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August 29, 2016

On behalf of the residents of Petersburgh, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to give voice to our concerns regarding PFOA drinking water contamination in our community. The importance of these hearings is critical in determining what happened and ensuring that situations such as this do not arise again.

There is, and should be, much talk about accountability when it comes to this issue. There are those who hold the industries involved as solely responsible. Others lay blame on the agencies assigned responsibility for the regulating and overseeing of the chemicals involved. Still others will place accountability on the elected officials responsible for providing adequate funding and staffing for those agencies to effectively do their jobs. And there are those who will place the blame on some or all of the aforementioned.

But I would like to provide you a few examples of the accountability that I, as Supervisor of the Town of Petersburgh, face every day.

I am accountable to the young mother who comes to me angry that she has forever lost the intimacy of nursing her newborn child; who speaks with fear of even bathing that child.

I am accountable to the homeowner, about to retire and downsize, fearful that she will be unable to do so because of uncertainties over the salability of her property.

I am accountable to the worker who calls me late at night, unable to sleep, fearful that their job will be lost or moved. You can't let it happen, they tell me. How will I pay my mortgage? How will I feed and clothe my family?

I am accountable to the parents who raised their children, their now grown children, in this community, and now live in fear of the damage that might have been done to them.

And I am accountable to the individual, mourning over the loss of a loved one,

forever wondering about the illness that took their life.

This is the reality that we live with daily. And in our world we rarely deal with numbers. In our world we deal with names, we deal with faces. I urge everyone to put names and faces to the numbers.

And so while we determine what got us here, we need to remember that we are here. And this brings to all of us a new accountability. For now it is a matter of making as right as possible what has been done. With this there can be no excuses, no finger pointing. And in repairing what has been done, there can be no more damage inflicted on those who have suffered so much already.

We need the reparations done correctly.

We need a clean and sustainable water source. And we need an infrastructure that will ensure this water is safely delivered to our residents.

We need the guarantee of a stable economic base, where workers are not fearful of losing their jobs, and homeowners can rest assured of the stability of their property values, and where new growth can occur.

We need the assurance of long-term health monitoring. Can I repeat that? We need the assurance of long-term health monitoring.

It is not hyperbole to say that the world is watching what is happening here today. In a very real sense, the world is watching. For there are tens of thousands of communities asking "What chemical is next? And is it going to be us?"

And if it is them, they are looking to see how they will be treated, how things will be made right for them.

There is opportunity here to begin the process of making things right. I emphatically urge all parties involved to make that happen.

Thank you.

Alan Webster
Supervisor