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## Updated: Residents sound off on impacts of Micron's planned chipmaking plant in Clay

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A public hearing at the Liverpool High School auditorium was held on the Micron Technology Draft Environmental Impact Statement today. Beth Lauzon, of Camillus and Canastota, makes a statement in the hearing's morning session. Dennis Nett | [dnett@syracuse.com](mailto:dnett@syracuse.com) dennis nett | [dnett@syracuse.com](mailto:dnett@syracuse.com)



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

Syracuse, N.Y. — Micron Technology's planned destruction of hundreds of acres of wetlands and use of toxic chemicals at a proposed chipmaking plant in Clay dominated the first session of the only public hearing to be held on the project's impacts.

More than 60 people spoke at the first two sessions of today's hearing, with more than half voicing their concerns about the environmental damage the plant could wreak.

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The hearing was held to get formal public feedback on the 20,000-page environmental impact report on the Micron project released last month.

Dan Larson, of Sterling, criticized the report for not detailing exactly which chemicals Micron would discharge into the environment.

"To allow a commercial enterprise like Micron to dump unidentified or unknown toxins in unspecified quantities with unproven and underdeveloped treatment technologies into our groundwater supply is a serious abdication of governmental responsibilities," Larson said.

The hearing is being conducted by representatives from the Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency and the U.S. Department of Commerce. Both agencies are responsible for the project's environmental review and plan to provide Micron billions in taxpayer subsidies.

The daylong hearing also served as the public hearing for Micron's separate permit to fill in about 200 acres of wetlands. That's overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who had two representatives listening to today's testimony.

Representatives of construction unions, builders organizations and economic development groups praised the jobs and economic boost the Micron project would bring. Micron has said it would create up to 9,000 jobs at the plant, and another 40,000 spinoff jobs in the community.

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"Central New York is experiencing a bit of a renaissance," said Susan Crossett, chief executive officer of Sapphire Recruiting, in Syracuse. "Micron was exactly the right partner that our region wanted to realize our vision."

Even Wegmans spoke in favor of the Micron project.

"Wegmans is in support of this initiative, recognizing the possibilities it has for our area as well as the impact it will have on our community," said Evelyn Ingram, the supermarket chain's regional spokesperson. "We are here in partnership with Micron to recognize that we want to do all we can to support our community."

About 100 people attended each of the two sessions, and about 60 of them spoke. OCIDA's lawyer, Jeff Davis, ran the hearing. He called out names from cards that speakers had filled out before the session began, and cut them off after the 3-minute timer beeped like a microwave.

The hearing continues with one more session, from 6 to 9 p.m. today.



Martin P. Wargo, a biologist with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Buffalo District, left; Lt. Col. Robert Burnham, commander of the Buffalo district, center; and David Frenkel, environmental division director for the federal CHIPS Program Office, listen to a speaker during a public hearing at Liverpool High School Thursday on the draft environmental impact statement for Micron Technology's proposed chipmaking complex in Clay. Scott Schild | [sschild@syracuse.com](mailto:sschild@syracuse.com) Scott Schild | [sschild@syracuse.com](mailto:sschild@syracuse.com)

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It will be the only hearing on the project's impact report, a 20,000-page document that has been in the works for more than two years. Anyone can submit written comments on the report until Aug. 11, but Thursday is the only chance to stand at a microphone and speak.



Concerns about wetlands and pollution dominated the two daytime sessions. Speakers said the report doesn't detail enough what chemicals Micron will use and discharge into the Oneida River. And others said the damage caused by destroying wetlands isn't fully captured in the report.

"Just 300 acres of freshwater wetlands can store over 300,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide," said Hilary McManus, who teaches biology at Le Moyne College. "When wetlands are destroyed, that carbon is released into the atmosphere and the land loses its ability to store carbon in the future."

Two college presidents offered their support of Micron: Linda LeMura, of Le Moyne; and Warren Hilton, of Onondaga Community College.

The report is called a draft environmental impact statement. It details the enormous impacts the project could have on Central New York, from traffic to air quality to housing to noise. It also looks at how many jobs could be created and how the local economy would grow.

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The county and federal agencies must review all comments from the public hearing and those submitted in writing, then respond to all "substantive" comments. Those comments and responses must be incorporated into the final environmental report. That's expected to be released in October.

[OCIDA released the report June 25. The entire report is available at OCIDA's website.](#)

There's also a paper copy at the central library at 447 S. Salina St., Syracuse.

Micron did not participate in the hearing, but the company sent several executives to listen in. Among them was Ashley Kunz, senior director of environmental, health and safety at the company's expansions in Idaho and New York; and Carson Henry, senior director of the U.S. expansion program, including Clay.

Micron plans to start clearing trees in November, a job the company says will take four months. Micron will eventually cut down more than 400 acres of forest, according to an application filed this month with state and federal agencies.

The body of the report is 719 pages. Attached are more than 19,000 pages of appendices, mostly traffic counts and studies.

The agencies are giving the public 45 days to comment on the report, the minimum required under federal law. That period ends Aug. 11.

Environmental and labor advocates complained today that 45 days is not nearly enough to review such a huge report and have asked for four months of review. The county and federal governments have refused to extend the comment period.

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Micron plans to start construction in November. Before that, the company needs to obtain dozens of permits, from the federal Environmental Protection Agency to the town of Clay.

Micron plans to build up to four chipmaking factories at the corner of Route 31 and Caughdenoy Road in Clay. The project, which could cost \$100 billion and employ 9,000 people, would be the largest private investment in New York state history.

The company plans to start construction in November and build continuously for 16 years. The first fabrication plant, or fab, would start producing memory chips in 2029, [according to Micron.](#)

[Micron could receive more than \\$20 billion](#) in taxpayer subsidies to build the first two plants. The money comes from the bipartisan CHIPS and Science Act, passed in 2022 to bring computer chip manufacturing back to the U.S.

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