House Agricultural Committee Meeting
April 4, 2016

Good Afternoon. My name is Trudy Peterson. I am the Town Administrator for the Town of Gilcrest. I would like to speak to you today regarding the need for this Bill. I'd like to give you a flavor for the results of our dewatering effort over the past year.

- The Town has achieved significant results very quickly during the limited time the Town has been able to pump our dewatering well.

- We also see significant rebound happen very quickly when we are required to stop pumping.

- We can only pump when there is no call on the river. That condition has been favorable in the past year but that is not the routine condition.

- There are extremely limited pathways to move water to the river.

- The ditches we are able to use freeze over in the winter and fill with weeds in the spring. Both conditions back up the water and cause us to cease pumping. Cleaning the weeds is a huge task for our 2-1/2 public works employees and they cannot access most of the ditch. Most of the ditch we are using is on private property. These issues continue for approximately 6 miles to the river. Adjoining property owners and ditch users are unhappy we are increasing the water in the ditch and make claims of damage to their properties causing potential liability to the Town.

- We have to turn the pump off when it rains too much or when someone down the ditch says they are having problems with the additional water. We must take caution no to "cause damage" to someone downstream of our pump although the Town and multiple land and howeowners in the

region have experienced significant damage largely due to the changes in recent years on how groundwater is administered.

- Our groundwater pumping permit was issued on April 6, 2015. That is 363 days we have had permission to pump. We have actually been able to pump a total of 80 days due to these constraints. The groundwater recovers as soon as we stop pumping so every gallon we pumped was refilled within a few days. The electricity for the pump costs $62.87 per day. We have spent over $5,000 on electricity. Assuming we could ever achieve full time pumping the cost of electricity would be $22,947.55 per year. Where does that money come from?

- Ditch companies will not allow dewatering water to be discharged into their ditches so that is not an option.

- The cost to build a pipeline to the river has been estimated to be $926,000 per mile. The shortest route to the river is approximately 3-1/2 miles. That is $3,241,000. That cost does not include the time and money for engineering and easement acquisition.

- The Town is performing an engineering study now to determine the best way to dewater the town. Once there is a recommended solution it will most likely only benefit the town. What about the rest of the region and how will the recommended solution be funded?

- This Bill, which would forgive post pumping depletions, is a first step to amending the way the state administers groundwater at this time. It is not a full solution but it is a step in the right direction. Dewatering is a treatment for the problem, not a solution to the problem. This legislature needs to work diligently on a long term, permanent solution to correct this issue. Anything short of that is simply masking the symptom of an ongoing

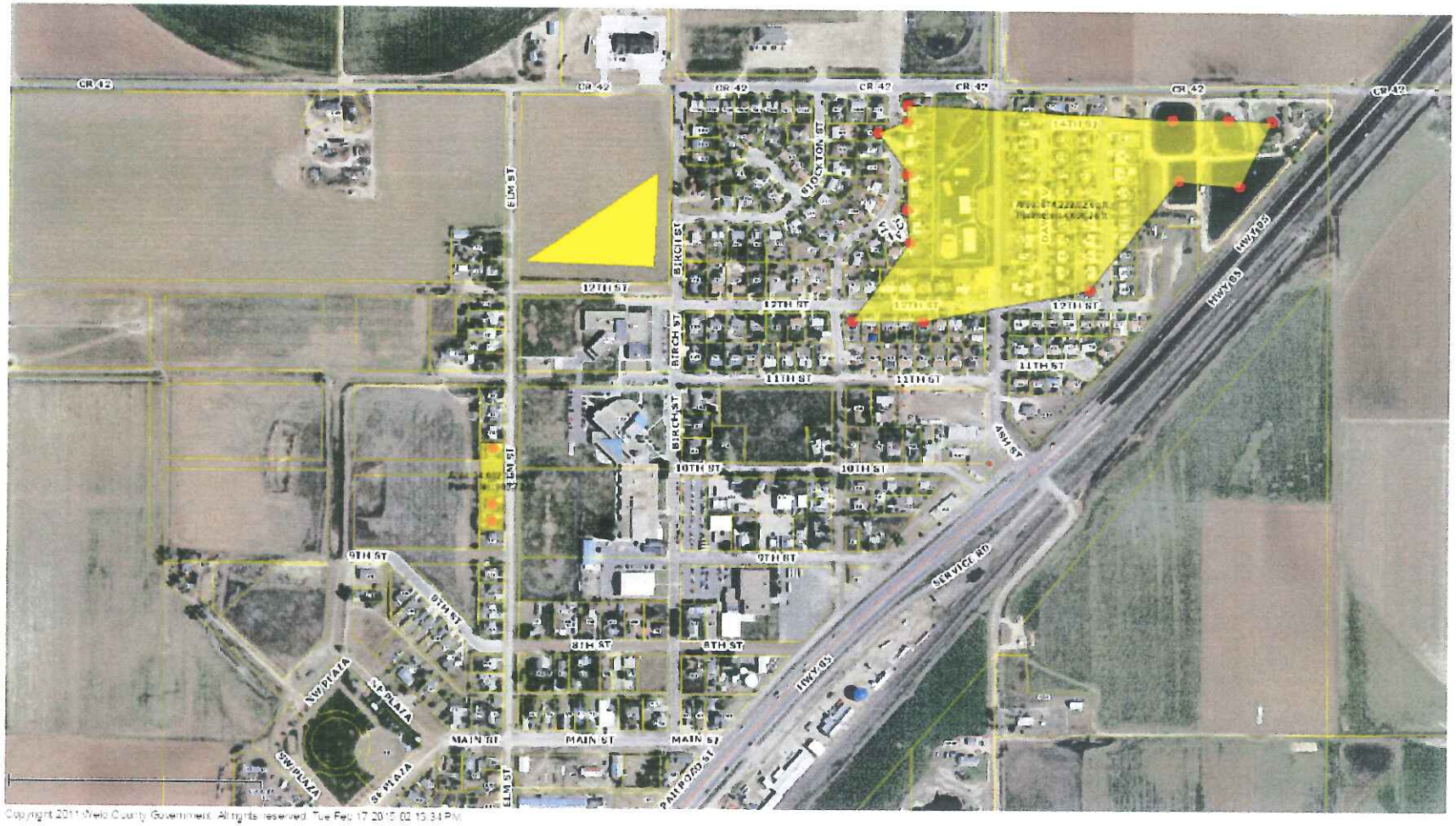
problem that will continue to cause damage to valuable farmlands and residential properties.

- I am here on behalf of the Town of Gilcrest however the issues I have illustrated do not just affect the Town. The number of people and properties being adversely affected by this issue is growing daily. Please consider this Bill carefully and then vote in support of approval.

Thank you for your time.

Town of Gilcrest Ground Water Issues

As reported 2014-2015



Bullet Points
House Agricultural Committee Meeting
February 18, 2015

- Groundwater Levels Rising For Past 10 Years
  - Water Level Was 33' in 1996 (*Park Well Drilled)*
  - Water Level Was 11' In 2007
  - Sewer Line Collapsed Due To High Groundwater In 2010
  - Highest Water Level In 2014 was 5'4"
  - Water Level In January 2015 Is 1' To 2' Higher, Depending On Location, Than In January 2014
  - The Illustration Shows The Locations Of The Flooded Basements With Respect To The Town

- 12 Homes Reporting Flooding In Basements And Crawl Spaces Since August 2014.
  - Median Household Income Is $42,000.
  - Homeowners Are Spending Upwards Of $20,000 To Install Sump Pumps. Some Homes Have Multiple Pumps.
  - Some Homeowners Have Stated They Will Have No Choice But To Let Their Homes Go If What They Have Done Does Not Work.
  - Expect More Homes In 2015, Recurring Problems With Homes Flooded In 2014. Residents With Damage In 2014 Cannot Afford Additional Repairs In 2015. More May Have To Walk Away From Their Homes.
  - These Are Pictures Of One Home That The Owner, Who Is In Her 70s, Spent Her Entire Savings Fixing. The Cost To Her Was $26,000 And If The Water Rises Again She Will Be Back Where She Started With Repairs.

- Gilcrest Taxpayers Have Already Spent In Excess Of $500,000 Repairing A Collapsed Sewer Transmission Line And Acting To Mitigate Groundwater At The Wastewater Treatment Plant.

- The Rising Groundwater Has Pushed The Liners Of The Lagoons Up Creating Large Bubbles. One Bubble Has Already Ruptured. It Was In The Final Treatment Pond. What If The Next Bubble Is In The First Treatment Pond? Water Quality In The Entire Aquifer Could Be Affected.

- The Bill To Repair Damage Done To The Plant By Rising Groundwater Is Currently Estimated To Be $1,191,000. Sewer Bills In Gilcrest Are Currently $48 Per Month. Remember the $42,000 Median Income Number?

- If Water Levels Continue To Rise Damage Can Be Expected In The Repaired Facilities.

- It Remains To Be Seen What All This Will Do To Home Values, Salability Or Mortgage Availability. We Can't Take Advantage Of The Current Housing Need Due To Constraints Caused By The Rising Groundwater.

- Gilcrest Needs Immediate Dewatering And Funding To Do So.

- It Appears That There Is A 40 Year Old Ongoing Water War Between The Upper River Well Users And The Lower River Surface Users. Gilcrest Is In The Middle And Paying A Terrible Price In A Battle They Have No Stake Or Power In. There Needs To Be Cooperation Between Those Two Groups To Get Gilcrest Out Of The Middle.

- I support The Original HB 1178, However, Even If The Bill Passes In Its Original Form Gilcrest Will Need, At Minimum, To Operate Our 3 Existing Wells As Dewatering Wells To Lower The Groundwater And Protect Homes In 2015. We Need Money To Pay For The Costs To Pump And For Pipe To Divert Water.

- I Strongly Support Amendment L001 Because It Is The Emergency Bill For Short Term Relief To Lower The Groundwater That Gilcrest Needs.

- Please Support The Emergency Actions Needed To Prevent Further Damage in 2015 And Avoid Future Flooding That Impacts Both Personal Property And Public Facilities.

- None Of These Impacts Are A Result, Or Should Be A Responsibility, Of The People Living In Our Town.

To Whom it may Concern

I put in the basement in June of 1998 the water has never came in the basement until Aug. of ~~2013~~ 2014. The damage cost so far has come to $17600, not included is spray Killing the mold it created, and we have developed a cough from it

please excuse the writing as I am 80.

Leland D Roemmich

1201 Moore Dr.

Lilcrest Co.

Town of Gilcrest
PO Box 128
Gilcrest, CO 80623

To whom it may concern,

I am a 75 year old widow who has lived at 1208 Vine Street since 1976 and am the original owner of my home. My basement started flooding in October due to the rising levels of ground water. In the 38 years I have lived in my home I have not had problems with water in my basement.

I had a sump pump installed but the clay soil underneath my home did not allow the groundwater to flow to the pump and a drain system was put in around the outer walls of the basement. Since the drain was put in the sump pump has been pumping water out every five to seven minutes.

The costs incurred to date are:

Sump Pump	$ 1,800
Drain system	$21,000
Movers	$ 400
Pod & Storage	$ 346 per month

The cost still to be incurred will include additional months of storage, re-carpeting and movers to return stored future to the basement.

As this was an act of nature my insurance would not cover any of the costs. As a retiree on a fixed income these costs are a server financial burden.

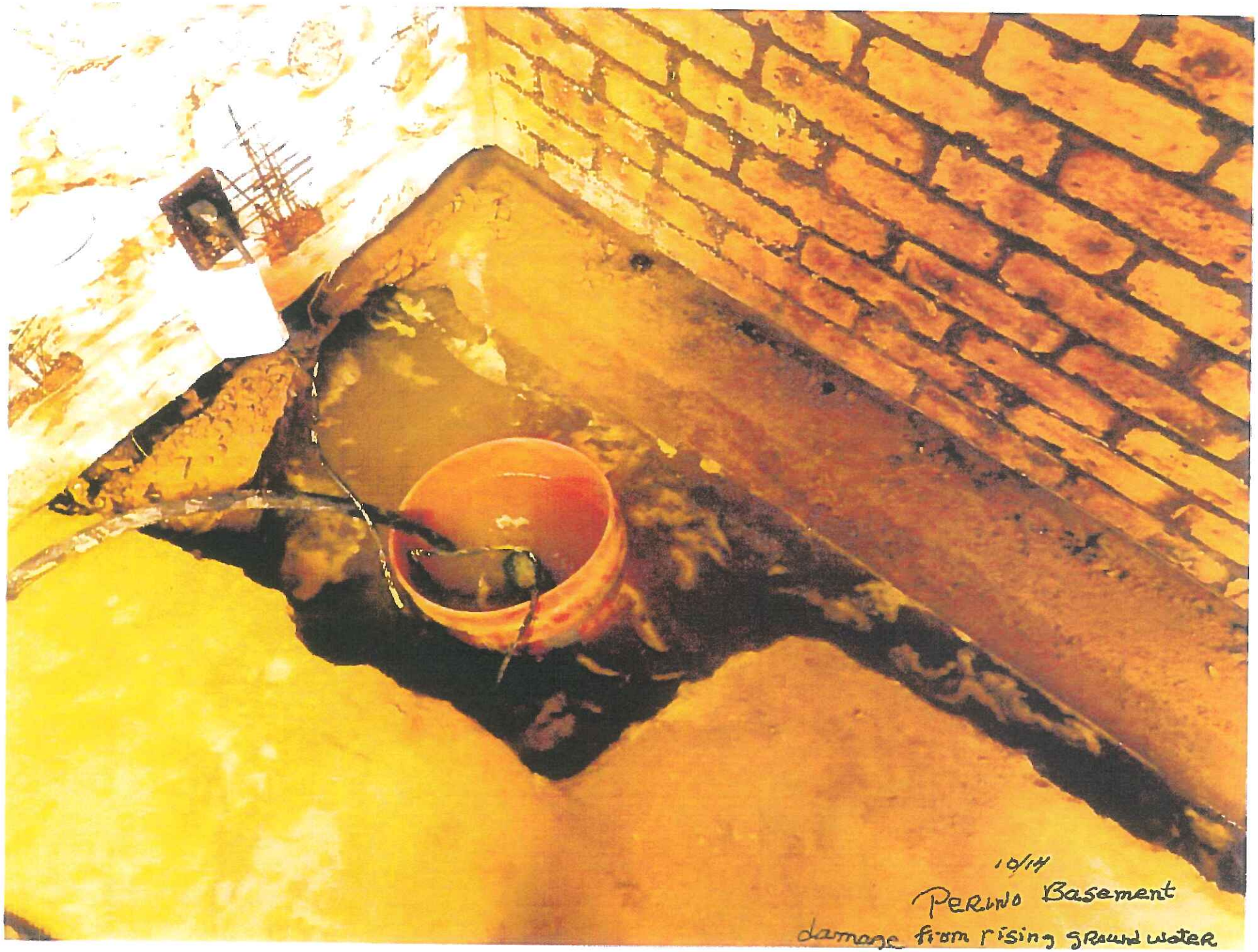
Sincerely,

MaryAnn Perino


Perino Basement
Rising Ground water
damage 10/14

10-14

Perimeter Basement
cracking cement to access
ground water table


10/14
PERINO Basement
damage from rising ground water


10/14
PERINO Basement
(Damage from) Rising ground water levels


PERINO Basement
Damage from rising
ground water levels
1/14

Date: 4/22/15

To the Colorado House Appropriations Committee:

My name is Bryan Bird, I own the home at 408 12th St in Gilcrest CO, and have since December of 2004. I purchased this home from my in laws who purchased the home during the summer of 1998. Over the twenty six plus years this home has been in our family there has never been a problem with flooding of any sort until September of 2014, when the increasingly high ground water levels encroached upon our basement causing flooding and thousands of dollars of damage, not to mention the displacement from the basement of the home which has three bedrooms and a secondary bathroom. This flooding caused damage to the newly installed (March of 2013) carpet, along with the baseboard and drywall; and also created potential health risks due to the formation of mold.

We worked as quickly as possible to rectify the issue, we began removing the water logged carpet and padding within 24 hours of flooding, working tirelessly to vacuum and mop up water that continuously flowed into the basement from seams and along the foundation. We attended a town hall meeting that first night where we learned that rising ground water levels was a known issue in and around Gilcrest and that other home owners were also being affected. The city informed us that they too were having problems with the sewer and waste water treatment ponds due to the high ground water levels, and that they had no legal recourse in regards to pumping additional water in the hopes of lowering the levels. It was recommended that I contact the State, specifically the State Engineers office which I did the following day. I reached out to a Mr. Dick Wolfe, State engineer and Director of the Colorado Division of Water Resources. Although Mr. Wolfe was very kind in taking my call and discussing the issue, he also had no good news. What Mr. Wolfe informed me was that his hands were tied due to the legislation already in place restricting wells from being pumped and that the current legislation restricting well pumping was the direct cause of the rising ground water levels. He suggested we try to approach the legislation to enact change, and that he would reach out to the Governor's office to see if anything could be done on their end.

Over the next week we worked tirelessly to vacuum and mop up the seemingly endless amount of water that continued to flow into our basement. We had to hire a company to come in and test for mold to ensure the house was safe, what they found was elevated levels of mold in the air despite our best efforts to keep the basement dry. This led to a flood cut of all the existing walls, where four feet of drywall was removed around the entire basement, in some locations we found mold growing up to three feet high on the back of the drywall. We had to purchase and run a dehumidifier in the basement 24/7 to try and keep mold from growing and causing any further damage while we continued to deal with water flowing into the basement.

Not knowing how to proceed I contacted several local companies to obtain quotes on finding a resolution to the problem. The first quote was from Ben Frankin Plumbing out of Loveland, their plan was to put in place an interior French drain with two sump pits; cost $26,000. The next quote was from a mechanical company out of Greeley, they agreed with the plan from Franklin Plumbing and their quote was $22,000. These types of costs were not within our reach or financial capabilities. Gilcrest is not a rich town, most home values are below $150,000, with many below $100,000, so the thought of trying to

figure out how to finance a project that is 25-33% of your home value was overwhelming, what does one do when the cost is almost unattainable, yet without something being done the value of your home because almost nothing.

So we decided that with the help of friends and family that we would tackle the project ourselves. We hoped that we might be able to minimize the work, effort, and cost by going in stages based off of the quotes we had received. We started by installing a single sump pit in the North West corner of the basement. One would think a single pit wouldn't be that difficult, yet one would be wrong with that assumption when dealing with existing flooding conditions. After jack hammering through the concrete we spent the next several hours digging in saturated silt, sand, and dirt, with the constant flow of water coming in. We would have to stop every few shovel full of dirt and vacuum out the water that had collected at the bottom of our pit so that we could take a few more shovel full out. Every shovel full that we took out had to be put in a five gallon bucket and then hand carried up and out of the basement. It took three grown and very capable men hours to install this one pit. With the newly installed pit in place the pump was running every few minutes. Over the course of the next week we saw half of the basement dry up, but only half, the single pit was not enough to handle the entire basement and the high ground water levels.

So a second pit was installed on the Southern side of the house, the same process was used, the work of digging through silt and water logged sand. After this second pit was completed about another 25% of the basement dried up, but water continued to low in. At this point there was no other choice but to complete the work by installing a French drain. And the same back breaking work had to be done along the foundation of the basement, about 130 linear feet of concrete had to be jack hammered up, placed in buckets and hand carried out, then the process of digging through water logged silt, sand, and dirt in some places almost two feet down. We had a crew of eight people working, and still the project took multiple days. Part of the process of installing a French drain is to not only dig a trench to lay the pipe, but you have to first lay a rock bed, all that rock for the entire trench had to be hand loaded and carried down into the basement.

The French drain seemed to work, over the coming weeks the basement dried, although there is still concern that the drying of the basement may have been as much about the time of year, the reduced amount of ground water due to the winter months. The pumps that were running every few minutes expelling water from the sump pits were running in longer increments, there is still a very valid concern that with the spring run-off, or continued legislation that restricts well pumping that the water could return and that the French drain or pits may not be able to keep up with the flow. To make matters worse we are only allowed to pump the water out into our yard, so we are only circulating the water, not actually moving it to prevent it from coming back.

Once the French drain was in place and seemingly working the process started to return the basement to a useable place within the home. First concrete had to be hand carried into the basement to seal up the flooring that had been torn up for the drain. Then drywall rehung, walls painted, flooring installed, trim completed, and cleaning, lots and lots of cleaning from months of demolition work.

All told the project, done almost entirely by ourselves with the help of family has cost us upwards of $10,000, renting tools, paying for disposal of debri (half a dozen dumpster loads), drywall, flooring, concrete, pumps, pits, etc. We may have cut our costs in half by doing the work ourselves, but this unexpected costs have hurt our family, we had no plans or savings put aside for this type of work or problem. And although we hope the solution we have put in place works, there is still a great risk to our home as long as ground water levels stay high.

There are many homes like ours with full basements, homes that reach 8-12 ft below the surface. We need the legislatures help in lowering and managing the ground water levels so that not only our home can be saved moving forward, but that hopefully other homes in and around our area won't have to go through the same financial and personal burden relating to ground water flooding. I realize there are many people affected by the use and storage of ground water, all we are asking for is that the legislature consider managing the ground level waters in such a manner as to help protect families who have owned homes in these areas for decades, our economy is already tough enough as it is, in fact I have been unemployed for five months now, making the financial burdens of this unexpected project that much more difficult.

I truly appreciate your time, attention, and care in helping us address and resolve these issue hopefully not only in the short term, but to find long term solutions that protect us all. I have included a few pictures of our basement as the work was performed. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding this letter.

Thanks,

Bryan Bird

720-300-0485