

CHINA CLAY PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT ON “DIRTY DOZEN” LIST FROM ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION

NOVEMBER 8, 2011

The Georgia Water Coalition (GWC), a consortium of environmental groups, released a so-called “Dirty Dozen” list of “offenses to Georgia’s water” that included two recent fish kill incidents in the Brier Creek/Wrens area and at Commissioner Creek in Wilkinson County. Despite the fact that extensive investigations have not revealed any evidence that the Kaolin industry caused either of these incidents, the GWC unfairly blames the Kaolin industry for both incidents.

The investigations have indicated that low pH values in the streams likely were a factor in the fish kills. What the GWC has failed to publicize is that the streams in this part of the state are naturally low in pH. All discharges from the Kaolin operations are strictly regulated and, among other things, must have a pH of at least 6 which is in most instances a higher pH than the receiving stream. We also know that these incidents occurred at the end of an extremely hot and dry summer during low-flow conditions when fish populations would naturally be under significant stress.

The Kaolin industry, which contrary to the GWC’s allegations, is extensively regulated by both federal and state law, has operated successfully and in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner in east and middle Georgia for decades. The Kaolin industry provides thousands of jobs in rural areas of Georgia that sorely need jobs. Our members are committed to being good stewards of the environment and complying with all applicable laws and regulations. Since these two fish kills occurred, our industry has been fully cooperating with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GEPD) and has provided full access to our plants, mines and all associated records and data. Additionally, our members with operations in these areas have been thoroughly reviewing their operations and collecting samples and other information looking for any evidence as to the cause of these incidents. We intend to continue to fully cooperate with GEPD as the factors contributing to these incidents are further investigated.

For further information, please contact:

Lee Lemke
Executive Vice President
China Clay Producers Association
leelemke@georgiamining.org