



New York State Department of Environmental Conservation  
Attn: Commissioner Basil Seggos  
625 Broadway  
Albany, NY 12233-0001

August 20, 2019

Dear Commissioner Seggos,

The S.A Dunn C&D Landfill is located directly adjacent to the Rensselaer City School District and in close proximity to the homes of our students and families. Nobody involved believes this to be an ideal situation. We thank the Department of Environmental Conservation for acknowledging the elevated risk of this situation by providing increased oversight, more stringent regulations, and active monitoring of hydrogen sulfide and air particulate. These actions are helpful; however, we believe that our students and community members need to know, without a doubt, what is in the air that we are breathing.

We understand that a berm will be constructed as a barrier between the school and the landfill as a part of the permit modification process. Any barrier between the two properties should be considered an improvement; however, while a properly constructed berm should help prevent visual and audible distractions, it may not provide sufficient protection concerning air quality. All of these issues become increasingly critical as the landfill prepares to construct cells that are closer to the school.

For example, the school and neighboring properties have experienced two known wind events in the past two years that were recorded. Each resulted in corrective action from the Department of Environmental Conservation due to the dust that was leaving the landfill site. Testing done as a result indicates that the dust from those events was likely sand from the mining operation. As new cells are opened and operations move closer to the school, the material from any potential future event is less likely to be sand and more likely to be imported C&D material. This poses serious questions about air quality.

We understand that ambient air has many materials, including trace amounts of toxins. We also understand that the origin of particulate in the air can be difficult to trace to a source. Due to the variables in air quality testing, we believe that it is critical to begin baseline testing to understand the makeup of the current particulate in the air in our vicinity so that we can have a

Joseph Kardash  
Superintendent  
P: (518) 465-7509  
F: (518) 436-8566  
jkardash@rcsd.k12.ny.us

Meghan Heimroth, CPA  
School Business Official  
P: (518) 465-6871  
F: (518) 436-0479  
mheimroth@rcsd.k12.ny.us

BOARD OF EDUCATION:  
John M. Mooney, President  
Jennifer Haggerty, Vice President  
Dana Endres, Member  
Lark Rutecki, Member  
Vanessa Salisbury, Member

contextual understanding of any changes or increases in toxins over time, making detected hazards actionable. We need a strategic air quality plan that is grounded in data and facts, not assumptions.

As we continue to investigate and learn what air quality hazards may be associated with a C&D Landfill, we have learned that hydrogen sulfide and certain sized particulate matter are the most commonly measured items. The Rensselaer County Department of Health also helped by administering a comprehensive lead dust test of our property. We learned that due to the size of the dust, lead tends to be a leading indicator of potential hazardous material in the air. We were relieved to hear that our site was clean at this time concerning that test. If we wait until we detect lead dust to develop, it will be too late for any baseline air quality testing. The window of opportunity to instill confidence in the data and ensure our air quality is now.

We understand that it is not productive or feasible to test for everything so we ask that the Department of Environmental Conservation begin by exchanging information with our Civil Service Employees Association Industrial Hygiene Specialist, our Questar III Director of Health and Safety, and other safety experts to help us to collectively design comprehensive air quality management strategy.

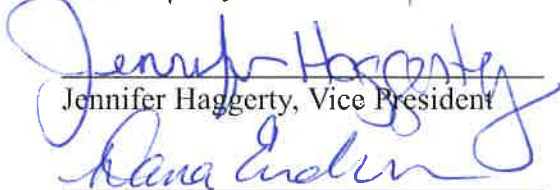
This is an opportunity, and a responsibility, for our state level government agencies to work together. The Department of Environmental Conservation may not have all of the equipment necessary for this comprehensive testing. It is time to partner with the Department of Health and, if necessary, the Department of Labor to collectively and collaboratively use the resources available to ensure the health and safety of our students and community members. Our situation and shared concern certainly fall within the purview of each agency. We, as the local government agencies, are collectively asking our elected state representatives to work with the appropriate agencies to ensure that this critically needed collaboration happens in a timely fashion.

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

**Rensselaer City School  
Board of Education Members**

  
\_\_\_\_\_

John Mooney, President

  
\_\_\_\_\_

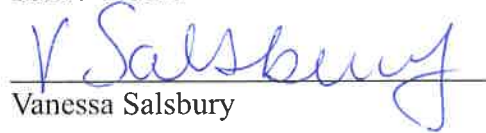
Jennifer Haggerty, Vice President

  
\_\_\_\_\_

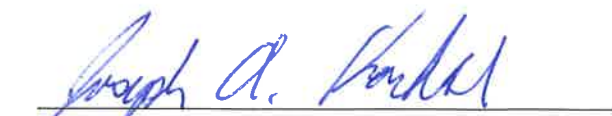
Dana Endres

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lark Rutecki

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Vanessa Salsbury



Joseph A. Kardash  
Superintendent, Rensselaer City School  
District



Michael E. Stammel  
Chairman, Rensselaer County Legislature  
District # 6 Representative



Richard J. Mooney  
Mayor, City of Rensselaer

**CC:**

Senator Neil D. Breslin  
172 State St., Capitol Building  
Room 430C  
Albany, NY 12247

Assemblymember John T.  
McDonald III  
LOB 417  
Albany, NY 12248

Steven F. McLaughlin  
Rensselaer County Executive  
1600 7th Ave  
Troy, NY 12180