

Ulster County Legislature

Carl Belfiglio, Legislator District No. 8
Chairman: Environmental,
Energy & Technology Committee



P.O. Box 1800
Kingston, NY 12402
Telephone: 845 340-3900
FAX: 845 340-3651

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: Krista J. Barringer

August 30, 2013

PUBLIC COMMENT SOUGHT ON NYC WATER FILTRATION AVOIDANCE DETERMINATION

(Kingston, NY) - In response to the New York State Department of Health's refusal to hold public hearings on the New York State (NYS) Department of Health (DOH) Filtration Avoidance Determination (FAD), the members of the Environmental Energy and Technology will hold a Public Hearing at 4:00 PM to 7:30 PM on Wednesday, September 25, 2013 in the Legislative Chambers on the sixth floor of the County Office Building, located at 244 Fair Street, Kingston, New York.

Environmental, Energy, and Technology Committee Chairman Carl Belfiglio noted October 15 2013 is the deadline for comments by the public to the NYS DOH and the purpose of this hearing is to give the public an opportunity to voice its opinions and possible concern over the NYS Department of Health's Filtration Avoidance Determination, also known as the FAD. As currently only written comments are being accepted by the DOH, all testimony presented at the Public Hearing will be compiled and presented to NYS DOH on behalf of Ulster County residents.

Chairman Carl Belfiglio, noting there is currently an interim operating protocol governing the releases, asked "What good are protocols if you continue to allow releases by the NYC DEC of millions of gallons of turbid water onto our environment? Enforcement discretion is an abuse of power because it violates the rule of law, allowing those in authority to apply justice only when they choose."

Town of Saugerties Supervisor Kelly Myers stated, "It is disgraceful that the New York State Department of Health refuses to hold public hearings on DEP's draft Filtration Avoidance Determination. This is essentially declaring war on Upstate New York. This document gives DEP the freedom to continue to destroy our environment and places no responsibility on DEP for the effects of dumping their waste products – mud and pollution – into the Esopus Creek and onto the backs of Ulster County residents. I am thrilled that the Ulster County Legislature has listened to the voice of the people. We cannot allow our natural and economic resources to be destroyed. "

Town of Marbletown Supervisor Michael Warren stated, “There has been an insidious relationship with the DEP, the DEC, and the Department of Health...the Department of Health basically had no clue what we were talking about. This is the department that is making the decision about the FAD. We were pushing for, right from the very beginning, public hearings on the FAD...to ensure that all the people, all parties understand exactly what is going on.”

Ulster County Legislator representing the Town of Saugerties and Environmental, Energy, and Technology Committee Member Mary Wawro stated, “Ulster County has seen too often where the State has made decisions without garnering ample public input. If the DOH will not hold a Public Hearing, the Ulster County Legislature’s Environmental, Energy, and Technology Committee will and will submit all comments on behalf of the Ulster County residents businesses and visitors.”

Town of Esopus Supervisor John Coutant noted his community extracts it’s drinking water from the Hudson River and stated, “the turbidity factor, that Legislator Belfiglio spoke about, is in fact one of the biggest concerns that we have and consequently, my Town Board, my water and sewer people, and our residents stand behind any and all actions that is taken by the Legislative body and/or the higher levels to cease and desist this indignity that is occurring to all of us.”

Town of Ulster Supervisor James Quigley recognized the work of the Lower Esopus Watershed Partnership, the Catskill Watershed Coalition, and the Watershed Advisory Group formed by Congressman Chris Gibson. He stated, “These groups have been tireless in their efforts to protect our environment and their continued voice in demanding action by the State is the rallying cry for all of Ulster County.”

The hearing will start at 4:00 and conclude at 7:30. Individuals are asked to RSVP by calling (845)340-3696 to ensure a time slot that accommodates their work and family obligations on that day. To hear the audio of the full Press Conference today, please visit the Committee’s website at <http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/legislature/committeesinfo/2013/Press%20Conference%20Audio.MP3>.

All attendees at today’s Press Conference, including Town of Ulster Supervisor James Quigley III, concurred with Supervisor Myers as she concluded, “Your voice is very important. Please come and voice your opinion at the Public Hearing announced today by the Ulster County Legislature. We have to speak out to stop this.”

###

(Photos attached)



(l to r: Town of Ulster Supervisor James Quigley, Ulster County Legislator District 8 Carl Belfiglio, Town of Esopus Supervisor John Coutant, Town of Marbletown Supervisor Michael Warren, and Town of Saugerties Supervisor Kelly Myers)



(l to r: Ulster County Legislator District 8 Carl Belfiglio, Ulster County Legislator District 1 Mary Wawro, Town of Saugerties Supervisor Kelly Myers, Town of Ulster Supervisor James Quigley, Town of Esopus Supervisor John Coutant, and Town of Marbletown Supervisor Michael Warren)



(l to r: Town of Ulster Supervisor James Quigley, Town of Marbletown Supervisor Michael Warren, and Town of Esopus Supervisor John Coutant,)



(l to r: Ulster County Legislator District 8 Carl Belfiglio, Town of Ulster Supervisor James Quigley, Town of Esopus Supervisor John Coutant, Town of Saugerties Supervisor Kelly Myers and Town of Marbletown Supervisor Michael Warren)