

## OPINION

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# **Micron must address flooding risk caused by building on wetlands**



**Micron Technology would destroy more than 200 acres of wetlands, like these along Burnet Road in the town of Clay, to build a semiconductor manufacturing complex. *Glenn Coin, [gcoin@syracuse.com](mailto:gcoin@syracuse.com) file photo***

## **Micron's wetlands destruction will harm biodiversity, climate**

To the Editor:

Micron's investment may bring jobs and economic growth to Central New York — opportunities of critical importance, especially to those living in concentrated poverty in Syracuse. However, Micron's planned destruction of about 300 acres of wetlands in and around Clay raises serious concerns.

Wetlands are essential to our health and environment. They support more than one-third of the country's threatened and endangered species, filter pollutants and buffer communities from floods.

They also store vast amounts of carbon, making them powerful tools in the fight against climate change. In fact, 300 acres of freshwater wetlands store 305,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide, roughly equal to the yearly emissions of 66,000 cars.

Destroying these wetlands will release this CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere and remove future carbon storage, further contributing to climate change. This release of CO<sub>2</sub> is not accounted for in Micron's Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Micron proposes to offset this destruction by restoring wetlands elsewhere, but science tells us that restored wetlands rarely replicate the ecological functions of intact ones, even after 100 years. According to a study analyzing 621 restored or created wetlands worldwide, their ability for carbon storage remained 23% lower than undisturbed wetlands, and supported 26% less biodiversity.

New York has ambitious sustainability goals. Sacrificing wetlands for industrial development undermines those commitments. I urge Micron and state leaders to avoid the destruction of existing wetlands and prioritize truly sustainable alternatives, like an eco-industrial park, as modeled elsewhere, that creates jobs, protects the environment and honors our responsibility to future generations.



**Hilary A. McManus** *Fayetteville* The writer is a professor of Biological and Environmental Sciences at Le Moyne College.



**This rendering of Micron Technology's planned chipmaking complex in Clay was included in the company's draft environmental impact statement filed in March. Route 31 is at the lower portion of the photo. Caughdenoy Road is to the left.**

*Micron Technology*

## **Roofs and parking lots will prevent the land from soaking up rainwater**

To the Editor

The flash flooding in Texas shows how deadly heavy rainstorms can be. With increasingly severe precipitation from climate change, we must invest in landscapes that reduce flood risks to avoid extreme flooding in Central New York.

In the case of Micron, we are doing the opposite. Micron will replace 200 acres of wetlands and 8,000 feet of streams with 645 acres of impervious surfaces (parking lots, roads, roofs) and 58 acres of semi-

impervious surfaces. Rainwater that was once captured will quickly flow downstream, increasing flood risk.

The proposed wetland restoration sites are not downstream of the facility, so do not mitigate this loss of water storage.

In its Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), Micron does not address how its development, or the accompanying surge in urban growth, will raise downstream flooding risk.

Micron provides vague promises regarding adaptive stormwater management, but fails to provide detailed evaluation and specific mitigation plans regarding downstream flooding.

Clay already floods. Just ask the folks at Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church or along Stearns Road about their sump pumps and basement floods.

Modeling from First Street Maps shows that the downstream towns of Phoenix and Fulton have severe to extreme flood risks. As planned now, the Micron development will likely exacerbate the flooding issues.

Please submit a public comment in response to the Micron DEIS by email at [CHIPSNEPA@chips.gov](mailto:CHIPSNEPA@chips.gov). Tell Micron to be a good neighbor and fully evaluate and mitigate flooding risk.

These views are my own. I do not speak for SUNY ESF.

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