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February 29, 2015

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

The Honorable Judith A. Enck
Administrator, Region 2
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 2
290 Broadway
New York, NY 10007-1866

Dear Administrators McCarthy and Enck:

I write to request information regarding the Ringwood Superfund Site located within the Fifth Congressional District of New Jersey, specifically regarding the groundwater test results conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

As you know, the EPA's management of the site is a decades old and ongoing concern for New Jersey residents. I believe that public health issues need to be dealt with in a transparent manner so that residents are well-informed about the safety of their communities and surrounding areas.

Recent groundwater tests raise additional concerns about the presence of toxic substances at the site. These reports found 1,4-dioxane, a probable human carcinogen that may result in liver, kidney, and upper respiratory damage, at levels close to 100 times the state maximum standard. Alarmingly, the EPA first had knowledge of a positive identification of this substance in November 2015, but failed to notify the public. In 2006, the site became the first superfund site to ever be relisted on the National Priorities List despite the EPA's 1994 claim that cleanup was finished. The continued presence of toxic substances at the site more than two decades later is unacceptable.

The protection of groundwater and drinking sources from contamination of toxic substances needs to be a priority. The Wanaque Reservoir—just one mile from the site—provides drinking water for more than 3 million people, and they deserve to be assured that their drinking water is clean and safe.

I believe a transparent and open line of communication between the EPA and New Jersey residents serves the best interests of all involved. Current law directs the EPA to disclose groundwater test results to the general public. To that end, please provide the following information as it relates to the Ringwood Superfund Site for the time period covering January 1, 2014 to the present:

1. All groundwater test reports currently in the EPA's possession; and
2. A list of known toxic substances and the levels of such substances found at the site.

I appreciate the EPA's recent plans to approve the drilling of additional monitoring wells. Since 1,4-dioxane is often used as a solvent in paint, I am disturbed that the EPA's initial testing excluded a search for this toxic substance. The discovery of significant levels of 1,4-dioxane demonstrates that the EPA's initial testing was inadequate and that corrective testing and cleanup must commence. Additionally, this discovery indicates that the presence of other toxic substances is possible. Please provide me with the EPA's plans for groundwater testing, specifically related to:

1. The EPA's plans for additional groundwater tests of known toxic substances present at the site;
2. A list of toxic substances that may be present at the site, but that the EPA has not tested for; and
3. The EPA's plans for additional groundwater tests of toxic substances that may be present at the site and have not been tested for in past groundwater tests.

I look forward to your prompt response as well as working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,


Scott Garrett