

## TOWN OF THURSTON

## PUBLIC MEETING

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In Re:

TOWN OF THURSTON 2023 SEWER SLUDGE PUBLIC HEARING

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Held On: August 10, 2023

Held At: Campbell Savona High School

8455 County Road 125

Campbell, New York 14821

APPEARANCES (TOWN OF THURSTON):

Michael Volino, Thurston Town Supervisor

Holly Chase, Deputy Town Supervisor

Noel Sylvester, board member

Dan Gee, board member

Jennifer Hargrave, board member

TONIA L. TINKER

Hearing Reporter

1 MR. VOLINO: Good evening. My name  
2 is Michael Volino. I'm the Thurston  
3 Town Supervisor, and I'm here this  
4 evening with -- I will introduce the  
5 rest of the board. We have our deputy  
6 town supervisor, Holly Chase, Noel  
7 Sylvester, and Dan Gee, and Jennifer  
8 Hargrave.

9 On behalf of the Thurston Town  
10 Board, I want to thank everyone for  
11 coming this evening. We would like to  
12 thank the Campbell Savona School  
13 District as well for providing us with  
14 this venue.

15 We are here this evening to receive  
16 and accept public comment on the concept  
17 of enacting a complete ban on the  
18 disposal of sewage sludge in the town of  
19 Thurston.

20 Sewage sludge is composed of the  
21 solids left behind from municipal sewage  
22 and industrial waste treated in waste  
23 water treatment plants. As you may well  
24 know, the town residents have been

1           dealing with the effects of the land  
2           application of sewer sludge for 40-plus  
3           years. The town board anticipates  
4           circulating the wording of a proposed  
5           law at our meeting on August 16th.

6           On February 15, 2023, the town  
7           passed a one-year moratorium to halt the  
8           expansion of a new permit on a solid  
9           waste management facility after the sale  
10          and lease of Dickson's Bonny Hill  
11          facility to Casella Organics, a  
12          Maine-based company which isn't  
13          permitted to land apply sewer sludge in  
14          their home state given its contamination  
15          with PFOS compounds.

16          Keep in mind, Casella came to  
17          Thurston after Maine banned this  
18          practice. Casella has requested to add  
19          Bay Park, the waste water treatment  
20          facility located in Nassau County, to  
21          the existing Dickson plant spreading  
22          permit, a violation of a moratorium  
23          given it has the potential to double the  
24          size of the landspreading operation on

1 Bonny Hill.

2 Currently, 18 percent of sewage  
3 sludge is land-applied, the rest is  
4 landfilled. However, Governor Hochul  
5 wants to increase landspreading by 30  
6 percent in the coming years as stated in  
7 the recent New York State Solid Waste  
8 Management Plan.

9 This is alarming given that all  
10 sewage sludge, be it Class A or Class B,  
11 has been shown to be contaminated with  
12 PFAS compounds that gets into the  
13 groundwater of adjacent landowners and  
14 is being linked to several negative  
15 health effects, such as kidney, liver,  
16 thyroid, testicular cancers just to name  
17 a few.

18 The proceedings this evening are  
19 being transcribed by CSR Reporting from  
20 Big Flats. This will give us a written  
21 record of the statements made here  
22 tonight.

23 Therefore, when you speak, please  
24 speak slowly and don't rush. If the

1 court reporter can't understand what  
2 you're saying, she can't record  
3 properly. Please identify yourself and  
4 the town you are from at the beginning  
5 of your remarks.

6 The proceedings are also being  
7 video-recorded by the Campbell Savona  
8 Central School District.

9 Keep in mind, this is not a  
10 question-and-answer session. This is a  
11 public statement session. However, we  
12 have members of the Cameron Concerned  
13 Citizens for a Safe Environment, the  
14 Finger Lakes Sierra Club, Thurston  
15 Water, Zero-Waste Ithaca, and DEC  
16 representatives here this evening to  
17 answer any questions you may have after  
18 the hearing as it relates to land  
19 application of sewer sludge.

20 If you want to speak, please sign  
21 up on the speaker list outside of the  
22 door. We ask that you keep your  
23 comments to three minutes. Anything  
24 that's lengthy or detailed can be put in

1 writing. We also ask only one person to  
2 speak at a time, no interruptions,  
3 please.

4 The town board also has prepared a  
5 survey to help us understand the  
6 concerns that people have with sludge  
7 spreading. Copies of the survey are  
8 located outside of the door as well.

9 One final thing, we ask that you  
10 submit your written comments and  
11 completed public surveys to the town  
12 hall by Monday, August 14th, in order to  
13 give us time to consider your comments  
14 before our regular monthly meeting on  
15 Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. This survey can  
16 be slipped in the town mailbox if there  
17 is no one at the town hall. Equal  
18 weight will be given to written and oral  
19 comments.

20 This evening, it was my thought to  
21 allow elected officials to speak first.  
22 We do have representatives here this  
23 evening from Senator Tom O'Mara's office  
24 as well as Assemblyman Phil Palmesano's

1 office. They do not want to speak.

2 So I would like to begin this  
3 evening, we have Tim Walsh, the regional  
4 director of Region 8 as well as two  
5 deputy commissioners, Sally and Dave,  
6 who are here. You know, the governor  
7 had requested that, you know, they reach  
8 out to Thurston, so they're here  
9 representing the governor.

10 There's three of them, so I'm going  
11 to allow them nine minutes to speak, and  
12 then we will go from there.

13 So I believe Sally is going to be  
14 speaking.

15 Oh, yes, one other point. Please  
16 state your name and spell it before you  
17 begin speaking. Thank you.

18 MS. ROWLAND: Thank you. Thank  
19 you, everybody, for coming out tonight.  
20 I'm going to be taking the whole nine  
21 minutes because I'm a little more  
22 familiar with the biosolids program in  
23 New York State for DEC.

24 My name is Sally Rowland,

1 R-O-W-L-A-N-D. I'm out of the Albany  
2 office out of the -- what's called the  
3 organics recycling program. I'm just  
4 going to give you nine minutes,  
5 obviously I can't talk about everything  
6 about the program, but I'm more than  
7 welcome to answer questions after. But  
8 I will give you kind of an overview of  
9 what we do at DEC in regards to  
10 biosolids, recycling, and a little  
11 flavor in general what our program does.

12 I come out of the organics  
13 reduction and recycling program. What  
14 we do is we regulate the use of  
15 materials as fertilizers primarily. So  
16 if you take a waste material and you use  
17 it as a fertilizer, you fall in the  
18 regulation for us, or it could be  
19 processing to make a material.

20 So we regulate composting  
21 facilities, we regulate food waste  
22 composting facilities, we regulate the  
23 diversion of food even to donation, we  
24 regulate the land application of food



1 processing waste, so Chobani sends  
2 materials off to farms, so we regulate  
3 that, and we regulate the recycling of  
4 biosolids for waste water treatment  
5 plants.

6 The premise of our program is  
7 something that has been very important  
8 to me for the decades I have been in  
9 this program, that these materials are  
10 beneficial to a farm. So I'll mention  
11 in a minute that I come from a farm, so  
12 it's imbedded in me that these materials  
13 are only allowed to go to the farms  
14 because they are beneficial as a  
15 fertilizer material. It's not the waste  
16 of disposal activity.

17 We have people come here  
18 periodically that say well, you know, my  
19 waste won't harm the farm, but we look  
20 at it and say there's no benefit. Even  
21 if there's no potential harm, there's no  
22 benefit, you're not allowed to do that.  
23 So that is a big premise that goes to  
24 our program.

1           To give you a little bit of flavor  
2 of DEC, how we work. DEC's central  
3 office in Albany where I work, we  
4 support the regional offices, we are  
5 kind of a technical resource for all of  
6 our regional offices. But our nine  
7 regional offices, like Region 8 here,  
8 they do the nuts and bolts of the  
9 program.

10           So they actually do the permitting,  
11 they do the inspections, enforcements;  
12 all of that comes out of the regional  
13 office, but we provide them support, we  
14 write the regulations, we do that kind  
15 of stuff out of Albany.

16           So just a little bit where I come  
17 from. I'm actually originally from  
18 Livingston County in Caledonia. I grew  
19 up on a small dairy farm. I went to  
20 Clarkson for engineering, so I have a  
21 chemical engineering degree from that.  
22 I have a masters and PhD in  
23 environmental engineering from RPI; I  
24 taught at RPI for a little while, and

1 I'm a licensed PE, professional  
2 engineer, in New York State.

3 I'm kind of an oddball at DEC. I  
4 have been in the same program my entire  
5 career. Most people move around. I  
6 didn't because I liked it. 37 years now  
7 I have worked in the recycling of  
8 organics, so I have a pretty good  
9 history, pretty good feel for the  
10 history of how this program evolved and  
11 how the regulations evolved over time.

12 So how do we regulate? We'll stick  
13 with biosolids. How do we regulate  
14 biosolids recycling? Land application,  
15 we have biosolids composting in the  
16 state, those kinds of activity.

17 They have to get a permit under  
18 what's called Part 361, the solid waste  
19 rules in New York. It's a little  
20 different than some states. Some states  
21 don't require a permit. New York  
22 requires a permit for all biosolids  
23 recycling activities.

24 So they have to have a professional

1 engineer; they have to go through  
2 permitting with us; they have to  
3 annually report to us; they are subject  
4 to all of those reporting/testing  
5 criteria that we apply on a regulation.

6 Question. Where do our regs come  
7 from? Where do the standards, where  
8 does the pollutant limits in biosolids  
9 come from? First, they come from the  
10 federal government. EPA sets the base  
11 standards for all states to follow for  
12 biosolids. It's called Part 503.

13 And EPA, how do they get those  
14 numbers? How do they decide what  
15 pollutants to regulate and what not and  
16 what the numbers are? What they do is  
17 what they call a risk assessment. It's  
18 just, kind of, a fancy term to say,  
19 let's look at all the ways this material  
20 could be exposed, whether it's leaching  
21 into the groundwater, which we,  
22 obviously, are very interested in. It  
23 could be ingestion. If your child picks  
24 up compost and ingests it, eats it. It

1           could be runoff to the stream.

2           EPA looks at 14 different pathways  
3           to say how could this material be  
4           exposed to the environment and to human  
5           health, and they look at how those  
6           materials move and what should be the  
7           right protective standards.

8           In some cases, the standard is  
9           something very straightforward, like  
10          zinc. The standard is based on how much  
11          zinc is in a vitamin, so that's the  
12          standard that sets what's allowed to be  
13          in that waste material. For other  
14          materials, it's based on what's known to  
15          be a risk.

16          So what we do is we take the  
17          federal rules and we incorporate them to  
18          the state regs, but in state regs, we  
19          can be more stringent if we want to, and  
20          we are. In New York State -- I don't  
21          know of any other state that is more  
22          stringent than New York when it comes to  
23          biosolid recycling, except for Maine,  
24          which we'll talk about right now.

1           We have a stringent fermenting  
2           program, testing program, our standards  
3           are more strict than EPA. So we have  
4           had a longstanding, comprehensive  
5           standard for biosolids. As I say, I've  
6           been doing it over three decades, it has  
7           been a very successful program, so we  
8           see it as a benefit certainly. Again,  
9           as I say, we only allow it because it's  
10          a benefit from a nutrient standpoint to  
11          that farm.

12          These kind of materials that we  
13          deal with, organic waste, are the best  
14          kind of fertilizers in reality because  
15          they're slow-releasing; the nitrogen  
16          comes out slowly as organic matter to  
17          the soil. There's a lot of reasons why  
18          it's a really good material to use, but,  
19          of course, from a regulator standpoint,  
20          we have to address potential concerns  
21          too.

22          So we take those. We have our  
23          state regs. The question right now is  
24          okay, what about PFAS. What we have

1 done is we have -- we are waiting for  
2 EPA. EPA is going through that risk  
3 assessment process, and they bring in  
4 outside scientists and it takes too  
5 long, as far as the States are  
6 concerned, to get this done. So they  
7 haven't come out with the PFAS standards  
8 yet.

9 But in the interim, what we're  
10 doing is we're going to set our own  
11 standards until EPA comes out with  
12 theirs in a year and a half or so. So  
13 we have a policy that's about to go in  
14 place in the next few weeks to set PFAS  
15 standards in biosolids in New York  
16 State.

17 It's really going to say that  
18 biosolids can't have any industrial  
19 influence from PFAS. It can have what  
20 you would normally just get from a home.  
21 So what you're already exposed to in  
22 your own home from the PFAS that's  
23 already in our consumer products.

24 Of course, the real answer for PFAS

1 is it shouldn't be in consumer products.  
2 It shouldn't be in your Vortex; it  
3 shouldn't be in your dental floss; it  
4 shouldn't be in your makeup. And  
5 there's things moving in that direction.

6 Already in New York State, there's  
7 laws on food packaging which comes up  
8 with food waste composting. You end up  
9 with PFAS. There's laws about  
10 protecting your clothing, coats, and  
11 other textiles to get you to ban the use  
12 of PFAS. So we're getting there, but we  
13 need more work to get it out of the  
14 waste stream in general. So we are  
15 addressing PFAS in New York State even  
16 as we wait for EPA to finalize that.

17 As I mentioned a little bit, we  
18 don't have a lot of recycling of  
19 biosolids in New York compared to other  
20 states. We have about 20 percent, give  
21 or take, mainly because our landfills  
22 are still relatively cheap. A lot of  
23 our dairy farms don't need other  
24 fertilizers, they already have a lot of



1 manure to deal with. So we don't have a  
2 huge program in New York State.

3 Nationwide, it's about half. About  
4 50 percent of the biosolids are  
5 recycled. It's about the same in  
6 Europe. So it's a very common practice,  
7 so it's a very successful, very common  
8 in other states.

9 The question is: What about Maine?  
10 And I want to address that. What  
11 happened in Maine is, as far as I can  
12 tell by looking at all of the  
13 information that's been put out, is the  
14 initial farm that was of concern had the  
15 application of paper mill sludge.  
16 Sludge directly from a paper mill that  
17 used PFAS in coatings. It wasn't the  
18 biosolids from a wastewater treatment  
19 plant.

20 And, obviously, it was a tragedy  
21 for that farm and those animals and the  
22 people living there, but the state of  
23 Maine decided to stop all land  
24 application. So they didn't take the

1 time, if you will, which normally you  
2 would do, to dig a little deeper to see  
3 what the issue was, and they said we're  
4 just going to ban land application.

5 And there's been studies done in  
6 Maine after this ban. There's been  
7 studies done in Michigan and elsewhere  
8 saying if you have a biosolid that's not  
9 been influenced by an industrial input,  
10 it doesn't cause contamination. It  
11 doesn't cause this animal impact. It  
12 really boils down to keeping those  
13 industrial sources out, and that's what  
14 we are looking to do too.

15 So that's what we're looking at  
16 right now. That's why we think our  
17 program is still protected for the state  
18 of New York.

19 Another couple things I just want  
20 to touch on real quick, I'm running out  
21 of time, is just more for the board to  
22 know than anyone.

23 MR. VOLINO: Hold on. She can have  
24 three more minutes because tonight we

1 will -- we have six speakers signed up,  
2 so we can go five minutes per person.

3 MS. ROWLAND: Again, I'm welcome to  
4 answering questions after too. I did  
5 want to touch on for the board to be  
6 realized too, it's not administered by  
7 DEC, but the Department of Agriculture  
8 and Markets administers the right to  
9 farm law in New York State, which is a  
10 very strong right to farm in New York  
11 State, which is a good thing.

12 And what that law says is that if  
13 you have a local law that's inhibiting  
14 -- unduly inhibiting a farm from being  
15 in production, that violates the right  
16 to farm. And biosolids recycling is  
17 considered protected under the right to  
18 farm.

19 So active markets typically will  
20 review bans, and there's been challenges  
21 in the past about outright bans on  
22 practices that are considered for a farm  
23 in an ag district to be protected, just  
24 for your information. Again, that's not

1 a DEC program.

2 So, again, we have -- and just to  
3 touch on the -- it's been raised a  
4 number of times, not just here but  
5 elsewhere, about the state plan that the  
6 governor is pushing biosolids recycling  
7 to increase significantly. It's not  
8 really the case.

9 New York State Solid Waste  
10 Management Plan is an overall plan  
11 looking at solid waste in New York, from  
12 bottles to cans, newspapers, to food  
13 scraps, to biosolids. And the plan in  
14 general is saying we should be diverting  
15 more waste away from landfills.

16 So there's just some projections in  
17 that plan that say if we move towards  
18 more divergence of paper, we should also  
19 be looking at more divergence of  
20 biosolids and food scraps. It doesn't  
21 mean we are pushing it, obligating it,  
22 mandating it in any way, shape, or  
23 fashion. If it happens, it happens. If  
24 it doesn't, it doesn't.

1                   These decisions on whether to  
2                   recycle biosolids or not are done by  
3                   that municipality that operates that  
4                   treatment plant that comes and gets a  
5                   permit from us. We don't force or  
6                   dictate to anyone. They make that  
7                   individual decision at that local level.

8                   So the plan, I just want to make  
9                   that clear, in no way is pushing any  
10                  municipality or any biosolid waste to go  
11                  to recycling if that's not what they  
12                  desire. Okay.

13                  MR. VOLINO: Okay. Thank you.

14                  Our next speaker this evening will  
15                  be Wayne Wells from the Cameron  
16                  Concerned Citizens for a Safe  
17                  Environment.

18                  Speakers will have five minutes.

19                  MR. WELLS: Good evening. My name  
20                  is Wayne Wells from Cameron Committee  
21                  for Safe Environment.

22                  The DEC has a credibility problem.  
23                  It has been in full awareness of the  
24                  pain of our communities that have

1           endured from the early years in which  
2           DEC Region 8 tolerated serious  
3           violations of DEC's regulations by Leo  
4           Dickson & Sons.

5           There was a total absence of  
6           effective fines or deterrence to change  
7           Dickson Corporation from prioritizing  
8           profits over the health and well-being  
9           of our communities.

10          The violations were so egregious  
11          and ongoing that I was compelled to  
12          testify to a panel of DEC officials in  
13          Albany in an attempt to force Region 8  
14          to effectively enforce its own  
15          regulations.

16          I'm truly sad to say that it was a  
17          futile exercise. From experience that  
18          -- from that experience, I concluded  
19          that the policy of sludge biosolids for  
20          growing food is simply a cover for an  
21          attempt at solving the political problem  
22          of state government from the pressures  
23          of municipalities demanding of  
24          politicians to do something with the

1 growing amounts of waste.

2 The proper funding tool development  
3 for a source study identifying multiple  
4 sewage hazards and their sources was  
5 never done. A municipal sewage  
6 treatment plant that takes landfill  
7 leaching is a very glaring example of  
8 ignoring one dangerous factor to the  
9 ability for current technology to assure  
10 us of any degree of safety to a  
11 biosolid.

12 With the rise in power of AI deep  
13 learning applied to deal with  
14 complexities of all toxins found in  
15 sewage, there might come a day when the  
16 process and the criteria for beneficial  
17 use is arrived at, but that day is not  
18 now or in the near future.

19 We the people are not going to  
20 allow a repeat of that tragic experience  
21 to further destroy our communities in  
22 deference to a state bureaucratic policy  
23 need to dispose of poisonous sewage upon  
24 our citizens.

1                   New York benefited from two  
2                   important professor emeritus, and the  
3                   DEC should know them as a source. And  
4                   that is Dr. Lisk and Dr. Murray McBride.

5                   Dr. Lisk is now dead. He warned in  
6                   as early as 1981, no sewage should ever  
7                   be used to grow food. Dr. Murray  
8                   McBride, as early as this year,  
9                   reestablished that statement.

10                  These are top-of-the-line  
11                  scientific authorities, and we need that  
12                  type of consensus to come around to  
13                  proper application of any sewage sludge  
14                  to ever be used on farmland. And these  
15                  scientists were studying sewage that was  
16                  actually being used from the Dickson  
17                  operation. Thank you.

18                  MR. VOLINO: Our next speaker is  
19                  Tim Hargrave from Cameron.

20                  MR. HARGRAVE: Good evening. My  
21                  name is Tim Hargrave, H-A-R-G-R-A-V-E.  
22                  My wife and I own a farm located in  
23                  Cameron, Thurston.

24                  Now, you just heard Wayne Wells, he



1 outlined the history of past Leo Dickson  
2 & Sons violations and Region 8's  
3 inability to effectively enforce their  
4 own regulations. I would like to expand  
5 on that narrative to include current  
6 permit violations.

7 About three weeks ago on July 20,  
8 2023, I sent an email to Region 8  
9 director Tim Walsh and some of his staff  
10 with many concerns regarding the permit  
11 violation. As par for the course,  
12 Region 8 did not even respond. I will  
13 explain just one violation here tonight.

14 11 years ago, on August 6, 2012, a  
15 public hearing was held at the Haverling  
16 High School to address Leo Dickson &  
17 Sons' permit violations and allow the  
18 public to comment on the proposed permit  
19 modification.

20 One of the results of this hearing  
21 was that Leo Dickson & Sons was supposed  
22 to establish and maintain grass buffer  
23 filter strips to minimize erosion.  
24 These filter strips were supposed to be

1 completed by 2015. And here we are  
2 today, eight years past the completion  
3 deadline, and these buffer strips are  
4 still not in place.

5 The lack of these filter strips  
6 allow Leo Dickson & Sons' field erosion  
7 to enter roadside ditches and into  
8 surface water bodies. Yet, Region 8  
9 continues to overlook this violation of  
10 Permit Condition Number 15.

11 I will give you a few more examples  
12 of Dickson recordkeeping problems and  
13 violations. This is from a DEC document  
14 dated February 1, 2012. It's from DEC  
15 attorney Lisa Schwartz. Failure of  
16 Dickson to keep adequate records.  
17 Dickson failed to maintain records.  
18 Dickson land-applied waste was too close  
19 to a drainage well and property line.  
20 Dickson allowed land application of  
21 waste at unpermitted, unregistered  
22 fields. Last, but not least, Dickson  
23 land-applied waste too close to portable  
24 well. This is from 2012. This

1 establishes a pattern.

2 I have another document here dated  
3 just recently from August 16, 2022, from  
4 DEC Environmental Engineer McKenzie  
5 Occipio (phonetic). Dickson's facility  
6 failed to submit weekly sludge reports  
7 as required by Special Condition  
8 Number 23 of the current permit.  
9 Dickson facility failed to pay the DEC  
10 in full for the 2022 on-site monitor  
11 fee.

12 On April 19th and May 3rd of 2022,  
13 Dickson facility received sludge from  
14 the town of Groton, which is not an  
15 approved waste source.

16 I will step back in time a little  
17 bit going all the way back to 1993. New  
18 York State DEC Commissioner Thomas  
19 Gerling (phonetic) referenced Leo  
20 Dickson & Sons' compliance history. And  
21 continuing until today, Leo Dickson &  
22 Sons have a well-established history of  
23 permit violations, and yet Region 8  
24 seems intent to bend over backwards to

1 accommodate Leo Dickson & Sons' permit  
2 modification request with little to no  
3 regard to this noncompliance history or  
4 to the impacts on the local people.

5 This is essentially concerning  
6 because of the farmland PFAS  
7 contamination problems in Maine, which  
8 Sally has attributed to paper mill  
9 waste. And some of it may be that, but  
10 Michigan has problems that's not related  
11 to paper mill waste.

12 So because of the PFAS  
13 contamination problems in Maine and  
14 Michigan, Region 8 must enlist New York  
15 State's Land Grant Cornell University to  
16 perform soil sampling adhering to  
17 Cornell-established protocols and test  
18 each and every field as listed on their  
19 permit, no matter how small, for the  
20 most common PFAS chemicals.

21 For Region 8 to continue to rely on  
22 Leo Dickson & Sons' data or Casella data  
23 when making decisions that impact the  
24 people in this area will only reinforce

1 our view of Region 8's incompetent  
2 oversight abilities.

3 Leading up to that August 2012  
4 meeting, ECO Tom Flaitz (phonetic) was  
5 investigating a report of contamination  
6 of a local Mennonite farm as well.  
7 During his contamination -- during his  
8 investigation, ECO Flaitz asked Phil  
9 Dickson, he says, "How do you determine  
10 field boundaries when spreading sludge?"

11 Phil Dickson responded, and this is  
12 a quote direct from ECO's instant  
13 report, Phil Dickson says, "We just take  
14 a wild ass guess for the field  
15 boundaries."

16 So DEC's mission statement, Tim, is  
17 to conserve and prove and protect New  
18 York's natural resources and environment  
19 and to prevent, abate, and control  
20 water, land, and air pollution in order  
21 to enhance the health, safety, and  
22 welfare of the people of the state of  
23 New York and their overall economic and  
24 social well-being.

1                   How about you, Tim? Are you going  
2                   to do what's right and hold up New York  
3                   State DEC's mission statement and  
4                   Article 1, Section 19 of the New York  
5                   State Constitution and err on the side  
6                   of caution and put the people, the  
7                   health of the local people as a number  
8                   one priority?

9                   Or, Tim, are you going to continue  
10                  Region 8's history of pandering to  
11                  corporate interest by taking a cue from  
12                  Phil Dickson's playbook and take a wild  
13                  ass guess regarding the PFAS levels in  
14                  Dickson's fields?

15                  You don't know the PFAS levels.  
16                  The decision is all yours, Tim. You can  
17                  be a hero and do what's right or  
18                  continue to allow Region 8 to bury its  
19                  head in the sand. I would suggest  
20                  Cornell soil sampling.

21                  For the record, I fully support the  
22                  local law banning sludge in Thurston and  
23                  Cameron.

24                  It's up to you, Tim.

1 MR. VOLINO: Okay. Thank you.  
2 Our next speaker is Leslie Smith  
3 from Thurston.

4 MR. SMITH: My name is Leslie  
5 Smith, L-E-S-L-I-E, Smith, S-M-I-T-H. I  
6 live at 5446 Bonny Hill Road. I live  
7 about as far as the parking lot we  
8 parked in from Dickson's sewage  
9 treatment plant.

10 Dickson's fields are all around me.  
11 My PFAS count is 18.1 or -9, something  
12 like that. Way above the limit.  
13 Dicksons used to dump on our land until  
14 my brothers and I put a stop to it. We  
15 saw plants that we have never seen  
16 before, and I have lived on that land  
17 for 40, 50 years, never seen these  
18 plants.

19 In the middle of December, plants  
20 growing, why is that? Well, we found  
21 out one day. My brother and I are  
22 running out across the field; we're out  
23 deer hunting. We were runting out  
24 across the field, he yells, I turn

1 around and look, and he's up to here in  
2 a hole in our field filled with human  
3 manure. And you can tell the difference  
4 between human and cow. Cow doesn't  
5 stink as bad. DEC didn't want to hear  
6 about it.

7 One day I went down to my hunting  
8 stand, went to get in it, I looked at  
9 the creek, and it was covered in brown  
10 stuff. Every rock had this brown stuff  
11 on it. Actually, I was down there  
12 repairing my tree stand. Push it a  
13 little bit, kind of browns the water up.  
14 Well, you stir it up and it stunk. DEC  
15 wouldn't drink out of the creek when I  
16 offered him a glass of water. Nothing  
17 wrong with the water, though.

18 My well when I was a kid was pure.  
19 It was the best water you could drink.  
20 Now you can't stand the smell of it.  
21 You can't stand to fill a glass up and  
22 look at it either.

23 I put it in a pond. Should I swim  
24 in it? Should I allow my kids and my



1 grandkids to swim in it? Should I allow  
2 my dogs to swim in it?

3 From the time they put that  
4 treatment plant on that hill, the hill  
5 has gone downhill fast. What gets me is  
6 people down in the valley, people down  
7 the road, they just kind of shrug their  
8 shoulders. Water runs downhill, people,  
9 right into the creek, into the river,  
10 all the way down to Chesapeake Bay.

11 Traffic on our road, man, semis  
12 running up and down that road to the  
13 point where they lose control, they are  
14 going to wipe out, you know, other  
15 people. And Dicksons have always been  
16 good about that. I have always gone to  
17 them and talked to them about it, and  
18 they made their drivers slow down. Now  
19 they have drivers, I don't know who the  
20 hell they are. They are from farms  
21 across the state somewhere, I don't  
22 know.

23 I'm very disappointed in Phil, and  
24 I guess that's one of my big problems.

1 And I can stand up here for another  
2 minute, but it wouldn't do any good  
3 because I'm so ticked off about the  
4 whole deal. I don't know what the  
5 answer is.

6 I think there ought to be a neutral  
7 party testing water besides DEC or  
8 Dicksons or Casella or us. Maybe  
9 someone neutral, and please don't have  
10 the government appoint them. We will be  
11 all month, all year waiting on her.  
12 Thank you.

13 MR. VOLINO: Thank you. Our next  
14 speaker is Lisa Hargrave from Cameron.

15 MS. HARGRAVE: Lisa Hargrave,  
16 H-A-R-G-R-A-V-E. I'm not really good at  
17 public speaking, so I'm going to read  
18 something from Dr. Murray McBride. He  
19 was a professor from Cornell University,  
20 and this was dated June 28, 2023.

21 Quote, "I am a soil chemist with  
22 many years of experience in conducting  
23 research on the behavior of toxic metals  
24 and other pollutants in agricultural

1 soils. My comment here is on the  
2 advisability of the practice of sewage  
3 sludge or biosolids application on  
4 farmland.

5 "It needs to be stressed that  
6 present federal (EPA) and state  
7 regulations were put into effect in 1993  
8 cover only 9 toxic metals and a few  
9 indicator pathogens and are now badly  
10 out of date. These rules provide no  
11 regulations or guidelines for the large  
12 group of biologically active and  
13 potentially toxic organic chemicals  
14 (including, but by no means restricted  
15 to perfluorinated compounds (PFAS),  
16 dioxins, PAHs, pharmaceuticals,  
17 plasticizers, antimicrobial agents, and  
18 brominated fire retardants).

19 "All of these chemicals, and many  
20 more, are present in sludges and  
21 biosolids generated by municipal sewage  
22 treatment plants, as demonstrated, for  
23 example, by the US EPA 2006-2007  
24 Targeted National Sewage Sludge Survey.

1                    "The problem is further complicated  
2                    by the fact that the contaminants of  
3                    concern in sludges are a moving target.  
4                    Regulations established in 1993 have not  
5                    adjusted to this fact. Many of the  
6                    contaminants of greatest concern today  
7                    (most notably, PFAS chemicals) were not  
8                    known to be present in sludges at the  
9                    time the rules were developed. The  
10                    fairly recent discoveries (for example  
11                    in Maine and Michigan) that the PFAS  
12                    'forever chemicals' are being found on  
13                    farms, in well water, and in vegetable  
14                    crops and dairy food products where  
15                    biosolids had been applied, sometimes  
16                    decades earlier, is proof that present  
17                    rules for biosolids' application on land  
18                    do not protect farmland, farmers, or the  
19                    general public.

20                    "Instead, farmland application  
21                    provides a direct pathway for  
22                    contamination of food crops, meat, and  
23                    dairy products with persistent organic  
24                    toxins, including hundreds of PFAS

1 compounds. Given this serious risk to  
2 farmers' land and livelihood, and to the  
3 health of consumers, it is disturbing  
4 that little or no testing for PFAS has  
5 been conducted by NYDEC of soils,  
6 groundwater, crops, or dairy products on  
7 farms that are applying or have applied  
8 biosolids in the past.

9 "It is claimed by proponents of  
10 biosolids as farm fertilizers that there  
11 are many decades of scientific research  
12 to support the practice of farm  
13 application of sewage sludge products as  
14 a 'beneficial use' by the recycling of  
15 nutrients and organic matter.

16 "This claim may create the false  
17 impression that there is presently a  
18 good understanding of the behavior and  
19 toxicity of -- that there is presently a  
20 good understanding of the behavior and  
21 toxicity of the many chemicals presently  
22 found in sludges. In actual fact, few  
23 of the thousands of chemical  
24 contaminants in sludges have been

1 identified and monitored, and fewer  
2 still have been studied in detail to  
3 determine their fate in soils and their  
4 tendency to transfer into surface and  
5 drainage water, into crops, or into  
6 livestock.

7 "To conclude, given the strong  
8 possibility for long-term contamination  
9 of soils, groundwater, and the food  
10 chain with persistent and toxic  
11 synthetic chemicals, the DEC proposal to  
12 increase application of sewage sludges  
13 or biosolids to farmland is misguided.  
14 Although there appear to be at present  
15 no good options for the disposal or  
16 re-use of this waste material, farmland  
17 application is in my view the most  
18 ill-advised and potentially dangerous  
19 option.

20 "Respectfully, Dr. Murray McBride,  
21 Professor Emeritus, Cornell University."

22 Just as a note, we had a meeting in  
23 the town of Cameron with Casella  
24 representatives. Many people in the

1 town of Cameron were concerned about  
2 this. One of our friends stood up and  
3 was saying, you know, what about the  
4 PFAS, that we're concerned about that.  
5 And I have to say, the director or, I  
6 guess, the person for Casella at the  
7 moment in Dickson's plant, current  
8 plant, which will be Casella, stated to  
9 this person that was standing up, "Well,  
10 you have PFAS in your makeup, so why do  
11 you care?"

12 My point for that was the fact that  
13 as an educated and informed consumer, I  
14 can decide whether or not I can take  
15 those chemicals out of my life by not  
16 buying them if they're in whatever  
17 product I choose to buy.

18 But the biosolids application of  
19 the PFAS on our fields above our house,  
20 as it seeps into our groundwater, as my  
21 husband hunts the game that's up there,  
22 we don't have the choice to take that  
23 out of our life. It is in our life  
24 forever.

1                   And why? Because it's a monetary  
2 good thing for a big corporation, not  
3 the best for our community. Thank you  
4 very much.

5                   MR. VOLINO: Thank you. Our next  
6 speaker is Eva Turner from Cameron.

7                   MS. TURNER: My name is Eva Turner,  
8 T-U-R-N-E-R. I do not have a speech  
9 prepared, but I would like to ask some  
10 questions for DEC. You are from Albany,  
11 and what you said up here about being  
12 safe in Maine, I'm sure that they told  
13 them that that was safe. So should we  
14 believe you? This is Albany that's  
15 talking to us.

16                   How about Michigan? Michigan was  
17 told that the biosolids were safe. What  
18 happened in Michigan? They wound up  
19 killing their cows. Do you know that  
20 this stuff grows? It comes up in the  
21 plants, in the food product. How do you  
22 know you are not eating bread coming  
23 from this corn? How do you know? Do we  
24 know where it's going? Do we know where



1 the meat is going? Do we know where the  
2 milk is going?

3 And Albany is going to tell us this  
4 is safe. Do you believe Albany? I  
5 don't. I'm sorry.

6 Now, I don't know why they're not  
7 here to protect us. I bet you that if I  
8 went to Cameron and starting throwing  
9 toxic chemicals on rattlesnakes, they  
10 would be after me and I would be fined.  
11 They will protect their rattlesnakes.  
12 They will go in there and do their burn  
13 before May 15th. They will just make  
14 everything perfect for them, but they  
15 are not for us.

16 Why won't they protect us? They  
17 are supposed to. But I don't see the  
18 DEC protecting us. They will protect  
19 the rattlesnakes.

20 Now I really didn't have a speech  
21 prepared, but that's just -- my  
22 complaint is not being tested, not being  
23 safe. If it was so safe, why is there  
24 so many wells on Bonny Hill that are

1 contaminated? Can anybody answer that?  
2 There has to be a reason, people. We  
3 know what it is. That big corporation  
4 wants to take us over.

5 We, the small people out here, will  
6 just blast them until we get caught,  
7 then move on like they do Maine. Do you  
8 know they are fighting them in New  
9 Hampshire, Vermont? Has anybody really  
10 looked into all of this? We really  
11 should.

12 And I would hope that my life would  
13 be more precious than their  
14 rattlesnakes. Thank you.

15 MR. VOLINO: The next speaker is  
16 David Folmar from Campbell.

17 MR. FOLMAR: I think the Hargraves  
18 said everything that needs to be said.

19 Back to your policy, my name is  
20 Dave Folmar; last name is F-O-L-M-A-R.

21 I would like to know why we are  
22 here. Shouldn't this type of thing have  
23 been spoken of and debated about with  
24 the communities before they start piling

1 New York City sludge into our ground?

2 I'm totally dissatisfied with all  
3 of you people representing the state,  
4 DEC. You're not watching out for  
5 people. This is ridiculous. You don't  
6 spread crap without making sure  
7 everybody is on board with it.

8 What kind of community, what kind  
9 of state, what kind of government do we  
10 have now? Just like they do with the  
11 rest of government, let's put a policy  
12 out there, let's sign it, and guess  
13 what? If it goes to Supreme Court or  
14 whatever and is determined  
15 unconstitutional, fine, we will ask for  
16 forgiveness.

17 Same thing holds true here. We are  
18 selling this whole country out for the  
19 benefit of corporations, somebody making  
20 money. The only thing here that's going  
21 on is somebody is making some big money,  
22 getting rid of New York City's waste,  
23 that's what's going on. Pretty simple  
24 to figure out.

1           They are the ones making the money.  
2           Look at what they did with the gas  
3           around here. I'm a landowner.  
4           Moratorium, can't frack, so all your  
5           landowners are screwed out of gas money.

6           People in Pennsylvania are living  
7           like kings, right? That's because the  
8           people that own the ground, that worked  
9           their hind ends off to have it, they  
10          don't count. It's not until big money,  
11          politics, and all of this crap gets  
12          involved that it matters.

13          All I'm going to tell you people is  
14          we are being ground into the ground.  
15          Your dollar is devaluing to the point  
16          where you are going to pay \$50 to get a  
17          couple loaves of bread and milk. Go to  
18          Walmart and walk out without spending  
19          \$100. That's where we are headed.

20          They are going to take everything  
21          away. They are going to throw disease  
22          at us. Now they want to contaminate our  
23          ground, upset our wildlife so if all  
24          hell breaks loose, guess what? We can't

1 even hunt because the meat that we get  
2 from the animals out here, you aren't  
3 going to be able to eat it.

4 Where is that going to put us?  
5 That's looking at the worst-case  
6 scenario, and this country is not headed  
7 in the right direction right now. We  
8 might be out there hunting to feed our  
9 families. And if you haven't got game  
10 to hunt, you are SOL.

11 So go poison the ground with your  
12 biocrap, heavy metals, and all of these  
13 other things, see where we end up.  
14 We're going to be -- you know, I was up  
15 at 333 today and crossed over to County  
16 Route 1, that stream was running full  
17 bore coming right down from Thurston,  
18 that's nice. So there's your runoff.

19 New York has clay ground. That  
20 means that your surface water comes  
21 right down into any well around. So you  
22 get runoff from these farms as biowaste,  
23 guess what? Boom. Right in your well.  
24 Your well is going to stink like hell.

1 You aren't going to be able to drink the  
2 water.

3 That is if you can today.  
4 Everybody is buying water; it has to be  
5 filtered at Walmart so you can have a  
6 decent cup of coffee in the morning as  
7 it stands. That's where we are at. So  
8 let's bring this crap in and start with  
9 another mess.

10 That's all I really have to say.  
11 You people better have a good look in  
12 the mirror before you go putting these  
13 rules and laws and permitting people to  
14 do this or do that because you have the  
15 authority to sign your name. Bull crap.

16 This stuff needs to come to the  
17 public before you start in forums like  
18 this so all of us get a chance to see  
19 and understand what the heck is going  
20 on. God forbid for the grandchildren we  
21 have. What kind of country are we going  
22 to leave here?

23 I will tell you something.  
24 Everybody better wake up because our

1 world is coming to an end with these  
2 types of things going on. God bless  
3 America, I hope we survive. Thank you.

4 MR. VOLINO: Thank you. Our next  
5 speaker is Bill Mattingly from the  
6 Sierra Club.

7 MR. MATTINGLY: Hi. My name is  
8 Bill Mattingly. I'm chairperson of the  
9 Sierra Club Finger Lakes Group.  
10 Mattingly is M-A-T-T-I-N-G-L-Y.

11 I haven't prepared remarks, but --  
12 so excuse my a little bit of rambling.  
13 I just want to make a few points. The  
14 Sierra Club and the citizens of -- some  
15 of the citizens of Thurston and Cameron  
16 and Bath participated in a study of  
17 their mostly drinking water wells just a  
18 few months ago, and these were PFAS  
19 tests.

20 So about 35 tests were done on  
21 various wells, drinking water wells of  
22 private citizens whose land was adjacent  
23 or right next to the landspreading  
24 operations. And in a nutshell, we found

1 PFAS in a lot of the wells.

2 And in two wells in particular --  
3 two wells in particular, we found two  
4 PFAS chemicals above the level that the  
5 EPA is proposing for public drinking  
6 water. So the EPA proposed public  
7 drinking water levels for two chemicals,  
8 PFOA -- these are PFAS chemicals -- PFOA  
9 and PFOS were in two wells. Both of  
10 those chemicals were above the  
11 recommended or the proposed EPA limits.

12 PFAS chemicals are emerging toxins,  
13 so we don't know a lot about them. And  
14 what every -- every time the -- every  
15 time it's studied, they learn something  
16 even more pernicious about these  
17 chemicals. For instance, they  
18 bioaccumulate up the food chain, meaning  
19 that a few parts per trillion in your  
20 water turns out to be hundreds or tens  
21 of thousands of parts per billion in the  
22 fish.

23 You know, and then people eat the  
24 fish, so the toxins accumulate up the



1 food chain. So just happening at a low  
2 level in your water, for instance, you  
3 know, these are vanishingly small  
4 levels, but the EPA is saying that even  
5 these levels such as for PFOS, the  
6 proposed EPA concentration that is the  
7 limit to take action to mediate that  
8 water is 4 parts per trillion.

9 So that's an extremely small  
10 number. So they know that this stuff is  
11 extremely dangerous. So if you want to  
12 know any more about the study that was  
13 done here in the area of these tests, I  
14 will have a table outside after the  
15 meeting and we can hand out the results  
16 of the test. It's more of a summary.

17 Now, these tests weren't certified  
18 tests. These were using tests from a  
19 noncertified lab, but they are  
20 definitely -- you know, we can't use  
21 them in court, but for somebody like the  
22 DEC to -- you know, I think the DEC  
23 should take these results seriously.

24 And actually, the DEC did ask us

1 for these results, and we are  
2 negotiating, talking to them. Although  
3 we have made an arrangement with the  
4 citizens here that these numbers, you  
5 know, will remain private, so we just  
6 can't hand the DEC the raw data.

7 So I have a high concern that --  
8 another point I would like to make is  
9 that PFOA and PFOS are actually old  
10 chemicals. These were -- these have  
11 been discontinued a long time ago, and  
12 yet they're in people's wells at levels  
13 above the EPA's threshold.

14 So you can see that's what they  
15 mean by forever chemicals. Okay. Thank  
16 you, all.

17 MR. VOLINO: Okay. That ends the  
18 people that signed up to speak. If  
19 there are other members of the community  
20 that would like to speak or would like  
21 to speak longer, you are welcome to.

22 So Tim Hargrave would like to go  
23 again.

24 MR. HARGRAVE: Again, my name is

1 Tim Hargrave from Cameron. I would like  
2 to expand a little bit on Sally  
3 Rowland's assessment.

4 Sally, do you want to pay attention  
5 to me?

6 Sally Rowland's assessment of that  
7 farm in Maine, she said it was  
8 attributed to paper mill waste, which it  
9 could be. However, the state of Maine  
10 has issued, for all of you hunters out  
11 there, and that one gentleman that was  
12 up here a few minutes ago brought up the  
13 idea of consuming game, the state of  
14 Maine has issued a do-not-eat advisory  
15 for 125 square miles.

16 Now, that's one hell of a big farm  
17 in the state of Maine. So I just want  
18 to bring it up to you folks out there  
19 that do hunt, if the DEC ever got around  
20 to testing the fields up there with  
21 unbiased, independent, third-party  
22 testing to check the PFAS levels of the  
23 Dickson fields, we would have a lot  
24 better understanding of the

1                   contamination up there and how it  
2                   impacts the people that hunt the game in  
3                   that area.

4                   Initially, Maine started out with a  
5                   do-not-eat advisory just on deer. They  
6                   have since extended that advisory to  
7                   turkey.

8                   So it falls back on you, Tim, once  
9                   more. You're the director. You call  
10                  the shots up there. You're running the  
11                  show. I'm asking you to really step up  
12                  to the plate and do something meaningful  
13                  up there.

14                  One huge thing that you could do is  
15                  start maybe adding a little bit of  
16                  public participation. We as a town, we  
17                  were begging you. In fact, I think one  
18                  of the town supervisors, actually both  
19                  of them, requested from Kimberly Birchen  
20                  (phonetic) a public meeting four or five  
21                  months ago.

22                  And still, you are just now here.  
23                  And you put Sally up here to give us big  
24                  dog-and-pony show about what the DEC

1 does. Not once, not once did Sally  
2 discuss the current permit modification  
3 or the current permit transfer request  
4 between Dickson and Casella.

5 You drove all the way down here or,  
6 for you folks, all the way from Albany,  
7 and you guys can't even find the time to  
8 address those issues.

9 I challenge you right now, Tim, get  
10 up here and talk to these people. Tell  
11 them where Region 8 stands, tell them  
12 what you are doing, tell them what your  
13 plans are. What are you going to do?

14 It's all up to you, Tim.

15 MR. VOLINO: Okay. Thanks, Tim.

16 Wayne would like to speak again.

17 MR. WELLS: Wayne Wells. I forgot  
18 to the spell my last name, W-E-L-L-S.

19 I would like to address also the  
20 DEC that came down here. I want to  
21 remind you that when I was fighting in  
22 the early days against the Dickson  
23 violations, I'm going to tell you how  
24 serious one example of violation was.

1           The Dicksons were taking leaching  
2           from the Bath sewage treatment plant,  
3           which did not have tertiary treatment  
4           capability. They were required, under  
5           your regulations, to put it in a  
6           containment with lime for a set period  
7           of time until the pathogens were  
8           reduced. And we have three medical  
9           facilities, the VA, the county health,  
10          and Ira Davenport medical facilities,  
11          pumping raw sewage into this sewage  
12          treatment plant.

13           Our people had to go out in teams  
14           to get down all the data for when -- the  
15           Dicksons, because they were saving  
16           money, lime costs money, and they were  
17           taking this sewage and not even putting  
18           it in their permitted illegally built  
19           lagoon, but they were dumping it on  
20           their Bonny Hill farm in an unpermitted  
21           hole in the ground. And because that  
22           hole in the ground was small, they were  
23           taking their TerraGator spreader,  
24           sucking it out as soon as the truck put

1           it into that hole.

2                       So we have got video camera  
3 evidence of this illegal violation one  
4 beautiful Friday afternoon. And  
5 unbeknownst to us, one of your officers  
6 in Region 8, Bill King, was observing  
7 this whole thing.

8                       And when the Dicksons realized that  
9 we were getting video evidence, they  
10 chased myself and my companions down the  
11 road until we got safely to our  
12 properties.

13                      Bill King came up later that  
14 afternoon to my house, and I told my  
15 wife, I said, "Get in the house." It  
16 was an old beat up Bronco, and I didn't  
17 know who it was, but we had had threats  
18 from the Dicksons. And this is after  
19 many, many, many, many reports of  
20 violations that were ignored by your  
21 Region 8.

22                      And it was Bill King. He stuck his  
23 head out the window, and he had this  
24 kind of silly smile on his face, and I

1           came to him, and I recognized him  
2           because we have had him up before many  
3           times on violations.

4                   And he said to me, he says, "You  
5           didn't see me, did you?"

6                   I said, "What? See you?"

7                   He said, "Yeah, I was hiding up in  
8           the woods. I was observing the whole  
9           thing. I was elated."

10                   I said, "Oh, the DEC may be doing  
11           something."

12                   So I said, "Did you go down and  
13           issue him a ticket?"

14                   You know what his answer to me was?  
15           He kind of looked down, looked a little  
16           sheepish, and he said, "Those are kind  
17           of rough boys."

18                   I said, "What the hell does that  
19           mean? You're the DEC. They are  
20           violating your own regulations."

21                   He said, "Well, I will make a  
22           report."

23                   I could never find that report.  
24           That's what prompted me to go to Albany



1 and testify. So don't tell me that this  
2 is safe, and don't tell me that you're  
3 not going to bend over backwards even  
4 more for Casella than you were for  
5 Dickson.

6 We the people will not permit this  
7 poison in our communities if I have  
8 anything to say about it. Thank you.

9 MR. VOLINO: Do we have anyone  
10 else? Ma'am?

11 MS. LITTLE: Good evening. My name  
12 Maryalice Little, M-A-R-Y-A-L-I-C-E, all  
13 one name, small A, last name,  
14 L-I-T-T-L-E.

15 I do not live in the town of  
16 Cameron or Thurston, but my husband and  
17 I live in the town of Campbell. We are  
18 one property away from the Hakes Casella  
19 construction demolition landfill, so we  
20 have had some experience with Casella.

21 I urge you, all of you, to make  
22 your wishes known to your town boards  
23 because it's my understanding that your  
24 town board, ultimately, gets to make

1 that decision, whether they want to be  
2 involved with Casella or not.

3 And I apologize for being late, but  
4 I'm assuming you are the town board of  
5 Thurston.

6 MR. VOLINO: We are.

7 MS. LITTLE: What happened in  
8 Campbell is the people that were on the  
9 board now, they were not around when the  
10 relationship between the Town of  
11 Campbell and Casella started.

12 You may not be here however many  
13 years it is from now, and there was one  
14 person on the board who said, you know,  
15 maybe we should stop this. It started  
16 out really small, and now it's this  
17 really big thing, and they are expanding  
18 for the third time, and they want to  
19 close one of our roads and make a  
20 circular road around it.

21 It's my understanding that the Town  
22 of Campbell really wants Casella to be  
23 in our town. So there's very little, it  
24 feels like, to me, in my opinion, that

1 we who live there can do very much to  
2 make a difference, and that's very  
3 disconcerting.

4 When the waste site was first moved  
5 there, people from the town said no, we  
6 don't want it, but the decision was made  
7 to allow Casella to be there.

8 We had a public hearing; I think it  
9 was 2018 maybe. 21 people prepared  
10 something to say, spoke out against the  
11 expansion, the current expansion at that  
12 time. One person spoke against [sic]  
13 it. It feels like it didn't matter  
14 because the expansion was allowed.

15 The people who live in the  
16 surrounding areas have put up with the  
17 trucks, as someone said, lots and lots  
18 of trucks. We don't drive that road  
19 anymore because of the trucks. It's a  
20 curve, a big hill, trucks get stuck.  
21 It's not -- we don't feel it's safe to  
22 drive that road anymore.

23 There have been smells. There are  
24 different issues with the construction

1 demolition waste site than there are  
2 with sludge, and you have all mentioned  
3 those kinds of things, so I just want to  
4 speak to that.

5 If you get in bed with Casella now,  
6 it will be very, very difficult to get  
7 out of bed with them because if the only  
8 reason that you're allowing -- and why  
9 allow this? Why allow this?

10 My guess is that there's some money  
11 involved. Why else would anybody take  
12 the chance? And I know all the towns  
13 are hurting for money. We have lots of  
14 small towns in the area, so I don't have  
15 a good solution for an alternative, but  
16 it feels like kind of selling out.

17 And that's a decision that you all  
18 have the power to make for your town.  
19 And I applaud you for stepping up and  
20 being on the board and participating  
21 because it takes a lot of time and  
22 energy and thought, and I'm sure you  
23 really care about your community because  
24 that's why you do this.

1           But I'm saying, in my opinion, once  
2           you get involved with this organization  
3           and you take the money from them, it's  
4           going to be really hard to not at some  
5           point, whether you're still on the board  
6           or other members of the community, say  
7           wait, we want to stop this now. It's  
8           kind of too late. So my suggestion is  
9           stop now. Thank you.

10           MR. VOLINO: Thank you very much.  
11           She makes a very good point. We, as a  
12           town, have the ultimate say.

13           MR. DICKSON: Good evening. I'm  
14           Brett Dickson, D-I-C-K-S-O-N.

15           And as Wayne explained, I'm part of  
16           the -- well, I will tell you, I'm part  
17           of a third-generation farm. I'm what's  
18           taking over the third-generation farm,  
19           and we are now crop only because the  
20           milk market really couldn't be sustained  
21           with some -- well, because of milk. No  
22           other reason did we sell the cows.

23           And I'm looking right at Wayne when  
24           I say this. We did not sell the cows

1 because they were sick, but thank you  
2 for checking with the gentleman up in  
3 Gouverneur that bought them because he  
4 did call me and let me know that an  
5 investigation was going on. I  
6 appreciate you trying to do something to  
7 me or my family. I appreciate that.

8 Anyways, we have used biosolids  
9 since 1978. I make a living off my  
10 farm, okay. That's what I do. I'm a  
11 farmer. I don't make a luxurious living  
12 by using biosolids, it's just what I  
13 believe in. As conducted correctly, I  
14 have great yields from the crops. It's  
15 not synthetic fertilizer. It's a great  
16 product when used correctly. I believe  
17 in it. If I didn't believe in it, I  
18 wouldn't be doing it.

19 And I'm not going to -- for any  
20 amount of money, I'm not going to take a  
21 third-generation farm and flush it away.  
22 Okay. I plan on passing this on. Yes,  
23 we have 2,800 acres, yes, we're  
24 hopefully going into business with

1 Casella. I think it would be a great  
2 relationship, but to the people that,  
3 you know, everybody standing up here  
4 slamming me or my 83-year-old father, we  
5 are just like anybody else in this room.  
6 We are trying to make a living.

7 And if anybody wants to try  
8 farming, have at it. It's not a 9:00 to  
9 5:00 job. It's 365 days a year, but I  
10 choose to do this. Okay. And I choose  
11 to utilize biosolids to fertilize my  
12 crops, and nothing bad has resulted from  
13 it.

14 I have a county yield that is right  
15 up there with some of the best in the  
16 country. I mean, I think that -- I  
17 heard the other day that soybean yields  
18 are -- now, they are using a natural  
19 yield on soybeans, I think it's 62  
20 bushels per acre. I have ten-year yield  
21 with no chemical fertilizer of 45.  
22 That's my average.

23 Corn, I'm 161, I think, for a  
24 tenure. National average is only 173,

1           that's even out in the corn mill. And I  
2           do pay my taxes on my property. Okay.  
3           I choose to own it; I pay the taxes on  
4           it. And I really feel that I should be  
5           able to do what I want to with it as far  
6           as making a living.

7                     And no, I'm not for polluting  
8           anybody's wells. Okay. If it can ever  
9           be proven, and I do mean proven, that  
10          that came from me, then I would have a  
11          totally different tune. Okay. But  
12          please prove it with certified tests and  
13          not a test that costs \$60 versus a  
14          certified test that is \$1,000. Tell me  
15          how they can be the same test.  
16          Certified, \$1,000. Noncertified, \$60.

17                     A certified test has to -- if it's  
18          not to the lab in a certain amount of  
19          time, it gets thrown out. I know. We  
20          have opened it up to the public or  
21          Casella has as to they will come and  
22          test anybody's water.

23                     MR. SMITH: When did they tell us  
24          that?



1 MR. DICKSON: They told me that --  
2 help me out, Mary.

3 MR. SMITH: That's bullshit.

4 MR. DICKSON: Well, if you would  
5 like them --

6 MR. SMITH: They never told me  
7 that.

8 MR. DICKSON: -- they will come  
9 test your water. And I may be speaking  
10 out of turn, but you have a contract  
11 signed stating their third party is  
12 allowed on your property because they  
13 are going to do the research, they are  
14 going to ask you where your septic tank  
15 is.

16 MR. SMITH: Never have asked me any  
17 questions. Never have talked to me.

18 MR. DICKSON: Well, that's perfect  
19 because now we know that Casella is  
20 willing to do a certified test on your  
21 water.

22 MR. SMITH: Do I get the pick the  
23 person that's going to test it?

24 PUBLIC MEMBER: No, they do.

1 MR. DICKSON: Okay. Well, anyways,  
2 no one else was interrupted when they  
3 were speaking, but anyways, that's who I  
4 am. I'm not a vicious person. Okay.  
5 I'm not out to kill people. I'm not out  
6 to pollute anything. I'm out to make a  
7 living just like everybody else in this  
8 room. I just choose to do it a little  
9 bit differently. Thank you.

10 PUBLIC MEMBER: Do you still live  
11 on the farm?

12 MR. DICKSON: I live 6 miles from  
13 the farm.

14 MR. VOLINO: In the town of Bath?

15 MR. DICKSON: In the town of Bath,  
16 that's correct.

17 Why did I move off the farm?

18 Well --

19 PUBLIC MEMBER: Because of the  
20 smell?

21 MR. DICKSON: No. When I actually  
22 left home, okay, because I didn't stay  
23 with my mother and father my whole life.  
24 I left at 16. I bought my first house

1 in the village because my wife lived in  
2 the village, and then we moved back out  
3 on the hill.

4 As far as the smell goes, Wilkins  
5 Dairy is right across the road from me,  
6 so I have no problem with it. And I'm  
7 6 miles from the main farm, okay, but I  
8 can -- I want to say it's less than a  
9 quarter mile from our furthest field to  
10 Bath. I have less than a quarter of  
11 mile.

12 PUBLIC MEMBER: Your plant is  
13 probably --

14 MR. VOLINO: Okay. Thank you. If  
15 you want to speak with him after the  
16 meeting, you can. Thank you.

17 Do we have any other speakers?

18 MS. SCHOONOVER: I want to speak,  
19 but I can't make it up to that.

20 My name is Mary Ruth. I have  
21 listened to you guys talk about industry  
22 or people that are making money. Who  
23 provides the jobs if it isn't the people  
24 that are making the money?

1           Corning Incorporated provides a lot  
2 of jobs in this area; Siemens provides a  
3 lot of jobs in this area, and from what  
4 I understand so does Casella.

5           Now, I know it would be great to  
6 have everything perfect in our world,  
7 and I will be honest with all of you,  
8 and Mike will back me up on this, I have  
9 pushed hard for this to come from DEC,  
10 from Tom O'Mara, from Phil Palmesano's  
11 office because I believe that there has  
12 got to be a solution to this problem.

13           Either the state needs to step up  
14 and start giving money so people can  
15 purify their water so they can use it  
16 again, and from what I have been told,  
17 you can do this, but it's very  
18 expensive.

19           But the state is the one that did  
20 not step up when I called DEC for a  
21 friend of mine by the name of Danny  
22 Wilson that had his well polluted. So  
23 that's where I'm coming from.

24           Don't put the industries down

1 because they are trying to do the  
2 industry and help the area, but  
3 understand that they need help as well  
4 as we need help.

5 Otherwise, I'm going to say the  
6 same thing I said at the last town hall,  
7 where the hell are you going to put all  
8 of this crap? We all have it coming out  
9 of us, and where the hell is going to  
10 go?

11 MR. HARGRAVE: Tim, would you  
12 address the public here tonight and let  
13 us know what the DEC's current position  
14 is up there now, where we're at in the  
15 process? You at least owe us that.

16 MR. VOLINO: First of all, does  
17 anyone else want to speak?

18 Okay. Tim, if you want to speak,  
19 you can speak from the stage so we can  
20 hear.

21 MR. HARGRAVE: Again, my name is  
22 Tim Hargrave, H-A-R-G-R-A-V-E.

23 I'm asking you respectfully, Tim,  
24 get up here and address these people.

1 Tell us what's going on in Region 8's  
2 mind up there, where they are at in the  
3 process. What do we expect in the next  
4 week, two weeks, in the next month?

5 We are asking you, we are all here  
6 tonight, we are asking you for  
7 information. And just like I said  
8 before, it's like pulling teeth. You  
9 guys have zero public participation  
10 plans.

11 We reach out to you, and weeks,  
12 almost a month at times before you get  
13 an email response. Here's your chance.  
14 Try to redeem yourself a little bit.  
15 Get up here and address these people,  
16 please.

17 MR. VOLINO: Is there anyone else  
18 that would like to speak?

19 PUBLIC MEMBER: Apparently not.

20 MR. VOLINO: Okay. So the  
21 representatives will be here from -- you  
22 know, Wayne and Tim are here answering  
23 questions. I see we have Zero-Waste  
24 Ithaca here to answer questions. Bill

1 Mattingly is here to answer questions.  
2 DEC is here to answer questions  
3 privately, but is there anything else  
4 that the board would like to add?

5 There is a survey online on the  
6 Town of Thurston's website. There are  
7 hard copies still in the back if you  
8 would like to fill that out, leave that  
9 at the town hall by Monday.

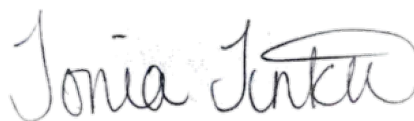
10 And if there's nothing else, that  
11 will conclude our public comment, and I  
12 appreciate everyone and thank everyone  
13 for coming.

14 (Proceedings concluded.)

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1 CERTIFICATION:

2  
3 I hereby certify that the proceedings and  
4 evidence are contained fully and accurately in the  
5 notes taken by me on the above cause and that this  
6 is a correct transcript of the same to the best of  
7 my ability.

8  
9 

10  
11 \_\_\_\_\_  
12 TONIA L. TINKER