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Suffern, NY 10901

Mr. Jeremy Rosenthal,
NYS DEC, Division of Environmental Permits,
625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-1750,
Phone: (518) 402-9159 depprmt@gw.dec.state.ny.us

Re: UWNY Scoping

Dear Mr. Rosenthal:

The following are my comments on the UWNY DEIS.

Rockland County's water challenges do not exist in isolation nor does its water resources and solutions. Strategic regional water planning is vital to addressing water supply and demand. It is therefore, troubling to learn of a band-aid like solution in the proposed desalination plan of United water New York/Suez (UWNY). Merely covering the area of injury resulting from systemic harm or improper management of risk does not promote effective water management practices.

It is unconscionable that Rockland County taxpayers and ratepayers of UWNY are subject to the terms and condition advanced by private industry to secure the drinking water resources for the majority of Rockland County. "Of course, UWNY has since selected the desalination plant as their preferred alternative."¹ Further dismay is attributed to the testimony of Rockland County Health Department Dan Miller during the Public Service Commission (PSC) 2006 Joint Proposal he represented Rockland County and did not negotiate as a member of Rockland's Health Dept. He stated, "I presented detailed testimony showing that United Water's production capabilities were not adequate to reliably meet projected demands. The projects that I used did not include routine conservation measures. It would not have been prudent for them because we don't have enforceable conservation measures in place unless we're in a water emergency."²

Further to Dan Miller's comment he notes that water that flows into the County via the Ramapo River is a water resource.

¹ Dan Miller testimony Aug 6, 2008 NYS Assembly subcommittee on the environment see attached transcript pg. 123

² Dan Miller testimony Aug.6, 2008 NYS Assembly subcommittee on the environment see attached pg 123

- To what extent has the Ramapo River been adequately studied for its impact to UWNYS access to Rocklands water supply?
- What impact does the Western Ramapo Sewer Extension and Advanced Waste Treatment Plant have on recharging UWNYS wellheads? Has this been fully explored to its recharge effect?

According to the USEPA Region 2 EIS of the Western Ramapo Sewer Extension and Advanced Waste Water Treatment Plant (AWT)

“This growth will lead to a higher demand for water from the aquifer for public use. Based on current zoning, an increase in water demand of approximately 453,000 gpd is expected at full build-out, of which 370,000 gpd (82 percent) is from residential use. Using current average well withdrawals in the area, this increase in population results in a less than four percent increase in withdrawals, such that no significant impacts to the wellfield are anticipated.”³

- What benefit, if any will be realized by the 1.5mgd to UWNYS wellheads?
- To what extent are taxpayer dollars benefiting UWNYS increase in available water for its system use?
- Given the statement no significant impacts to the wellfield, are the assumptions used in the 2006 Joint Proposal for projected supply and demand concurrent with the data in the USEPA data applied for the Ramapo AWT project?

It is worth noting that US Geological Survey was contracted by the County to conduct a five-year term survey of Rocklands groundwater resources that has a projected completion date of December 2009. Public funds contribute to the cost of this work and it is unclear why a proposal for a desalination project is being considered without the use of this study. Great attention was given to the need for such a study to which UWNYS also contributed to the cost.

- To what extent is the information being developed in this study considered in the assumptions developed for projected supply and demand?
- As UWNYS contributed to the cost of the USGS study are ratepayers contributing to this contribution and do ratepayers realize the benefit of this expense?

Stated in the Joint Proposal final statement December 2006⁴ it is noted that the PSC does not have authority for water testing quality of radioactive material.

³ <http://www.epa.gov/region2/spmm/westernramapo.pdf> pg 18

⁴ [http://www3.dps.state.ny.us/pscweb/WebFileRoom.nsf/Web/243EF59F4DB6F4E18525724400585455/\\$File/401_06w0131_06w0244_final.pdf?OpenElement](http://www3.dps.state.ny.us/pscweb/WebFileRoom.nsf/Web/243EF59F4DB6F4E18525724400585455/$File/401_06w0131_06w0244_final.pdf?OpenElement) pg 9

Juxtaposed with the historic leaks at Indian Point nuclear facility just north of the proposed plant location it is a bit disconcerting to learn that Hudson River water is being considered.

- Is the NRC overseeing the captured filtered radioactive material for waste transport, if not what agency does have the authority to enforce proper monitoring and handling of captured material?
- Is there is a baseline study of radioactive material present in the Hudson River in the area of the proposed site?
- How is continuous data obtained and reviewed for radioactive material?
- To what extent is there interaction between Entergy (operator of Indian Point nuclear facility) and UWNY to advise of early warning of known radioactive leaks or spills in the river?
- What additional costs will be borne by UWNY ratepayers to monitor and remove, where possible radioactive material?

“The monitoring equipment would record such parameters as turbidity, pH, salinity, temperature, dissolved oxygen, certain organic compounds, and certain inorganic compounds. Although the technology for the on-line or continuous monitoring of radionuclides in water has not advanced to the point where it is available for widespread commercial applications, UWNY intends to explore and keep close watch on the development of on-line devices for the screening for alpha, beta and/or gamma radiation.

Several promising technologies may arise from the efforts of the U.S. Department of Defense and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Once real-time or continuous monitoring for radionuclides becomes available, UWMN would include it as part of its early warning monitoring program. The information collected by the monitoring equipment would be transmitted to the main control room at the water treatment plant. Plant operators would be able to monitor any changes in river water quality and make any necessary adjustments to the processes to account for these changes. Also, in the event of a spill, the plant operator would be able to note any unusual change in water quality and shut down the intake until the spill passes by... “⁵

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[http://www3.dps.state.ny.us/pscweb/CentralFiles.nsf/0/f50bfb18c0a38f34852574eb00556133/\\$FILE/Chapter%2002.pdf](http://www3.dps.state.ny.us/pscweb/CentralFiles.nsf/0/f50bfb18c0a38f34852574eb00556133/$FILE/Chapter%2002.pdf) BUILDING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE pg 19

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Conceptual Design Report Haverstraw
Water Supply Project
Prepared for
United Water New York
Contact Information:
Contact Name:
Janine Witko

Electricity use and related costs of operating desalination facilities are known to be very high. Water processed through the proposed desalination plant will be dependent on fluctuating electricity costs and infrastructure demands.

- What are the comparative costs of including renewable energy sources to meet electricity needs?

As acknowledged in the DEIS, since 1973, Rockland County does not have an updated Comprehensive Plan. Rockland County has passed a green building bill December 2008 that seeks to meet green building standards that in practice consider water conservation

- To what extent is the impact of these required conservation applications considered in the supply and demand assumptions?
- Has there been a meaningful cumulative study of the potential build out of land use for each municipality within Rockland County?
- Has there been an accounting of green building practices being applied throughout the County?
- Have the effects of the recently adopted MS-4 storm water management regulations been studied to consider water resource benefits?

The failure to consider regional planning and meaningful applied water management practices is shortsighted in addressing Rockland's water needs. The desalination facility proposal should be abandoned until such time that comprehensive studies address water resources as a system. Further, to best enable public participation it is requested that an extension of at least thirty days be granted for additional comment.

Thank you for anticipated attention to these comments.

Sincerely,

Dorice Madronero