Valley Oaks Steak Company.

While the Garden Conservancy recognizes the need for businesses to grow and expand, we believe it would be prudent to do so in the appropriate context, one which can support the environmental impact of its operations. Addressing the production of pollutants is more cost-effective than controlling their emission.

Alternative expansion sites for the Valley Oaks Steak Company should be explored. We join many concerned organizations and individuals in urging you to do so. Powell Gardens is an economic generator in its own right. It is also a part of our cultural heritage and is an asset to the people of the greater Kansas City region and as such, it is worthy of protection.

On behalf of the Garden Conservancy and its Board of Directors,

James Brayton Hall  
President and CEO