ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY LEADERS SOUND THE ALARM ABOUT LAFARGE BURNING MILLIONS OF TIRES EVERY YEAR IN RAVENA

CALL ON ALBANY COUNTY LEGISLATURE TO PASS NEW CLEAN AIR LAW AT THEIR MONDAY DECEMBER 16, 2019 MEETING

The Albany County League of Women Voters and a coalition of Community environmental organizations and activists, concerned about the burning of possibly millions of tires by Lafarge/Holcim in Ravena, today held a press conference calling upon the Albany County Legislature to act immediately to prevent this serious threat to the quality of the air we breathe.

The conference, held at ALBANY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY 161 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY, included Judith Enck, Former EPA Regional Administrator and Founder of Beyond Plastics
David O. Carpenter, M.D. Director, Institute for Health and the Environment University at Albany
Barbara Heinzen, PhD, Consultant, Multi-stakeholder projects concerning the future of energy, land management for environmental/economic benefit, community environmental activist and advocate.

Speakers at the conference called upon the Albany County Legislature to pass the Clean Air Law, known as Local Law l, at its meeting this Monday, December 16. The law is needed to prevent Lafarge/Holcim, a multi-billion dollar international cement manufacturing corporation with a plant immediately next to the high school in the Town of Coeymans, from burning tires as a source of energy for its plant.

The Corporation has made clear that it wishes to use tires as an energy source. The proposed law would effectively limit this action and would further require careful monitoring of pollutants emitted by the plant or any business in the county from burning tire or waste for fuel.

The Coeymans town government had acted in March of this year to limit the burning of tires in its town. However, at last November’s election, those town board members who had voted for this law were defeated when Lafarge opposed their re-election and supported their opponents. The newly elected board members may repeal or gut the existing law when they take office in January. LaFarge wants to gut the law by allowing tire burning and not repeal the law. Without a county law, LaFarge could begin burning tires immediately.

With the risk of the burning of millions of tires once again facing the residents of Coeymans and Albany County, immediate action by the County Legislature is needed. Thus, the call for passage of the bill at Monday evening’s meeting.
"Lafarge Cement company currently burns massive amounts of coal and now wants to add millions of tires to be burned at its plant in Ravena. This is one of the most serious air pollution threats facing the entire Hudson Valley. It is imperative that the Albany County Legislature vote to protect public health and the environment by passing a new local Clean Air Act when they meet on Monday. We cannot endure more asthma and respiratory diseases, more climate change and an overall degradation of our air and the Hudson River," said Judith Enck, former EPA Regional Administrator and founder of Beyond Plastics.

"Air pollution kills! The most common cause of death from air pollution is a heart attack, but air pollution also cause respiratory disease and lung cancer. We need to take action to reduce releases of toxic air pollutants!” David O. Carpenter, M.D., Director, Institute for Health and the Environment University at Albany

"LafargeHolcim has a long reported history of polluting the air, water and land, breaking rules and violating the law. While the Environmental Protection Agency allows tire burning for fuel, it notes that the more responsible thing to do is to re-purpose or recycle them. We call on Lafarge and other businesses to change their tire burning plans and be responsible to the community and to our future.” Paul Tick, Clinical Director of a non-profit social service agency. He is the founder and editor of News from the Neighborhood, an on-line weekly news source covering politics and the environment.

“As a society, we have a problem with garbage - whether it is old tires, superfund sites, or municipal waste. We have a lot of garbage, but no one wants it. So what do we do? For almost 30 years, New York State has said we must produce less waste: "Reduce, Reuse & Recycle". These are the priorities before burn or bury or export our garbage. The Clean Air Law will encourage us to move in exactly that direction. It is time to change.” Barbara Heinzen, PhD

"If this law is not passed, Coeymans and Albany County will become the tire-burning capital of the Northeast. There is a reason that the Town Boards of Bethlehem and New Scotland supported the Coeymans Clean Air and the Albany County Clean Air Law: it will be impossible to contain the fallout from burning of tires and garbage. If that burning is allowed, it will be a black eye on Albany County’s otherwise good reputation for leadership on environmental protection.” Tom Dolan Outgoing Deputy Supervisor, Town of Coeymans

“Despite what they said during the campaign, I believe the new Town Board is going to do away with the Clean Air Law, or they are going to gut it and allow tire burning in very large quantities. That is why the Albany County Clean Air Law is so important. Once tire burning begins, you won’t be able to stop it. And once it starts, you won’t have clean air. But you can’t live if you can’t breathe clean air. You can’t eat good food if you don’t have good soil. So, if you do nothing, and the burning begins, what are we doing to ourselves and our neighbors?.. if we don’t have clean air, clean water and clean soils, we have nothing.” Phil Crandall Outgoing Supervisor, Town of Coeymans