



HOUSE OF DELEGATES WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

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Date: June 6, 2018

From: Delegate Brent Boggs *BB*

RE: Bakers Run Campground

Late last week, I was informed by local residents of the possible closure by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers of Bakers Run Campground, located on Sutton Lake near Centralia, West Virginia at the end of the 2018 camping season. Early today, I met on-site with campers, volunteers, local residents and at least one business owner regarding the campground and its positive impact on the local community, Braxton County and our State.

Earlier today, I reached out to Local COE officials, and I am awaiting a return call. In the meantime, I am asking for a written response as to what is planned for the campground beyond 2018.

Braxton County is proud to have two major Corps of Engineers lakes and wildlife management areas. However, this government land has removed thousands of acres from any form of development. The potential loss of Bakers Run would be another hit to our local tourism economy, recreational opportunities and have a negative impact on at least three local businesses that depend on the campground. While we have experienced major flood events in recent years at Bakers Run, this is not a new issue to our State or campgrounds located adjacent to flood control impoundments.

Since the Corps of Engineers is a federal agency, I will be requesting that our Congressional delegation explore this issue in depth prior to any action being taken. Areas of inquiry should include any disparities that exist in overall funding, needed improvements, routine maintenance, marketing, current inability to accept reservations, shifts in budget dollars between campgrounds, and an opportunity for interested individuals and governmental entities to make their concerns heard in a public meeting attended by COE officials.

Governor Justice and the West Virginia Legislature place tourism as one of the most important opportunities for growth in the economy. The potential loss of yet another camping venue on Sutton Lake (Brock Run and Mill Creek having been already closed) would only leave one full service campground (Freeman) to serve Sutton Lake. I trust all parties can come together to prevent the potential loss of a beautiful, volunteer maintained and family-oriented campground that serves the citizens of West Virginia and beyond.