



VILLAGE OF AURORA

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Objecting to the DEC Permitting Cargill's Proposed Shaft #4 Without Proper Environmental Review

WHEREAS the first Cayuga Salt Mine shaft was drilled in 1915 and Cargill, Inc. ("Cargill")'s permitted mining reserves currently extend under Cayuga Lake northward to within 11 miles of the Village of Aurora, and southward to within one mile of the City of Ithaca; and

WHEREAS mining reserves are likely to be expanded in a northward direction in the future if Shaft 4 is built in the currently proposed location; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Aurora recognizes the economic, social, recreational, and ecological importance of Cayuga Lake and its watershed to the State and to the local community; and

WHEREAS the Village of Aurora draws drinking water for its residents, Wells College, local water haulers from the surrounding area and the four hotels and restaurant of the Inns of Aurora; and

WHEREAS New York has established the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process to systematically consider environmental factors early in the planning stages of actions and projects that are directly undertaken, funded or approved by local, regional and state agencies;¹ and

WHEREAS environmental review early in the planning stages allows a project to be vetted, and modified as needed, to avoid adverse impacts on the environment;² and

WHEREAS Cargill's proposed shaft construction, the mining of the one-mile connecting tunnel, and expanded salt mining have potential adverse impacts that have not been

¹ 6 NYCRR Part 617; SEQR Handbook, 3rd Edition, 2010, Introduction

² *Ibid.*

properly reviewed and vetted under SEQR in contrast to the Hampton Corners Salt Mine in Livingston County which is carrying out its second Draft Environmental Impact Statement; and

WHEREAS adverse impacts include impacts on local water resources, including groundwater and the waters of Cayuga Lake and various ways in which substantial quantities of salt would be incidentally brought into contact with such local water resources, not only during current mining operations but also during the post-operational period after the mine is closed and abandoned; and

WHEREAS “the abandonment of dry salt mines raises a difficult problem, as post-abandonment mine flooding is, in most cases, highly probable, with possible severe consequences at ground level;”³ and

WHEREAS “the majority of salt mines succumb to collapse and flooding”⁴ and “flooding, whether intentional or inadvertent, is ...‘game over’ for successful containment or control of the salinity associated with the brine that will inevitably be squeezed out of the mine;”⁵ and

WHEREAS since 1975, and despite several applications for mine expansion by Cargill, the NYSDEC has never requested a full environmental impact study of the mining risks; and

WHEREAS the 1994 collapse and flooding of the Retsof salt mine in Livingston County and subsequent salinization of an adjacent fresh water aquifer provide an example of various adverse impacts and some of the factors implicated in salt-mine collapse; and

WHEREAS these and other potential adverse impacts on the environment should be subject to full and proper environmental review under SEQR; and

WHEREAS the NYSDEC reviewed the Cargill Shaft 4 project and concluded that the action meets their standards, and on 16 August 2016 issued an applicable permit without full environmental review of the project in its entirety;

now therefore, be it RESOLVED that the Village of Aurora joins in an Article 78 proceeding to require environmental review under SEQR; and allocate \$200 of discretionary funds to cover associated legal costs; and be it further

RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded by the Village Clerk to Governor Andrew Cuomo, NYSDEC Commissioner Basil Seggos, State Senators Patricia Helming and Thomas O’Mara, Senate Leader John Flanagan, Senate Minority Leader Andrea Stewart-

³ P. Bérest, B. Brouard, and B. Feuga, Dry Mine Abandonment, Abstract, Solution Mining Research Institute (SMRI) Technical Conference Paper, Wichita, KS, Spring 2004. (<http://www.brouard-consulting.com/sites/default/files/smri-wichita.pdf>)

⁴ [A. Michalski, 1/31/17 comment letter to DEC.](#)

⁵ [R. Vaughan, 12/9/16 comment letter to DEC.](#)

Cousins, Assemblyman Gary Finch, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, Assembly Minority leader Brian Kolb, Chair of the Assembly's Standing Committee on Environmental Conservation Steve Englebright, and Cayuga County Legislature Chair Keith Batman.