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# Environmental groups say public needs more time to review huge Micron report on NY project

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Public interest groups are asking for several months to study and comment on an environmental report that will outline potential impacts of the Micron Technology development planned for the town of Clay. (Rick Moriarty | [rmoriarty@syracuse.com](mailto:rmoriarty@syracuse.com)) Rick Moriarty | [rmoriarty@syracuse.com](mailto:rmoriarty@syracuse.com)



Syracuse, N.Y. – A coalition of Central New York environmental and social action groups wants the public to get more time to review the massive document outlining the potential impacts from Micron Technology's planned chipmaking plant in the town of Clay.

Micron submitted the report, called the draft environmental impact statement, to government agencies March 20. It's expected to be made public in early June, and county officials have said they would likely give the public 45 days to review and comment on the report.

That's not nearly enough for a report outlining the effects of what's been called the largest development project ever proposed in New York state, said the SustainCNY Steering Committee.

"The impacts which the project will create, both positive and negative, will be transformative to this community," the sustainability committee wrote in a letter to the Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency. "Adequate time must be provided for the public to not only review and understand the impacts, but to make informed comments on the information that public officials will use for project permitting decisions."

The report is expected to be thousands of pages long, including detailed appendices.

The group is also calling for at least five public hearings to be held in multiple locations, including Syracuse, Clay and Oswego. No public hearings are required under the state and federal review laws that apply to the project.

The Department of Commerce did not respond to requests for information for this story. County Executive Ryan McMahon could not be reached.

The Micron project, which could include up to four semiconductor factories that would employ 9,000 people in 20 years, would be the biggest private development in the history of New York state, officials have said. McMahon said the environmental report is "the most rigorous environmental review in the history of the United States."

Micron spent more than two years compiling the report, which examines the impacts of a wide range of potential impacts, including air and water quality, traffic, job creation and housing.

Micron submitted the report to the county and the U.S. Department of Commerce, which has pledged \$4.6 billion toward the building of Micron's first two factories in Clay.

Micron is pushing to get the environmental completed and line up the many permits it will need by November, when the company plans to start clearing trees from the 1,400-acre site.

“We’ve always known that this is a tight schedule, but we’re on track to hit it,” Scott Gatzemeier, Micron’s corporate vice president for U.S. expansion, told [syracuse.com/The Post-Standard](#) last month. “We’re working with all the agencies and we’ve got great federal and local and state support to go through this.”

Both the county and Commerce Department are required to conduct environmental reviews of the project. While the two reviews are run by different government agencies under different laws, the two agencies are working together on a single environmental report and review process.

State law requires the public be given at least 30 days to submit written comments after the environmental statement is released. The federal review requires a minimum of 45 days, and the county will offer that much, said the county’s economic development director, Robert Petrovich.

Petrovich said the county plans to make the report public June 4.

A 45-day comment window starting June 4 would include the week of July 4, one of the most popular vacation weeks of the year.

It’s not unusual for government agencies to give the public more time than the minimum required to comment on big projects. The state Department of Environmental Conservation added six weeks to a public comment period for the Onondaga Lake cleanup in 2017. The state Department of Transportation has extended comment deadlines for the I-81 project through Syracuse.

Even the Micron project has had extensions. Last year, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers gave the public an extra month to comment on Micron’s plans to destroy 200 acres of wetlands. And the county lengthened the public comment period for the initial stage of the environmental study in 2023.

“This happens all the time,” said Don Hughes, an environmental consultant and member of the Central New York Sierra Club chapter. “It’s commonplace to have these things extended.”

The SustainCNY Steering Committee includes representatives from the Sierra Club, New York Civil Liberties Union, Faith Impact Team, the Skaneateles Lake Association and Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation.

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