



# CITY OF NEWBURGH

Office of the City Manager

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Michael G. Ciaravino, City Manager

September 12, 2016

Hon. Howard A. Zucker, M.D., Commissioner  
New York State Department of Health  
Corning Tower  
Empire State Plaza,  
Albany, NY 12237

Re: City of Newburgh Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS)  
Drinking Water Contamination  
Biological Testing and Health Assessment Program

Dear Dr. Zucker:

I last wrote to you on this subject on July 13, 2016, to request your assistance in implementing a biological testing and health assessment program for the people who live and work in the City of Newburgh. A copy of that letter is enclosed for your convenience. As mentioned in the letter, at the public meeting held in Newburgh on June 20, 2016, Dr. Graber was asked what the Department was doing to address the health concerns raised during the meeting. Dr. Graber responded that the Department was looking into it and would respond at a future time.

A second public meeting on the subject of PFOS contamination has now been scheduled for Monday, September 19 at 6 p.m. at Mount St. Mary College, 330 Powell Avenue, Newburgh. A copy of the flyer announcing the meeting is enclosed for your review. As you can see, Dr. Graber is already listed as a member of the panel, but of course both of you are invited to attend. It is our greatest hope that at that meeting either you or Dr. Graber will be able to lay out in detail your plans and your timetable for implementing a biological monitoring and health assessment program to determine the health impact, if any, on those who have been drinking our water.

I will not repeat the comments made in my last letter, all but two of which remain valid today. The two factors that have changed are the Superfund status of Stewart Airport and the amount of information we now have about the possible duration of the contamination.

On August 12, 2016, DEC declared the Stewart Airport Air National Guard (ANG) Base a state Superfund site, after finding the U.S. Department of Defense potentially responsible for contaminating the City's water supply. We have been led to believe that this step will provide additional authority for the State to move quickly not only to ensure environmental remediation of the contamination, but also to implement any needed biological monitoring and health assessment programs. In this respect, the City of Newburgh would now appear to be at the same regulatory stage as the Village of Hoosick Falls, also feeling the effects of a nearby Superfund site, where biological monitoring and health assessment programs have been underway for some time.

Secondly, DEC has continued to develop helpful additional information concerning the history of PFOS use at the ANG base. We have recently learned from DEC that there was a significant spill of PFOS containing material at the ANG Base as early as 1990. We have been told that the 1990 spill involved a release of 2,000 gallons from each of two tanks, for a total release of 4,000 gallons. It is assumed that this release eventually made its way into Washington Lake, but more work needs to be done to understand how much would have reached the Lake and how much would have gone elsewhere. Nonetheless, we now have reason to believe that PFOS may have been present in the Lake for the last 25 years.

There may be a knowledge gap opening up here which hopefully you will be able to fill. DEC's responsibility is to remedy the current contamination problem and to reimburse the innocent parties, such as the City of Newburgh, for their expenses. For this reason, DEC has a marginal interest in the history of PFOS releases at the ANG Base to the extent it helps them understand how to provide a permanent remedy for the current contamination. In your role addressing the health of the City's residents and workers who have been exposed to this contamination, I assume you will want to understand in greater detail the history of the exposure, which means understanding in greater detail the history of the releases at the ANG Base.

DEC has done an excellent job addressing the current emergency. The temporary treatment plant being installed to allow us to reduce water levels in Washington Lake to avoid overtopping the dam, the permanent water treatment plant being built to allow the City to resume using Washington Lake, the strengthened connection to the Catskill Aqueduct to survive the winter and the agreement to reimburse the City for the temporary purchase of Aqueduct water are all deeply appreciated.

It is now time to turn to addressing our health concerns, and we look forward to working with you in this regard. We look forward to your Department's participation in the public meeting on September 19 and to the advice you will provide at that time. As always, we stand ready to assist in any way we can. Please feel free to contact me in advance of the public meeting if I can provide any information or other assistance.

Sincerely,



Michael G. Ciaravino  
City Manager  
City of Newburgh

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  
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