



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

October 30, 2017

Commissioner Basil Seggos
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway, 14th Floor
Albany, NY 12233-1010

Dear Commissioner Seggos:

We acknowledge your August 17th response to our joint letter of July 13, 2017 (copy attached) in which we requested that you enact a moratorium on "permits or authorizations and avoid approving activities, which will directly, or indirectly, lead to salt mining under Cayuga Lake." In that letter we provided important new information from geologist Dr. Richard Young outlining concerns that the "small pillar" mining techniques in use at the Cargill salt mine could result in a mining collapse in much the same manner as the Retsof mine in Retsof, New York.

As we stated in our prior correspondence, "We urge the Department to enact a moratorium on permits or authorizations and avoid approving activities, which will directly, or indirectly, lead to salt mining under Cayuga Lake. The new geological information is compelling and a mine disaster under the Lake would be catastrophic." With the pending expiration of Cargill's current mining permit on November 1, 2017, the Department has an important opportunity to re-evaluate mining practices at the mine and more fully consider our request. We write today to re-state our belief that a moratorium on mining under the Lake makes sense. Such a moratorium would restrict salt mining under Cayuga Lake "precisely where lateral compressive tectonic forces are most severe." A moratorium would still preserve Cargill's ability to transition to "future salt mining under dry land areas surrounding the lake with more geologic stability." Perhaps more importantly, this sensible policy would protect Cayuga Lake as well as local economic interests.

In your August 17th correspondence you rejected consideration of the issues we raised "regarding mine flooding, subsidence, and aquifer/lake salinization" as unrelated to the new access shaft. We urge you to consider those issues now as you review Cargill's permit renewal application. We believe this information raises the possibility of significant adverse environmental impacts and we urge you to fully explore any new information that could be relevant in preventing a mine collapse including, but not limited to the new information provided by Dr. Richard Young.

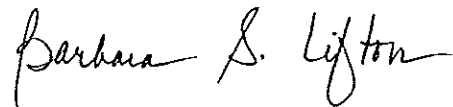
In short, we remain troubled that the Retsof mine failure could be replicated at the Cargill mine under Cayuga Lake. The Cargill salt mine is a complex facility that has significant implications for the surrounding communities. We believe a thorough environmental review, one that considers the new geological information, should be undertaken. It would be shortsighted of the Department to simply renew the permit without fully considering new information and potential adverse environmental implications that have come to light in the roughly 14 years since the last environmental review, including but not limited to the new technical data presented by Dr. Young.

In conclusion, we respectfully request once again that you fulfill our moratorium request. We believe such a moratorium can and should be considered as part of the permit renewal process and believe this is the only way to completely safeguard the Lake from a potential salt mining catastrophe similar to the one in Retsof. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about this critically important environmental and public health matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Englebright". The script is cursive and fluid.

Steve Englebright, Chairman, NYS Assembly
Environmental Conservation Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara S. Lifton". The script is cursive and elegant.

Barbara S. Lifton, Member
New York State Assembly