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BUSINESS

Micron's Clay project gets its first dose of public opposition and tough questions

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About 170 people crammed the Clay Town Hall board room on Tuesday, March 19, 2024, to comment on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposed environmental review of Micron Technology's planned semiconductor manufacturing complex on Route 31. At the podium is Soule Lieter, who said she supports the project. Glenn Coin | gcoin@syracuse.com



By **[Glenn Coin | gcoin@syracuse.com](mailto:gcoin@syracuse.com)**

Clay, N.Y. – [Micron Technology's](#) plan to build a massive semiconductor factory complex on Route 31 encountered its first public opposition Tuesday night in a crowded town hall.

About 170 people filled the town of Clay board room to raise their concerns about the project.

About two dozen expressed fears about chemicals polluting air and water, cars and trucks overwhelming local roads, taxes rising sharply, and rainwater flooding their back yards. Their comments were met with nods and occasional applause.

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“I’m terrified about this project,” said Alice Loomis, of Clay. “I hope it doesn’t destroy our ability to live here.”

More than 20 people spoke out about the project at the meeting held to elicit comments about how [the federal government should study the project’s potential environmental impacts](#). The meeting, called a scoping session, was held by the U.S Army Corps of Engineers, the federal agency assigned to do the study.

A handful of speakers said they supported the project, and a handful said they didn’t want it to happen.

The rest said they wanted to make sure that if the project is built, it won't hurt the environment or community.

"We believe this project presents significant opportunities, but it comes with tremendous challenges," said John Przepoira, of Syracuse, a member of Green USA. "The scale of the proposed action is enormous, and the review of the potential impacts, direct, indirect and cumulative must be equally robust."

Several people said they were worried about the vast array of chemicals used in semiconductor factories, including those called "forever chemicals," used extensively in consumer products and now found in groundwater around the country.

"I do support this project," said Paul Fritzen, who said he was an engineer and avid fisherman. "I also know just how far of a reach something like a chemical spill could go, so I would implore the Army Corps to research just how far of an environmental impact could happen in a worst case scenario."

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Tuesday's meeting was in stark contrast to the scoping session held in October for the parallel environmental review required by New York state. At the October meeting, several speakers calmly raised concerns about chemicals and taxes, but no one specifically opposed it.

The Army Corps representative at the meeting, Steve Metivier, chief of the regulatory branch of the Buffalo district, listened calmly but did not respond.

Micron plans to build four fabrication plants, or fabs, covering a total of more than 130 acres of land at the corner of Caughdenoy Road and Route 31. Micron said it could invest up to \$100 billion over the next 20 years, ultimately employing 9,000 people.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, the Army corps is required to conduct an environmental review because Micron hopes to get federal funding. Once the study is done, the agency can approve, modify or deny Micron's application to build the fabs. There's no deadline for the study, Metivier said.

"A NEPA environmental impact statement is supposed to take two years, but there's no requirement that it takes that long," Metivier said. "Some take longer, some take less."

Micron plans to begin construction in early 2025 and start producing chips by 2029.

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Micron has applied for an undisclosed sum from the federal CHIPS and Science Act to build the Clay fabs and one in Boise, Idaho, at the company's headquarters. No public announcement has been made on how much money Micron might receive. Intel, which is building fabs in Ohio and Arizona, got an \$8.5 billion award this week.

The comments at Tuesday night's meeting weren't surprising, said Carson Henry, the Micron official in charge of building the Clay fabs.

"Any time there's a project of this magnitude, there's going to be people with questions," said Henry, Micron's senior director of strategic U.S. expansion, after the meeting. "We'll take those questions back and we'll incorporate them into the administrative and, in some cases, we need to set the record straight."

If you didn't make it to Tuesday's meeting, you can submit written comments by April 4 at celrb-micron.public.comments@usace.army.mil or by mail to:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District

Attn: Ms. Margaret Crawford

7413 County House Road

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