

County takes steps to legally ban sewage sludge

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Natalie Abruzzo / WSKG News

Town of Cameron board of supervisors hears public comment from resident Wayne Wells (standing) on the banning of sewage sludge as fertilizer in its jurisdiction at the board meeting on July 10.

A second Steuben County town is taking steps to ban the use of sewage sludge, also known as biosolids, as fertilizer.

On Wednesday, the town of Cameron unanimously passed a resolution to move forward with an environmental assessment of a potential permanent ban on sewage sludge and to present the findings to Steuben County for review.

It is part of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR). The SEQR is one of several steps the town must take to ban sewage sludge and the practice of landspreading in its jurisdiction.

Cameron follows in the footsteps of its neighbor, Thurston, which banned sewage sludge last year.

Sewage sludge, also called biosolids, is a byproduct of wastewater treatment plants repurposed and spread on farmlands to help grow crops and vegetation.

Concerns about PFAS, also called "forever chemicals", found in water samples in Cameron was the impetus behind the potential ban.

In April, the town passed a resolution for an additional year of its moratorium on the use of sewage sludge.

Cameron Town Supervisor Bob Manly said it is now in the hands of Steuben County. Manly said he wants the county to review all documents pertaining to the ban. The county has 30 days to respond to the environmental review.

Steuben County Legislator Wendy Lozo, who represents the towns of Cameron, Canisteo and Thurston, was in attendance at Wednesday's meeting. She was asked about the county's process to move forward with its review by Cameron resident Wayne Wells. However, she was not prepared to answer. Lozo said she would take the inquiries back to the county and get answers.

A public hearing on the potential ban is slated for Cameron's next board meeting on Aug. 14.



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During the July 10 town board meeting, Cameron resident, Tim Hargrave (standing) asks Steuben County legislator, Wendy Lozo (pink shirt) about a county resolution to work with an NYC law firm regarding PFAS.