CITY OF NEWBURGH

Office of the City Manager

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Michael G. Ciaravino, City Manager

September 27, 2016

Dr. Nathan Graber, Director
Center for Environmental Health
NYS Department of Health
Corning Tower
Empire State Plaza,
Albany, NY 12237

Re: City of Newburgh PFOS Drinking Water Contamination
Biological Testing and Health Assessment Program

Dear Dr. Graber:

I would like to thank you and your staff for participating in the public meeting on PFOS held in the City of Newburgh on September 19th, and especially for announcing officially that the Department of Health will be undertaking a biological testing program to monitor exposure to PFOS. As we understood your presentation at the meeting, the program will include the collection of blood samples, collection of information on risk factors and an information program on the meaning of the results.

In the interest of helping to define the program and the needs of our community, I'd like to summarize some of the comments made from the audience at the meeting as well as add my own thoughts on our priorities.

1. We need to know the date, time and place where the blood testing program will be conducted, how people can enroll in the program, and how long a wait they will have, if any, to be tested and to get their results back. I understand there is much to be done in preparation, but we especially need this information by the time of our next public meeting ***on Tuesday, October 25, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at the Newburgh Armory Center 321 South William Street, Newburgh, New York 12550.***

2. We need to know that everyone who has been exposed and wishes to be tested will be permitted to enroll in the program. As was pointed out at the meeting, the City water system affects people outside the City, not the least of which are residents who have moved away and people who work in the City and live outside the City.

3. If you need facilities for the taking of blood samples in the City, we stand ready to provide whatever space you need in one of our City buildings. Please provide us with a description of the space and facility needs so we can organize whatever staff movements may be needed.

4. We understand that the laboratory analysis is unique to PFOS, or perhaps to PFC's, and therefore you will be relying on the Wadsworth Laboratory. However, I would like to repeat our offer to make space available if you are able to establish a temporary lab in the City. If we do so, the City may benefit from faster turnaround times as well as employment opportunities.

5. A number of residents testified at the meeting that they have been to their doctors and were informed that their doctors have no relevant information on the significance of their potential exposure. We need to have an outreach program to educate physicians within this geographical area on the health risks associated with EPA's lifetime health advisory for exposure to PFC's, along with any other sources you may have.

6. Not only do the physicians need an outreach program, the individuals and families who have been exposed to PFC's need a clear explanation from your Department of what is known and what is not known about the health risks of the exposure. As you know from the public meeting, some individuals have already ascribed their particular illness to PFOS exposure when no relationship to such an illness appears in the literature. These questions need to be addressed.

7. Addressing health effects more generally, I would like to suggest that your Department include in its study specific research into whether the individuals who have been exposed to PFOS, taken as a whole, have experienced a higher incidence of any illness or disease that may be related to PFOS exposure. Perhaps Newburgh could be the source of new study undertaken to obtain information on health effects that are suggested in the literature.

8. In connection with such a health effects study, I assume you would want to know how long the exposure has existed. Several residents raised this question at the meeting. We know a large spill of PFOS was reported at the airport many years ago. Your excellent work detailing current PFOS contamination in the water should be expanded into historical analysis of exposure in drinking water to determine the duration of exposure.

9. We also look to you for assistance in reviving your Department's Source Water Assessment Program and Watershed Rules and Regulations program to enable the City to protect its watershed from future spills and routine releases. I understand this program was defunded a number of years ago, but I would hope this drinking watershed crisis is adequate justification to facilitate funding for at least a partial program to prepare a new, accurate and comprehensive source water assessment for the City of Newburgh.

10. Finally, I ask that we establish a weekly chain of communication to keep the City abreast of your progress. I can assure you that this issue is of the utmost importance to all of us in the City and certainly my highest priority. Martin Brand at DEC has been most helpful in keeping the City abreast of DEC's efforts on a weekly basis. I suggest we now need the same arrangement with you.

Again, I thank you for making the decision to get the blood testing program underway. I look forward to working with you to implement all of the above action items in the City as soon as possible. Please contact me at any time should I be able to be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Michael G. Ciaravino
City Manager

cc: Fire Chief Terry Ahlers, City of Newburgh
Captain Paul Pullar, City of Newburgh
Captain William Horton, City of Newburgh
Police Chief Daniel Cameron, City of Newburgh
Thomas Scaglione, Governor's Office
Judith Enck, Regional Administrator, USEPA
Basil Seggos, Commissioner, NYSDEC
Martin Brand, Deputy Commissioner, NYSDEC
Kenneth Lynch, Executive Deputy, NYSDEC
Kelly Turturro, Acting Director, Region 3
Dr. Nathan Graber, Director of the Center of Environmental Health, NYSDOH
Catherine McCabe, Regional Administrator, USEPA
Pat Evangelista, Region 2, USEPA
Mark Maddaloni, Region 2, USEPA
Paul Simon, Region 2, USEPA
Angela Carpenter, Region 2, USEPA
John Martin, Region 2, USEPA
Cecilia Echols, Region 2, USEPA
Robert Schick, Division Director of Environmental Remediation, NYSDEC
George Heitzman, Director, Environmental Remediation Region 3& 6, NYSDEC
James Tierney, Division of Water, NYSDEC
Jeffrey R. Conway, Region 3, NYSDEC
Dr. Howard Zucker, Commissioner, NYS Department of Health, (NYSDOH)
William Gilday, Bureau of Water Supply Protection, NYSDOH
Dr. Eli N. Avila, Commissioner, Orange County Department of Health, OCDOH
Keith Miller, Orange County Department of Health, OCDOH
Daniel Shapley, Water Quality Program Manager, Riverkeeper
Judy Kennedy, Mayor, City of Newburgh
City Council, City of Newburgh