

# Opinions

## CWM hazardous waste landfill application in final stages

An old application to site a massive, 6-million-ton toxic waste landfill operation in the towns of Lewiston and Porter, located a mile from all public schools, is still pending. Residents for Responsible Government (RRG), formed in 2001, has been fighting this CWM Chemical Services LLC application, and you can help finish the job.

From 1972 to 2015, CWM ran one of the largest PCB and toxic waste landfill operations in the U.S., taking waste from more than half the country. Although

thousands of landfills in the nation accept residential garbage, only 17 landfill operations take the most dangerous chemicals known to man, the kind CWM wants to import from half the country.

CWM's landfilling has been closed for nine years, but is still trying to reopen.

CWM applied for a new landfill and, in 2003, predicted its application would be approved by 2005. However, the application was so troubled that CWM's landfill filled up and was forced

to close in 2015. CWM's application is only now nearing final decision-making, which is required from a state Hazardous Waste Siting Board and the state Department of Environmental Conservation commissioner-designee.

Final briefs are due soon from CWM and "intervenor" approved by the state; counsel for Niagara County, the Town of Lewiston, the Village of Lewiston, and the Village of Youngstown; counsel for the Lewiston-Porter School District,

the Niagara County Farm Bureau and RRG; Tuscarora Nation counsel, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper counsel, and resident Amy Witryol.

Numerous conferences, motions, and sworn testimony have been offered on issues such as groundwater, radiation-contaminated soils, air pollution, truck traffic noise, and adverse impacts on real estate and economic development, including marketing farm products.

Intervenor, including RRG, will submit final arguments on

these topics and more over the next several months. You can help RRG defray the cost of experts' assistance with final arguments. We have been toxic-free for nine years now; let's finish the job!

Donations may be made online at rrg-ny.com or sent to RRG, P.O. Box 262, Youngstown, NY 14174.

Thank you for your continued support.

Vincent Agnello  
President, RRG

## Lewiston's environmental future at risk

The Town of Lewiston has long been home to some of the most diverse natural landscapes and vital resources in the region. From the rich agricultural lands to the majestic Niagara River and the historic escarpment, these assets form the foundation of our town's ecological balance.

However, recent changes to local governance and oversight structures, specifically the proposed dissolution of the Environmental Conservation Commission (ECC) and the shift of responsibilities to the Planning and Environmental Review Board under Local Law 4, pose a serious threat to our environmental stewardship and public well-being.

### Loss of comprehensive environmental oversight

The threatened dissolution of the ECC, which is responsible for a broad range of environmental protections, strips the town and residents of a key body focused solely on long-term ecological preservation. The newly empowered Planning and Environmental Review Board will focus on reviewing specific projects under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and only those presented by the Town Board, taking a piecemeal approach that neglects the overall environmental health of the town. This reactive stance will hinder proactive initiatives aimed at preserving our natural heritage.

The ECC's statutory duties, such as investigating environmental incompatibilities, maintaining a natural resource inventory, advising on broader environmental strategies, and investigating environmental threats to the community, are now diluted or lost. The weakened oversight will have far-reaching consequences, ultimately jeopardizing the ecological integrity of the town, the well-being of its residents, their quality of life, and property values.

### Environmental threats looming large

Lewiston faces numerous environmental challenges that demand specialized and continuous oversight:

• **Modern landfill and Chemical Waste Management:** These waste management sites are potential sources of soil, air and water contamination. Without dedicated environmental oversight, Lewiston risks significant

public health impacts from toxic leakage and long-term pollution.

• **Hazardous material at Niagara Falls Storage Site and Lake Ontario Ordnance Works:** These sites contain dangerous radioactive and chemical materials from past military and industrial activities. The proper containment and monitoring of these hazardous materials is critical to prevent further environmental degradation and health hazards to our community.

• **New York State Power Authority:** As a major operator along the Niagara River, the New York State Power Authority has significant influence on local ecosystems. Hydroelectric dams disrupt aquatic life and can erode riverbanks. Without focused environmental scrutiny, the ecological balance of the river is at risk.

• **Niagara River and escarpment:** The Niagara River and the Niagara Escarpment are invaluable natural treasures. The escarpment, on the Canadian side, is a UNESCO-designated biosphere, and the river's aquatic ecosystems need active protection to prevent degradation from unchecked development or industrial activity and waste disposal as recently proposed by the City of Niagara Falls.

• **Agricultural resources:** Lewiston's rich farmland is essential to the town's economy and local food supply. These resources are increasingly threatened by urbanization and industrial pollution, requiring vigilant oversight to ensure sustainable land use practices.

**A call to action**  
In an era where environmental challenges are only growing more complex, it is deeply concerning that the Town of Lewiston is reducing its environmental protections. By moving to dissolve the ECC and eliminate its oversight capabilities, we risk exposing our town to irreversible environmental damage.

We must urge our Town Board to reject the elimination of the Environmental Conservation Commission and maintain a dedicated conservation body with the authority and resources to tackle the significant environmental challenges, many of which are unique to our community. Lewiston's future depends on a balance between development and preservation.

We invite all concerned residents of the Town of Lewiston to attend the Town Board meeting and public hearing on these changes scheduled for Sept. 23 at 6 p.m. at the Lewiston Town Hall, located at 1375 Ridge Road. This is your opportunity to voice your concerns and advocate for the protection of Lewiston's natural heritage.

Together, we can work to ensure that the town's natural beauty and ecological integrity are preserved for future generations like all the other communities that surround us.

*The Town of Lewiston Historic Preservation Commission: James Allen, Domonic Balassone, Zach Collister, Brock Davey, Matthew Feldman, Mark Gallo*



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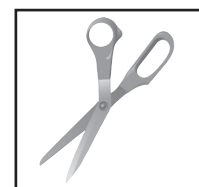
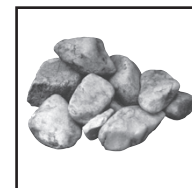
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