Privilege of the floor presentation regarding

**Resolution Urging Governor Hochul and the DEC to Protect Cayuga Lake Water Quality by Requiring of Cargill Salt Mine a Full Environmental Review, a Closure Plan, and a Surety Bond to Ensure Safe Closure**

**November 8, 2023**

**Ithaca, NY**

**Joe Kreitinger, PhD**

**US Army Engineer Research and Development Center (retired)**

**US Army Corps of Engineers**

* Thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening. I’m Joe Kreitinger, a local expert in ecological and human health risk assessment as well as risk management. I’m retired now but spent the last 12 years of my career working for a US Army research lab developing risk management strategies for construction of infrastructure by the Corps of Engineers and implementation of habitat restoration in the Great Lakes for the USEPA.
* I want to urge all of you to vote in favor of tonight’s resolution.
* The characterization of ecological risk to Cayuga Lake from the Cargill Salt mine is a very complex problem to solve. There are a lot of questions that need to be asked and answers sought. I’ve seen virtually no transparency nor rigorous analysis that is necessary for the assessment of large-scale impacts to Cayuga lake from our local salt mine.
* The potential for an unforeseen failure of the mine with severe impacts to the ecology of Cayuga lake is not unthinkable. There have been four hard rock salt mines developed in Central NY. Of these four, two have failed resulting in a complete loss of the mine with uncontrolled release of brine into the surrounding environment. There are many geological similarities between these four salt mines.
* In order to cut through the complexity, it’s instructive to understand that the Cargill salt mine, like all salt mines in central NY, will ultimately fill with water, mine shafts will collapse with structural weakening of the overlying rock. The only issue is whether this happens over a hundred years following the end of economic salt mining or whether it happens dramatically over a very short time frame.
* Of course, Cargill engineering is developing and implementing solutions to these problems which can be successful until they aren’t: individuals are not always careful, engineering decisions are made with incomplete information, or management doesn’t provide the resources necessary to meet the technical challenges.
* To evaluate the potential for risk to Cayuga Lake a serious technical review and associated risk model needs to be developed with full transparency and access to data that Cargill has not made available through an EIS or other publicly available environmental evaluation.
* I’m not advocating for a mine closure tonight, however, I am urging you all to vote in favor of this resolution in order to increase transparency and have a wholistic look at the risks the salt mine poses to lake ecology and community water supplies.