EPA's Notes from September 6, 2016 "Concerned C8 Citizens" Meeting
Petersburgh, New York

Meeting commenced at 7:00 PM at the Petersburgh Veterans Memorial Hall located at 71 Main Street, Petersburgh, N.Y. 12138. Meeting organizers had copies of Gina McCarthy's September 1, 2016 letter to Commissioners Zucker and Seggos available for meeting attendees.

In addition to Rensselaer County Executive Kathy Jimino, the following representatives from USEPA Region 2, NYSDOH, NYSDEC, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and Rensselaer County Health Department attended the meeting:

Larisa Romanowski, Public Affairs Specialist, USEPA Region 2
Mark Maddaloni, Toxicologist, USEPA Region 2
Pat Evangelista, Office of the Regional Administrator, USEPA Region 2
Thomas Gentile, Air Toxics Section Chief, Division of Air Resources, NYSDEC
Jim Quinn, Project Manager, NYSDEC Region 4
Keith Goertz, Regional Director, NYSDEC Region 4
Robert Swider, Regional Environmental Health Director, NYSDOH
Jim Bowers, NYSDOH
Dawn Hettrick, NYSDOH
Dr. David Smith, Division of Animal Industry Director, New York State Department of Ag & Markets
Rich Elder, Rensselaer County Environmental Health Director
Maryfran Wachunas, Rensselaer County Public Health Director

Various updates related to the PFOA contamination and status of the landfill on Jones Hollow Road were provided to an audience of approximately 90 people and questions were answered.

Rensselaer County Health Department

Reported they collected 496 water samples from private wells from 393 homes (some homes sampled more than once). The PFOA concentration in these samples was presented as follows:

68 samples below 20ppt
35 samples above 20ppt and below 70ppt
58 samples between 70ppt and 1000ppt
13 samples greater that 1000ppt
172 samples at non-detect

52 POETS have been installed and are operational. An additional 10 POETS are in the process of being cleared for operation and 9 are pending installation. Anyone in the Town of Petersburgh wishing to have their well sampled can call Rensselaer County Health Department at (518) 270-2655 and the request will be forwarded to NYSDEC for action.

Residents are seeking further clarification from DEC on the details related to the maintenance of the POET systems. DEC has indicated that they will provide additional details at a future meeting.

NYSDEC

Reported their negotiations with Taconic Plastics are going slowly and how they believe the company will only be willing to do so much. Taconic will not commit to do any work related to the landfill or private wells below 70ppt. They are willing to perform investigation related to their facility and incurring the cost of POETS for private wells above 70ppt. Taconic has also agreed to pay for bottled water and its distribution. NYS has committed to paying for 6 months of residents' water bills. DEC provided copies of data for landfill and information related to maintenance of POETS. DEC also requested residents to come forward with any information related to suspected dump sites.

DEC indicated it plans to commence investigation work at the landfill this coming fall. PFOA and PFOS have been found there. There was a strong request from residents that DEC take immediate action to contain the leachate migrating from the landfill.

DEC reported that water coolers have been installed at the Berlin school while a filtration system for the school is being designed and will be installed. DEC further indicated that a municipal filtration system for Berlin may be challenging and may require looking at other options.

Although they continue to negotiate, DEC expects Taconic to maintain POETS on wells with over 70ppt PFOA while DEC maintains those under 70ppt.

A fish study is also being considered because of the PFOS discovered at the landfill (DEC seems to think the PFOA does not bio accumulate).

DEC will require Taconic to perform stack testing for PFOA and model the results to determine potential community impacts. DEC indicated previous stack testing results which have been publicly requested are being reviewed by in-house attorneys for release.

DEC indicated it does not have a list of vegetables that absorb PFOA the most but it is prudent to wash vegetables.

NYSDOH

NYSDOH approved of GAC system design on August 17, 2016. GAC system expected to be operational by the end of October or November of 2016.

At least one more serum testing event will be scheduled in Hoosick Falls while residents strongly requested event be held in Petersburgh.

DOH indicated it analyzed serum for PFOA only. This conflicts with what we had heard from Nathan Graber.

We learned DOH is maintaining leftover blood samples from participants for potential additional future testing as per its agreement with participants. Petersburgh resident, Emily Marpe, strongly requested that DOH use these samples, especially those of her children, to analyze for additional PFCs. DOH will follow-up with response.

The following points were made during the meeting's Qs and As session:

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- Petersburgh needs funding to perform study to determine potential alternative drinking water sources.

- Petersburgh issued its own "no fishing" and "no swimming" advisory (related to potential discharges from the landfill).

- Resident identified concern about his observation of increased prey bird fatalities and requested NYS investigate. DEC indicated it would perform necropsies if dead birds were provided. Resident committed to delivering dead owl to DEC.

- County Executive Kathy Jimino stressed the importance of good communication between EPA and the other involved state and federal agencies.

- The question/concern was raised about whether sampling is being conducted to test for the chemical Tconic Plastics is currently using in its plant (which replaced the PFOA).Issue of breastfeeding was raised by a resident and general response recommending breastfeeding was provided based on benefits of breastfeeding outweighing risks associated with exposure to PFOA.

- Significant frustration expressed about the delays associated with NYS negotiations with Taconic.

- A resident reiterated she hardly never drank water from her private well and yet she has a blood serum level of over 200ppb. She is still convinced her exposure is from air emissions from Taconic. DEC intends to further investigate her situation.

- Next meeting is to be held on October 6, 2016 at the same location.

Media Coverage

- Time Warner Cable News

- NBC Channel 13

- Eastwick Press

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