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In the Matter Of:

PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION

PUBLIC HEARING

June 22, 2017

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1
2 STATE OF NEW YORK
3 DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
4 ----------
5 In the Matter of
6 PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION
7 on the
8 ONONDAGA LAKE
9 NATURAL RESOURCE DAMAGE ASSESSMENT
10 and RESTORATION PLAN
11 ----------
12 PUBLIC HEARING in the above matter, conducted
13 at the Southwest Community Center, 401 South
14 Avenue, Syracuse, New York before JOHN F. DRURY,
15 CSR, Notary Public in and for the State of New
16 York, on June 22, 2017, 6:00 pm to 7:50 pm.
17
18 BEFORE: MOLLY T. McBRIDE,
19 Administrative Law Judge
20 625 Broadway, 1st Floor
21 Albany, New York 12233-1550
22 (518) 40-9003
23 molly.mcbride@dec.ny.gov
24
25

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1 ALJ McBride
2 ALJ McBRIDE: Thank you everyone for
3 coming out this evening. Good evening
4 everyone, my name is Molly McBride, I'm
5 the Administrative Law Judge with the
6 New York State Department of
7 Environmental Conservation. And I'm
8 going to be presiding over this
9 evening's public comment session.
10 We are here this evening to receive
11 comments from the members of the public
12 regarding the DEC and the US Fish &
13 Wildlife Service for post projects:
14 Restoring wildlife habitat and
15 recreation on Onondaga Lake.
16 The DEC and the US Fish & Wildlife
17 Service plan to restore and protect
18 wildlife habitat and water quality and
19 increase recreational opportunities at
20 Onondaga Lake as outlined in the Draft
21 Restoration Plan, and the Environmental
22 Assessment released for public comment.
23 The Draft Plan and additional
24 information on the Natural Resource
25 Damage Assessment Process may be found

1 ALJ McBride
2 online. And that address is available
3 at our sign-in table at the hallway.
4 As part of the Onondaga Lake Natural
5 Resource Damage Assessment and
6 Restoration Process, the DEC and the US
7 Fish & Wildlife Service assess
8 contaminant related injuries to natural
9 resources, such as waterfowl and turtles,
10 and quantify the lost use of natural
11 resources to the public, such as fishing.
12 The Agencies then solicited
13 restoration project ideas from
14 stakeholders who identified as type and
15 scale of restoration needed to
16 compensate those who were injured. The
17 ultimate goal of the process is to
18 replace, restore, rehabilitate or
19 acquire the equivalent of injured
20 natural resources and resource services
21 lost due to the release of hazardous
22 substances, at no cost to the taxpayer.
23 Comments on the Draft Plan may be
24 submitted through July 17, 2017 and may
25 be mailed to the US Fish & Wildlife

ALJ McBride

Service to the attention of Anne Secord. The mailing address as well as the e-mail address are available at our sign in table right outside the hearing room here. If you did not get that information when you checked in here today, please take it with you when you leave. We will keep that information at the table until we finish our hearing here this evening.

This Public Comment Session is to provide an opportunity for all of you to come and comment on this Proposed Plan. This is not a question and answer session, but an opportunity for you to put your comments on the record. Anyone who wishes to speak today must fill out a speaker card. So far I have approximately 35 speaker cards. If you have not yet filled out a card they're available at the table in the hallway.

Speakers will be called in the order that we receive their cards. I will call your name when it is your turn to

1 ALJ McBride
2 speak. If I mispronounce your name, I
3 apologize, please correct me when you
4 get to the microphone. Again, please
5 come forward and speak into the
6 microphone. Address your comments
7 forward here to me.
8 And remember that we do have a court
9 reporter, who will be taking down your
10 comments. Please begin with your name
11 and your address, and if you are
12 speaking on behalf of a group please
13 identify the group or person you are
14 representing here this evening.
15 This hearing is for purposes of
16 public commenting, and again, this is
17 not a question and answer session. If
18 you do have any questions for DEC staff
19 or US Fish & Wildlife staff, they are
20 available here this evening. And you
21 may also contact them after this
22 evening. And again their contact
23 information is available at our table.
24 Because we have approximately 35
25 speakers so far, and I anticipate we'll

1 ALJ McBride
2 probably get a couple more people, we're
3 going to limit each speaker to three
4 minutes. That way everyone will have
5 their opportunity to put their comment
6 on the record here this evening. We
7 have a timer here on the screen that you
8 can see. Please be aware how much time
9 you have left, and finish up your
10 comments in that three minute time
11 period. I would ask that everyone
12 please be respectful of that three
13 minutes, and conclude your remarks when
14 your three minutes are up.
15 When you make your statement, please
16 speak loudly, slowly and clearly so that
17 we do have an accurate record of
18 everything you're saying here this
19 evening. I also request that everyone
20 silence their cellphones before the
21 hearing begins.
22 And also I'm going to ask that you
23 please show respect and silence for all
24 speakers who are making their comments
25 here this evening. Please show each

Raichlin

speaker the same courtesy and respect that you would want for yourself when speaking. I realize this is an emotional issue. And on behalf of the DEC and the US Fish & Wildlife Service, I thank you all for coming out here this evening.

If you do not wish to make a statement on the record here this evening or if I call your card and you changed your mind, please realize you may still submit written comments. We have forms in the hallway, you can submit your comment here this evening or again, you have the mailing address and e-mail address. Thank you all again for coming out. And we'll begin with our first speaker, Barry Raichlin.

BARRY RAICHLIN: What I would like to say is, I'm a fisherman, and I've lived in Camillus and Mattydale all my life. I've been all over the country as a truck driver. And what I don't like about this whole project is, you have

Raichlin

Nine Mile Creek come down to the Lake. There is no access for people like I am right now, and Onondaga Creek has no access. You have no fish ladders on Onondaga Lake -- or Onondaga Creek. And there is a lot of little streams like Ley Creek, I know there is fish in there.

But the big factory there by the truck stop, they've completely fenced off all that area where that Creek goes through there and you don't have access to it. And most of the area around the Lake they made beautiful trails for bikers, but I'm not a biker. I can't even get close to that little dock area they got on the Lake. I am looking at it, how the hell do I get down there? And that's what I'm trying to get, you know, put forward here.

We've got to do something about people like me. There are a lot of people that are old, that can't walk all that far, we're not bikers. So that was

1 Lane
2 what I would like to get forward. Thank
3 you, very much.
4 ALJ McBRIDE: Thank you, sir. Our
5 next speaker is Aggie Lane.
6 AGGIE LANE: I'm Aggie Lane, and I'm
7 a resident of the Southwest Side of
8 Syracuse, actually a few blocks from
9 here. I'm a member of Syracuse United
10 Neighbors. And I've spent the last 17
11 years working on Onondaga Creek issues.
12 From 2000 to 2010 I worked with the
13 grassroots group, the Partnership for
14 Onondaga Creek, fighting to keep the
15 County from building RTFs, or what I
16 call rainy day sewage plants, for
17 combined sewer overflows on Onondaga
18 Creek. The Partnership advocated for
19 underground storage of these combined
20 sewer overflows. In particular, we
21 pushed for solutions that didn't use
22 chlorine disinfection, so that Onondaga
23 Creek and Onondaga Lake's habitats
24 wouldn't be further impaired.
25 In 2008 the County embraced our

1 Lane
2 storage solution adding green
3 infrastructure to bolster the capture of
4 combined sewage. Now, almost 10 years
5 later, the water quality in the Lake and
6 our Creek is vastly improved.
7 My house is across the street from
8 Onondaga Creek. In years I haven't
9 smelt the stink of the Creek. A really
10 good thing. So now we need to embrace
11 our Creek for the asset it is. For
12 decades various people have been talking
13 about how we could reclaim the Creek.
14 In 2004, Onondaga Environmental
15 Institute got a four year grant from the
16 EPA to study how the Creek could be
17 reclaimed, naturalized, so it creates
18 habitat for birds and fish and provides
19 green space and recreation for the City
20 residents. OEI's final report cites a
21 number of projects. It's time we funded
22 them.
23 The NRD plan, which this hearing is
24 about, would be a perfect way to fund
25 Onondaga Creek projects for City

1 Ringler
2 residents, especially those living on
3 the Southwest and South Side of the
4 City. Currently, the Creek is off
5 limits to City residents because it is
6 fenced in, and its banks are overgrown.
7 Residents hardly know it's there, and
8 some of them have a very negative image
9 of it. It's time to change that. We
10 want to enjoy our Creek and in our
11 backyard. The NRD process is the
12 funding opportunity we need. Please
13 make it happen.
14 ALJ McBRIDE: Thank you. Neil
15 Ringler.
16 NEIL RINGLER: My name is Neil
17 Ringler, 19 Gettman Drive, Baldwinsville,
18 New York. I've lived a few miles from
19 the Lake for the last 42 years and
20 worked on it with a group of students
21 for about 30 years. Fished it on
22 Saturday, caught six fish, actually nice
23 fish, put them back. But hopefully
24 we'll be able to. But I'm here to
25 simply give overall general support.

1 Heckathorne
2 And I am extremely excited about the
3 projects that were suggested. Doesn't
4 mean there shouldn't or couldn't be
5 other projects, but from out standpoint
6 of working on the Lake for many many
7 years, for probably 40 or 50 graduate
8 students, many of those projects made a
9 tremendous amount of sense.
10 And I'm here really to listen to the
11 other ideas, such as the Onondaga Creek,
12 Nine Mile Creek and so on. But from my
13 standpoint, the process looks to be an
14 extremely positive one. Thank you.
15 ALJ McBRIDE: Thank you. James
16 Heckathorne.
17 JAMES HECKATHORNE: I'm James
18 Heckathorne from Baldwinsville. And I
19 read through the report, and I like what
20 I see in most of the proposals. And I
21 do a lot of work with the Trustees.
22 Tonight I'm here to represent a group of
23 people, who like me, are avid cyclists,
24 hikers, like to go down to the Lake.
25 And we're particularly excited about the

1 Heckathorne
2 two projects that involve the bike trail.
3 So what we did is we got together,
4 kind of grassroots effort, and
5 circulated a petition. And I would like
6 to read part of it into the record
7 tonight, if I could.
8 "Connecting the Erie Canalway Trail
9 has been debated for more then 20 years.
10 The proposal put forth by the Onondaga
11 Lake Trustees connects a major segment,
12 potentially connecting up to 280 miles
13 of existing Erie Canalway Trail,
14 creating one of the longest intrastate
15 multi-use use trails in the United
16 States."
17 "With these benefits in mind, this
18 petition supports the construction of
19 two proposed projects: Connecting the
20 Erie Canalway Trail from Camillus to the
21 Onondaga Loop, the Lake Trail, and an
22 extension of the Loop the Lake Trail
23 into the Inner Harbor of Syracuse. We
24 urge the Onondaga Lake Trustees to
25 implement these projects without delay

1 Heckathorne
2 to make a real, lasting benefit for the
3 people of New York State."
4 So we posted this petition. So far
5 when I left the house, we had 176
6 signatures. We'll continue to collect
7 them and we'll submit them as part of
8 the record. People who signed the
9 petition were also invited to submit
10 comments, and we'll submit those to the
11 record too. But just a few.
12 Penny from Syracuse says, "This is
13 so important to revitalizing this area
14 and bringing back the beauty and
15 usability of the area."
16 Scott from Syracuse says, "Please
17 extend and improve the trail."
18 Jack from Liverpool says, "This
19 trail is being used by so many people, I
20 can only imagine how the Erie Canal
21 Trail and Southwest Lakeshore Trail
22 Extension will be received once
23 completed. Keep the line, let's Loop
24 the Lake."
25 Dale from Syracuse simply, "Please

1 Dolin
2 complete the trail."
3 I won't go through them all because
4 we've got several, but Glen from Boston
5 says, "Have been waiting a lifetime for
6 it to happen." So we echo those
7 comments, and we hope to see the bike
8 trail included as part of the project.
9 ALJ McBRIDE: I don't think I said
10 in the beginning, if anyone is reading
11 their comments into the record, please
12 leave your comments behind for the court
13 reporter to enter into the record.
14 Thank you. Virginia Dolin.
15 VIRGINIA DOLIN: Credit where credit
16 is due. I'm very glad that Bob Congel
17 restored the Carousel that was put at
18 Carousel Center for a long time, because
19 that's restored from the original Long
20 Branch Park. So we have something that
21 was on Onondaga Lakeshore from a hundred
22 years ago restored.
23 A hundred years ago, we had White
24 City, we also had the Iron Pier. We had
25 the beginnings of some actual

1 Dolin
2 entertainment, amusements that were easy
3 for people to get to from Syracuse. And
4 they conflicted with the expanding
5 Allied Chemical vats.
6 White City, that used to have 25,000
7 electric lights, must have looked just
8 so the moon had landed. Was bought up
9 and used as a chemical plant. Like
10 tearing down paradise to put up a
11 chemical plant. And the Iron Pier,
12 which actually was made out of wood, and
13 painted black to look like an Iron Pier
14 that was in progress at the time that
15 Allied was upping its amount of chemical
16 waste on the Lake.
17 And by 1938, pretty much there was
18 no entertainment industry on the Lake.
19 In 1934, Three Rivers Inn had opened in
20 Phoenix. People would rather drive past
21 the Lake and go to Phoenix to see Nat
22 King Cole, the whole group. It's not
23 that there wasn't an entertainment
24 industry, it's just that when you're the
25 most polluted Lake in the United States,

1 Bowes
2 people aren't going to go to your
3 resort.
4 So I would like to see a little bit
5 done on Onondaga Creek, which has these
6 beautiful parks. I would like to see
7 some entertainment for the public
8 restored to Onondaga Creek. It's kind
9 of a replacement for Onondaga Lake.
10 ALJ McBRIDE: Thank you. Andrew Bowes.
11 ANDREW BOWES: I'm from
12 Baldwinsville, New York. Are there any
13 Creek Rats here? Raise your hand.
14 We've got one guy over here that cleaned
15 Onondaga Creek as a volunteer effort.
16 Made it a navigable waterway that it is
17 today. I have used it from behind the
18 MOST, just two weeks ago, it is a
19 fabulous resource. It's an emerald
20 ribbon through the center of this City.
21 I think with proper care and thought
22 that Kirk Park can be widened, the water
23 can be slowed down, you can have a
24 canoe/kayak access point there. There
25 is enough room in Kirk Park for

1 Bowes
2 entertainment that can be supported by
3 local communities. It's a vital
4 resource. It's going to continue to be
5 polluted to some degree by the mud boils
6 unless there is some science that
7 changes that. So a fund should be
8 created that lasts at least seven
9 generations, just like the Haudenosaunee,
10 and didn't get it right, quote though,
11 do. We need to look forward on how to
12 maintain this Creek. It's not so much a
13 natural Creek, like Nine Mile, which
14 looks great, it's been replanted, I've
15 paddled there multiple times, that's a
16 naturalized area.
17 This is an urban area, it's going to
18 have to require more maintenance.
19 Access points, there is about six of
20 them. My one that I think is the big
21 one for me is behind the MOST, because
22 it's in the center of downtown. There
23 is over $300 million of investment in
24 downtown that people are moving down in
25 droves, if you listen to the developers.

West

How many of those people would like to access to fish that Creek and have recreation along that Creek?

With that fund, an administrator can work with public and private benefits, relationships, you can have sponsors. Honeywell can put their sign on the gates. That way the things can be controlled and maintained.

I've been in a lot of different waters. This one has been neglected. It's time that Honeywell, the DEC, do what they did for Nine Mile Creek needs to be done on Onondaga Creek. The studies are there. The stuff is out there. There are a lot of people here know a lot more about it than I do. It's time to get going on it. Thank you.

ALJ McBRIDE: Thank you. Caroline West.

CAROLINE WEST: Thank you. I'm Caroline West, thank you for coming, Judge. I live in Syracuse, a block and-a-half from the Creek, in the

1 Krol
2 Valley. I cross the Creek multiple
3 times a day. The restoration is great,
4 recreation is great. My main concern is
5 that we, who live near the Creek,
6 shouldn't be afraid of the floods. We
7 shouldn't be in a Flood Zone. If the
8 Creek can be fixed that should happen.
9 And this is the time to do it, when
10 there is funding available. We
11 shouldn't always have these nightmares
12 of writing these flood insurance
13 premiums. Thank you.
14 ALJ McBRIDE: Danielle Krol.
15 DANIELLE KROL: Hi, I'm Danielle
16 Krol, I'm a senior transportation
17 planner, and I'm here representing the
18 Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation
19 Council. I'm here to offer our support
20 to two specific proposed recreational/
21 restoration projects. The Erie Canal
22 Trail Extension and the Onondaga Lake
23 Recreation Trail.
24 As was already mentioned, that
25 connecting the Erie Canal Trail through

1 Krol
2 New York State and through our community
3 has been talked about for more than 25
4 years. And with member agency support,
5 and we are an agency of multiple
6 different agencies, City of Syracuse,
7 Onondaga County, New York State, our
8 agency, SMTC, conducted a study that
9 examined how to close the current gap in
10 the trail between Camillus and Dewitt.
11 It's one of the more significant gaps
12 across the state. It's about 12 to 14
13 miles was missing. It's also in an
14 urbanized area, and so easy to do, would
15 have been done by now.
16 So part of our process, for our
17 study, included a survey asking the
18 public what they wanted to see in Erie
19 Canal Trail in that area. And folks
20 said that they were interested in having
21 off roads that has easy access to
22 cultural sites, activities, food,
23 services, and one that followed the
24 historic route of the canal.
25 In the western part of the gap, in

1 Krol
2 the Camillus area, SMTC looked at
3 Honeywell property at a high level as a
4 potential connecter. And as part of
5 that examination we also looked at
6 Gerelock Road and Gerelock Place.
7 That's a significant part of the history
8 of the Erie Canal Trail. We received a
9 lot of public comment and general
10 feedback about how important it is to
11 hold onto that asset and to preserve the
12 Gerelock as part of the trail.
13 Another point I would like to make
14 is connections to the existing trail in
15 the community, the Erie Canal Trail and
16 the Southwest Trail piece there, would
17 help do that. Connect with the Lake
18 trail and the Creek walk. And it would
19 be important in creating an overall
20 regional trail network.
21 I also wasn't to point out too, the
22 SMTC created a long reach transportation
23 plan, 25 year vision that guides
24 transportation planning and investment
25 in the county. And closing the gap in

1 Krol
2 the Erie Canal Trail would help achieve
3 several of those goals and pass a long
4 range plan, providing more trails to
5 connect destinations, increasing the
6 percentage of commuter trips made by
7 bike or walking, reducing miles of
8 people traveling to the region. And it
9 also came out of the regionally
10 significant project having the trail in
11 our community.
12 And the last point I would like to
13 make is that recently the Governor
14 announced 200 million to complete the
15 Empire State Trial across New York
16 State, which includes the Erie Canal
17 Trail. For the central pieces on
18 Honeywell property are extremely
19 significant, they're a key piece to
20 completing the trail. If these projects
21 don't happen through this manner it will
22 be really tough to have it happen.
23 ALJ McBRIDE: Rich Puchalski.
24 RICH PUCHALSKI: My name is Rich
25 Puchalski, Executive Director of

1 Puchalski
2 Syracuse United Neighbors. We are here
3 today to protest the projects that are
4 in the 8 1/2 x 14 slick paper. It
5 includes stuff like Nine Mile Creek, but
6 it neglects to talk about anything along
7 Onondaga Creek, which is the largest
8 tributary to Onondaga Lake.
9 We think that the Council should
10 have a little bit more representatives
11 of people in the City, particularly
12 African-Americans, in order to take a
13 look at this whole issue of Onondaga
14 Creek.
15 Onondaga Creek is an area that's
16 chain-linked fenced off. Overgrown with
17 trees and brush. One can't even see the
18 water in the Creek, and as we cross the
19 streets that go through the neighborhoods.
20 Staff of Environmental Conservation
21 and US Wildlife should take a look at
22 Meadowbrook. It's a beautiful area next
23 to Barry Park, and it's got runners,
24 walkers, cyclists using the trails,
25 enjoying the lush green space. There is

1 Puchalski
2 ducks and geese, something that we don't
3 see in Onondaga Creek.
4 This year 270 properties came off of
5 the FEMA flood zone on the East Side.
6 We believe that the basins protects the
7 homeowners, it's quite the opposite of
8 Onondaga Creek. The FEMA hundred year
9 flood zone made its ugly appearance in
10 August of '16. 876 properties were
11 targeted to pay flood insurance, which
12 is up to about $600 a year.
13 Mud boils. It's time for DEC to take
14 a study about the Creek, particularly in
15 the City, along South and Temple Streets.
16 And this has pushed forward this whole
17 idea of a hundred year flood zone. Our
18 neighborhoods along the Creek are being
19 harmed as a result of the mud boils.
20 SUN would like to see fishing piers,
21 canoe/kayak launches along the Creek,
22 retention basins and recreational
23 amenities. We want a slice of the NRD
24 money.
25 Public hearing. Well, you know

1 Lyons
2 initially there was not a public
3 hearing. I think a few people showed
4 up, a dozen of us from SUN on the 10th
5 or 11th of May and protested that event,
6 held up our signs. And demanded that
7 the NRD people hold a public hearing.
8 And that's why we have it today. Thank
9 you. Catch you around the next time.
10 ALJ McBRIDE: Thank you. Jessi Lyons.
11 JESSI LYONS: I'm a resident that
12 lives, my property backs up to Onondaga
13 Creek in North Valley Neighborhood. And
14 I also represent the Brady Faith Center
15 that serves people in the Southwest
16 community and the South Side, and we run
17 an Urban Farm on the South Side that is
18 adjacent to Onondaga Creek. It also has
19 a tributary that is on the other side of
20 the property and we're surrounded by
21 woods.
22 So my personal experience is that
23 the Onondaga Creek Corridor on the South
24 Side through the Valley does have rich
25 opportunity for natural resource

1 Lyons
2 restoration and development, and
3 recreational opportunities that come
4 with that. And also the property values
5 and overall well-being that would come
6 to residents by increasing the
7 recreational and ecological restoration
8 in that area.
9 Our neighborhoods are long overdue
10 for having these type of developments.
11 And the day-to-day benefit that a
12 resident gets from having these
13 opportunities, including transportation,
14 by biking and walking, canoeing,
15 whatever it might be, but also having
16 increased access to education and nature
17 education in the City.
18 So I am advocating, as well as the
19 others, to increase the ecological
20 restoration, focusing on Kirk Park,
21 focusing on the section south of
22 Ballantyne Road that are already semi-
23 naturalized that have very easy
24 opportunities for development. There is
25 lots of green space along Onondaga Creek

1 Ring
2 that is public property that could be
3 developed for these purposes. Thank you.
4 ALJ McBRIDE: Thank you. Hanna Ring.
5 HANNA RING: Hi, my name is Hanna
6 Ring. I'm the Central New York Program
7 Coordinator for Citizens Campaign for
8 the Environment. Thank you for the
9 opportunity to speak today.
10 CCE applauds the Trustees for
11 conducting an assessment of the damages
12 to Onondaga Lake and for providing the
13 assessment. We also thank you for
14 extending the public comment period and
15 in holding the hearing today. We
16 support many of the aspects of the
17 restoration plan, however, there are a
18 few points we want to make to improve
19 the plan and better restore Onondaga
20 Lake, it's habitat and its watershed.
21 We commend the Trustees for
22 considering and proposing a variety of
23 restoration projects, however the
24 description and information provided
25 about the specific projects are vague

1 Ring
2 and lack crucial details. We're talking
3 of not providing enough information
4 about the project to adequately gauge
5 the environmental benefits and impacts.
6 CCE encourages the Trustees to produce
7 additional information about the
8 proposed projects and other projects
9 that have not been fully considered. As
10 well as include information about the
11 location, the size, and the cost and the
12 environmental impact of those projects.
13 The proposed projects listed in the
14 Assessment are a very good starting
15 point to addressing the restoration in
16 Onondaga Lake, but do not go far enough.
17 The ecological and restoration projects
18 that are in the Assessment are limited
19 and overlooked projects that would
20 benefit the watershed. The Assessment
21 should consider a project to restore
22 habitat and recreational opportunity to
23 Onondaga Creek and other tributaries.
24 Projects that restore native fish and
25 plant species, as well as additional

1 Ring
2 projects to educate the public on the
3 health of the Lake and what they can do
4 to contribute to its restoration.
5 CCE urges the Trustees to seek out
6 and assess additional restoration
7 projects in order to address the
8 overwhelming restorative needs of
9 Onondaga Lake. As well as place a
10 higher priority on the ecological
11 restoration projects than they have in
12 this Assessment.
13 Many of the proposed recreation
14 projects are focussing on increasing
15 fishing access. Fishing access onto the
16 Lake, none of them include informing the
17 public of the health risks of consuming
18 fish from the Lake. Fish consumption
19 advisory signs are crucial to have
20 around Onondaga Lake due to legacy
21 pollution.
22 The proposed recreational
23 restoration projects do not mention
24 educating the public of the dangers of
25 consuming the fish. CCE urges the

1 Liptak
2 Trustees to include the installation of
3 fish consumption advisory signs at all
4 fishing access points that accurately
5 depict the danger of consuming fish.
6 Furthermore, CCE urges the Trustees
7 to use the signs developed by the
8 Onondaga Lake Watershed Partnership.
9 The OLWP developed fish advisory signs
10 that would be universally understood,
11 and clearly conveys and depicts that
12 fish from Onondaga Lake should not be
13 eaten.
14 ALJ McBRIDE: Thank you. Matt Liptak.
15 MATT LIPTAK: Hello, I'm Matt Liptak
16 from Baldwinsville, New York, I'm a
17 little tall.
18 ALJ McBRIDE: You can move that up.
19 MATT LIPTAK: Anyway, I would just
20 like to say that it's important for you
21 to consider the Haudenosaunee, the
22 Iroquois people in your restoration of
23 the Lake. There was promises to them a
24 year or two ago through Onondaga
25 legislation, that a portion, some acres

1 Liptak
2 of the land on the Lake would go back to
3 them. And I don't think we should break
4 another promise to the Native America.
5 Also there is some basic things real
6 quick, that I notice that seem to be
7 omitted. There were no information
8 about bathrooms along all the trails
9 that you're going to be making. I know
10 that I'm a regular user of Onondaga Lake
11 Park on the east side, and those
12 bathrooms come in very handy when I'm
13 drinking a lot of water on a hot day. I
14 was thinking maybe to construct a few on
15 the other side.
16 And I encourage the people to think
17 a little bigger about the development of
18 the west side of Onondaga Lake for the
19 restoration. Why not turn a visitor
20 center into a nature center. Why not
21 turn the northwest side opposite Willow
22 Bay into possibly a campground, if it
23 could be restored. And that's all I
24 have to say. Like to thank you for your
25 hard work and thank you for the chance

1 Adams/Kittleman
2 to speak.
3 ALJ McBRIDE: Thank you. Maryanne
4 Adams and Renee Kittleman. They're
5 going to share their remarks.
6 MARYANNE ADAMS: Hi, I'm Maryanne
7 Adams. I'm Conservation Chair for
8 Onondaga Audubon. I happen to live in
9 Cato, New York, but I represent Audubon
10 Chapter in many Counties around here,
11 including Onondaga County.
12 For the past few years this
13 organization has been closely tied to
14 Onondaga Lake's restoration process. As
15 an Audubon Chapter, we have strong
16 feelings about protecting the birds that
17 depend on the area as a migratory
18 stopover point and as a destination for
19 raising the next generation. The
20 construction of the Amphitheater
21 resulted in dramatic changes to some 70
22 acres of scrub habitat.
23 Now the restoration process has the
24 potential to greatly improve a variety
25 of habitats. However, as habitat

1 Adams/Kittleman
2 improves and more bird species move in,
3 we have the added responsibility of
4 educating the public who are enjoying
5 increased access about the wildlife that
6 shares the space. Along with this
7 fabulous opportunity comes increased
8 responsibility. Every proposed project
9 will have an impact on wildlife. Each
10 one needs to be thoroughly assessed with
11 regards to what it will mean for the
12 birds and other fauna that share the
13 habitat.
14 We will do that in our written
15 comments to follow later. I'd like to
16 introduce Renee Kittleman, the
17 Vice-President of Onondaga Audubon.
18 RENEE KITTLEMAN: We give our
19 support to the grassland restoration
20 work. And prior to the Amphitheater
21 being built, there were Bobolink and
22 Dickcissel breeding at the grassland,
23 and recreating that habitat for these
24 birds is a huge priority. We applaud
25 the proposal.

1 Adams/Kittleman
2 MARYANNE ADAMS: We'd also like to
3 see mudflat creation as shorebird
4 foraging habitat. Onondaga Lake used to
5 be a key migratory shorebird stopover
6 location in Central New York and hosted
7 some very rare species, such as Northern
8 Lapwing in the past. Creation of
9 forging habitat is key to preserving
10 this trend.
11 In addition, we've been noticing
12 that lately a great deal of money has
13 been shunted toward improving parking
14 areas. So looks like a lot more paving
15 is going to be done. Pavement is not
16 really good for wildlife. For example,
17 if asphalt is wet, waterfowl will
18 mistake it for water. If a Loon lands
19 on a parking lot, thinking it's water,
20 it can't fly off again, and stuck there
21 and will probably die. We would like to
22 see more gravel used wherever possible,
23 you know, if it doesn't inconvenience
24 the public too much.
25 RENEE KITTLEMAN: Common Terns have

1 Adams/Kittleman
2 been showing up on the Lake again, and
3 creating of Tern nesting platforms could
4 be easy productive means of providing
5 the birds with nesting habitats that is
6 fairly safe from predators. This could
7 fit in nicely with the plan to install
8 structures for fish and amphibians.
9 MARYANNE ADAMS: We continue to be
10 concerned about the placement of the
11 final portion of the Loop-the-Lake
12 Trail. We applaud the completion of the
13 trail. We think it's a wonderful thing.
14 Some of our board members are bikers.
15 However, we think it's very important
16 that the Bald Eagle roost, that is in
17 the same area as the proposed, one of
18 the proposals for the trail be
19 considered, either have it closed during
20 the time when the Eagles are there or
21 else have a different loop to avoid them
22 if it's necessary.
23 RENEE KITTLEMAN: And we hope a
24 conservation based group or a coalition
25 of such groups are given priority for

1 Riefler
2 the transfer of the Honeywell Visitor
3 Center. We would like to see the Center
4 used for a variety of environmental
5 education programs.
6 MARYANNE ADAMS: In general, we
7 commend all the efforts to restore
8 habitat around Onondaga Lake, and the
9 Onondaga Audubon looks forward to
10 working with fish and wildlife, DEC,
11 Onondaga County, to make the Lake a
12 better place for birds and other
13 wildlife in addition to what is being
14 planned for the benefit of humans.
15 ALJ McBRIDE: Thank you. Ryan Riefler.
16 RYAN RIEFLER: Good evening. Ryan
17 Riefler here from 2780 Schuyler Road in
18 Marietta, New York. I am an operator at
19 the Village of Marcellus Wastewater
20 Treatment Plant. I've come this evening
21 and I've heard some fantastic things
22 about what might be able to be developed
23 or restored for our communities and our
24 youth of the future, maybe potentially
25 move them away from technology and

1 Riefler
2 reacquaint them with the outdoors again,
3 which is great.
4 I don't have any concerns about what
5 necessarily you're proposing, other than
6 maybe the distribution of the resources
7 that do so. I've come to speak on what
8 I feel is inequity of the distribution
9 of the damages. As we gather here
10 tonight, a small bedroom community ten
11 miles to the west of here is suffocating
12 the financial weight of the unintended
13 mandate late for the Onondaga Lake
14 phosphorus TMDL.
15 And as much as the gentleman before
16 me has spoken about the public hearing
17 for the opportunity to express their
18 thoughts, we were never invited or even
19 acknowledged during the creation of that
20 TMDL. And once again, I feel something
21 similar is happening to many of these
22 residents and community members here.
23 During the Onondaga Lake clean up,
24 initially the clean up was kept, the
25 liability of the clean up was kept to

1 Riefler
2 the edges of the Lake. But with the
3 creation of the Onondaga Lake TMDL for
4 phosphorus, it was expanded to the
5 entire watershed. So we have 3,000
6 families that are looking to have to
7 financially pay for a 600 pound
8 reduction in phosphorus that our
9 wastewater treatment plant would have to
10 remove each year due to our permit.
11 We have a $6 million project that
12 has been necessitated by this TMDL and
13 the phosphorus, towards the phosphorus,
14 and the DEC oversight to include us in
15 the creation that lead us to a point
16 that we feel we have no outlet for our
17 community to continue to thrive and
18 expand itself.
19 We see many leave New York State due
20 to taxes and the cost of living here and
21 the economic inabilities to find jobs.
22 We're trying to continue to keep our
23 youth here. And as rising costs are
24 associated with wastewater
25 infrastructure, and costs obviously not

1 Riefler
2 going into the funding of this that
3 should be equitable, we are concerned.
4 We've been very busy in Marcellus with
5 energy upgrades to the plant in 2006.
6 And the composting project, which has
7 reduced the total biosolid disposal
8 costs. All of these things are driven
9 by great savings for our community
10 members. But obviously there is an
11 investment cost to that.
12 We've also been awarded a hundred
13 thousand dollars for a clean energy
14 communities grant and $20,000 for zero
15 emissions infrastructure.
16 So we are environmentally minded and
17 fiscally responsible. Yet we feel that
18 this unfunded mandate has been put upon
19 the Village, and this might be an
20 opportunity for damages and assets to be
21 steered toward the Village to right what
22 I feel is a wrong.
23 We've currently got about a $2
24 million gap on that $6 million project
25 and, any financial assistance in that

1 Cummings
2 consideration would be appreciated.
3 Thank you.
4 ALJ McBRIDE: Sir, can we have your
5 remarks? Geoffrey Cummings.
6 GEOFFREY CUMMINGS: Good evening.
7 I'm from Eastwood, 219 Norwood Ave. in
8 the City of Syracuse. Generally I'm
9 pleased with the quality and the scope
10 of the projects that I'm seeing that are
11 being generated from the community
12 members. I would especially like to
13 reiterate support for really the
14 Onondaga Creek from Tully into the City
15 and the considerable problems they're
16 having, really all along them.
17 To me it gets down to hoping that
18 the DEC and the Wildlife Departments are
19 going to help us keep Honeywell to the
20 commitment that was made to this
21 community. We want to be key markers of
22 that, in that the fish in the Lake would
23 be edible. I don't appreciate all the
24 science, and a lot of it, I think all of
25 us it's hard to keep a handle on. But

1 Lowry
2 there is a cautionary tale, even
3 presently in the Hudson River, where 25
4 or 30 years ago G.E. was again brought
5 into a similar situation, and looked to
6 bring the Hudson back. And presently it
7 doesn't seem as though it really has
8 done that. And it becomes a matter of
9 holding them accountable.
10 I'm concerned that five years down
11 the road the fish will still not be
12 edible, and that that commitment will
13 have become gray or lost. And again, I
14 ask the Department of Conservation to
15 help us defend that and to help us
16 support that principle. Thank you.
17 ALJ McBRIDE: Alma Lowry.
18 ALMA LOWRY: Good evening, my name
19 is Alma Lowry, I'm an attorney, here
20 speaking on behalf of the Onondaga
21 Nation. The Nation participated as a
22 Trustee in this process for many years,
23 hoping that it would result in a cleaner
24 and restored Onondaga Lake. We are
25 pleased to see good ideas in the Draft

1 Lowry
2 Plan, particularly the restoration of
3 the habitat around the Lake and
4 protection of undeveloped lands in the
5 Tully Valley. But we also see some
6 serious shortcomings.
7 The Nation has already provided
8 written comments, and rather than
9 repeating those at length tonight, I'm
10 going to focus on three key issues.
11 1st, the need to expand the damages
12 considered, to include broader cultural
13 and recreational losses.
14 2nd, the need for projects directly
15 in the damaged communities, particularly
16 along Onondaga Creek.
17 And 3rd, the need to ensure that
18 increased fishing access won't increase
19 exposure to toxic fish.
20 So the Draft Plan focuses pretty
21 much exclusively on damage to
22 identifiable natural resources, like
23 fish and birds and recreational fishing
24 losses. This ignores entire categories
25 of lost benefits that should have been

1 Lowry
2 provided by an unpolluted Onondaga Lake.
3 Such as the psychological and emotional
4 benefit to people in the community of
5 the connection with nature, the cultural
6 value of the Lake to the Onondaga Nation
7 and the broader Syracuse community, and
8 the simple existence value of the Lake.
9 These losses are significant and it
10 should not be ignored. We are asking
11 the Trustees to expand their assessment
12 to include these losses and develop
13 projects to address them.
14 The Draft Plan should also
15 prioritize projects that are easily
16 accessible to City residents. As the
17 Onondaga Nation has committed itself to
18 try to restore the proper relationships
19 between the people and the natural
20 world. And the century-long pollution
21 of Onondaga Lake has really severed the
22 relationship between people in the
23 Syracuse community and the natural wood
24 embodied in that Lake. That loss is
25 profound. And it can't be repaired with

1 Lowry
2 just a handful of recreational fishing
3 spots and hiking trails, particularly
4 when those projects are distant from the
5 affected communities.
6 Onondaga Creek, in particular,
7 should be a focus of attention. Onondaga
8 Creek flows through the Nation's
9 territory, it flows directly through the
10 City of Syracuse. It should provide
11 easy access to nature for both the Nation
12 and urban residents. Unfortunately it's
13 severely damaged. And most of the South
14 Side is fenced off from the communities
15 and residents, as Rich mentioned, often
16 can't even see the water. The Trustee
17 Council can and should develop projects
18 to make Onondaga Creek an accessible
19 natural area for urban communities. To
20 make up for this loss, this loss
21 connection, the Nation and these
22 communities have suffered because of
23 ongoing pollution. And therefore
24 projects that have been proposed, such
25 widening and renaturalizing the Creek or

1 Lowry
2 creating retention ponds with
3 recreational access, these should be
4 considered.
5 And last, we're concerned about the
6 heavy focus on expanding recreational
7 fishing acces in and around Onondaga
8 Lake. We're worried that may lead to
9 increased consumption of fish, despite
10 Department of Health recommendations
11 that children under 15 and women under
12 child bearing age not eat any fish at
13 all. We would like the Council to
14 maximize the likelihood that the public
15 will follow the recommendations by
16 posting limited fish consumption by
17 posting warning signs in multiple
18 languages, with graphic warnings at all
19 new or expanded recreational fishing
20 locations.
21 I just want to thank you for the
22 opportunity to speak tonight. And
23 really appreciate the hearing, and the
24 opportunity to testify, as you see a lot
25 of people here.

1 Wowelko
2 ALJ McBRIDE: Stephen Wowelko.
3 STEPHEN WOWELKO: Good evening. My
4 name is Stephen Wowelko of East Syracuse.
5 I'm the Director of the Onondaga County
6 Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, and a
7 Councilman to the New York State
8 Conservation Council.
9 The Onondaga County Federation of
10 Sportsmen's Clubs represents over 5,000
11 members in over 30 sporting organizations
12 throughout Central New York.
13 At a meeting of the delegates from
14 its member organizations on June 19,
15 2017, the representatives unanimously
16 passed a resolution in support of the
17 proposed projects in the Natural
18 Resource Damage Assessment and
19 Restoration Plan Projects for Onondaga
20 Lake. I will submit a copy of that
21 resolution for the record.
22 Sportsmen feel that the projects go
23 far and above what our expectations were
24 in this remediation process to compensate
25 the public and the environment for

1 May
2 losses sustained while the Lake was
3 being cleaned up. We realize that time
4 is of the essence, and the longer that
5 these projects are delayed, the longer
6 it will be before we and future
7 generations will be able to enjoy their
8 benefits.
9 ALJ McBRIDE: Thank you. Rachel May.
10 RACHEL MAY: Good evening. I'm
11 Rachel May, Director of Sustainability
12 Education at Syracuse University. For
13 the last couple of years I've had a
14 grant from the Environmental Protection
15 Agency to develop curriculum for
16 students in middle schools and high
17 schools in the area, in the watershed.
18 So that they can learn about indigenous
19 environmental values and the historical
20 ecology of Onondaga Lake.
21 It's been a very successful program.
22 We've brought a lot of students out to
23 the Haundenosaunee Peace Center and the
24 Honeywell Visitor Center and elsewhere
25 on the Lake so they can learn about the

1 May
2 history of the Lake and the ecosystems
3 and nature around the Lake as it is now
4 and as it once was.
5 So my comments are mostly that there
6 are a number of ecological restoration
7 projects that are proposed, and I would
8 like to see more attention to how they
9 might be used by school children, by
10 school groups. So that there would be
11 signage and information that could be
12 used so that they can be part of field
13 trips.
14 But, and I don't know if this even
15 falls in the purview of the project, but
16 what we have found is that a lot of
17 these students don't have access to the
18 Lake to begin with. And they only,
19 they're seeing the Lake for the first
20 time, because they're coming there on a
21 field trip that we have paid for through
22 our grant. So if all of the resources
23 are going to improving recreation along
24 the Lake, but there are a lot of people
25 who can't get to the Lake to begin with,

1 Cunningham
2 that's a problem. So I would like that
3 to be taken into consideration in some
4 way. If there is a way to create a fund
5 for field trips to the Lake for our
6 children in the watershed or other ways
7 of enhancing access to the Lake from
8 communities that don't have that access.
9 That's what I would like to see.
10 ALJ McBRIDE: Mary Cunningham.
11 MARY CUNNINGHAM: I'm Mary
12 Cunningham, I'm been a 40 year resident
13 of the City of Syracuse. I would like
14 to just say a few words in support of
15 some of the comments that have been made
16 today.
17 1. There's been a lot of focus on
18 the Lake itself. But the Creek also
19 really needs research done to figure out
20 why is the Creek flooding? What might
21 be done about it? And how does that
22 relate up the Creek into the
23 Haudenosaunee land? And I think we need
24 to recognize that it is all one. It's
25 not a Lake and a creek, it's all one.

1 Cunningham
2 And it's the whole ecosystem.
3 2. I'm glad to hear that there will
4 be money spent on looking at the mud
5 boils and how that might relate to it.
6 So I think that's really important.
7 I spent a year looking with the
8 parks and rec department looking at Kirk
9 Park, Onondaga Park and Elmwood, which
10 had Onondaga Creek, common thing they
11 have going through them is Onondaga Creek.
12 When you look at Meadowbrook, which is
13 on the East Side, which has become
14 recreation, flood control and natural
15 habitat, I really think you have three
16 major beautiful jewels on that South and
17 Southwest Side in those three parks that
18 might be able to become a sludge
19 prevention mechanism that provides a
20 great deal to the culture of the
21 neighborhood as a whole. And I would
22 really like to see research done to
23 think about how do we turn any of those
24 areas, those green spaces into multiple
25 use, including flood control as well as

1 Emerson
2 the restoration. Thank you.
3 ALJ McBRIDE: Michael Emerson.
4 MICHAEL EMERSON: Mike Emerson,
5 Ontario, New York. My comments are
6 probably a little different from what I
7 heard so far. But I'm more concerned
8 with the Tully recreational area and
9 nature preserve project. I'm not quite
10 sure what that means.
11 But my history is that I grew up in
12 the Tully Valley area as a young man.
13 My grandfather, Earl Grassly ran the
14 Solvay Process farm going way back when.
15 So I virtually grew up in that whole
16 area.
17 To make a long story short, I know
18 that whole area like the back of my
19 hand, because again I grew up in it and
20 hunted and fished on that property,
21 which is now Honeywell, for close to 40
22 years, back when it was Solvay Process
23 and then it became Allied Signal
24 Corporation.
25 Well, when Honeywell bought it out,

1 Emerson
2 they restricted access to everybody.
3 There was no access to anybody, the
4 trout stream or the woods, entirely.
5 And I guess in speaking so much from a
6 fisherman and a hunter, that that whole
7 area is overpopulated with deer right
8 now. Because there is no access to be
9 able to hunt there.
10 I'm sure that if Honeywell got with
11 the DEC to allow access again to hunting
12 that property, the New York State
13 Troopers and the insurance companies
14 from 81, along 81, Lafayette and Tully
15 would be sorely happy. Because the
16 accidents are incredible. And I don't
17 know if anybody has ever hit deer around
18 here going 65 or 70 miles an hour going
19 off 81, that's not pretty.
20 So I guess that's my point in a way,
21 that I would like to see Honeywell work
22 with the DEC to get, allow access to
23 those properties. It's a gorgeous area.
24 The trout streams on that upper end of
25 Onondaga Creek, beautiful trout fishing,

1 Emerson
2 it has a ton of small streams that used
3 to lead down in there are loaded with
4 brook trout.
5 Fellows Falls is probably the best
6 kept secret in New York State. That
7 should be a State Park. It is
8 absolutely fabulous. I see on your
9 picture, you've got a picture of the
10 center falls, it's actually three falls.
11 The one in the beginning, and the one in
12 the center, which is the most beautiful,
13 and then there is one up higher.
14 So that whole area should be somehow
15 made into some kind of preserve and
16 allowed access to the public. It's
17 gorgeous, off Tully Farms Road near the
18 base of the old Solvay farms that my
19 grandfather ran for his whole life. So
20 I'm just a little perturbed because
21 again, I know that whole area like the
22 back of my hand. Every stream, every
23 rock pretty much. But now the Honeywell
24 owns it, boom. I mean for the last
25 seven to nine years you can't get access

1 Monastory
2 anywhere near it.
3 And personally, pushing 62, pushing
4 63, excuse me, I can't wait another
5 seven to nine years. And if it's an
6 issue, I would say to the DEC if it's an
7 issue of firearms, which I'm not
8 against, open it up to archery only,
9 start out there for liabilities issues.
10 ALJ McBRIDE: Les Montgomery.
11 LES MONASTORY: My name is Les
12 Monastory, I'm a fisherman, an aquatic
13 biologist, and also represent Isaac
14 Walton League, which is a National
15 Conservation Organization.
16 About 35, 40 years ago, I got
17 involved in Onondaga Lake. I worked for
18 the County of Onondaga as an
19 Environmental Planner, with the
20 Environmental Management Council. And
21 we developed the original Environmental
22 Plan for Onondaga County in 1975, which
23 included plans for restoration of
24 Onondaga Lake.
25 As a member of the Isaac Walton

1 Monastory
2 Chapter, myself and Bob Ripburger, who
3 is a pretty well known conservationist,
4 outdoorsman, we basically convinced the
5 then DEC Commissioner Williams, to
6 reopen Onondaga Lake to fishing in 1985,
7 1986. With the help of Al Digler, and a
8 bunch of other fishermen volunteers, we
9 have had a youth fishing program for the
10 past 31 years at Onondaga Lake. And
11 we're having another program coming
12 again on August 20th. We have tried to
13 get as many youth as possible involved
14 with these programs.
15 Also our Isaac Walton Chapter has
16 been monitoring streams in the Central
17 New York region for the past two
18 and-a-half decades including Pompey.
19 And we have worked with school groups,
20 we have worked with adult teams, and I
21 actually have six adult teams. I go out
22 weekly monitoring streams here in
23 Onondaga County. And have seen
24 tremendous improvements in water quality
25 both in the streams and of course in

1 Squillace
2 Onondaga Lake.
3 I'll be happy to, the Isaac Walton
4 League, we have a statement of interest
5 and concerns. And we now have a chance
6 to turn what was once the most polluted
7 Lake in America into a national treasure.
8 I would like to see Onondaga Creek
9 opened again to public access, including
10 fishing, recreation, education. And we
11 also support the recommendations of the
12 Fish & Wildlife Services and the DEC for
13 use of these Habitat Restoration Funds.
14 But we also would like to see the mud
15 boils improved and continue the
16 restoration of the Lake and its
17 tributaries.
18 ALJ McBRIDE: Cindy Squillace.
19 CINDY SQUILLACE: Hi, I'm Cindy
20 Squillace. I'm here as a resident of
21 Syracuse and also a member of Neighbors
22 of the Onondaga Nation. The Neighbors
23 of the Onondaga Nation has already
24 submitted a full statement with comments
25 and recommendations. So I'm not going

1 Squillace
2 to go over them right now, but I do want
3 to highlight just a couple of things.
4 One that we feel very strongly that
5 the Nation's vision for Onondaga Lake
6 should be taken much more seriously.
7 And there should be found ways to have
8 their meaningful input into what
9 happened with the Lake.
10 Also our comments are about Onondaga
11 Creek. As many people have said,
12 feeling that that was another source of
13 food, recreation, of spiritual well-
14 being of not just the Onondaga people
15 but all of us along the Creek. So the
16 statement does go into detail about that.
17 As a resident of Syracuse I would
18 like to mention I work in the Syracuse
19 City schools. And I work with the
20 refugee populations in the Syracuse
21 schools. And as I got to know them
22 more, and talk with them about their
23 family and their culture, what I found
24 out is that many of the families are
25 eating fish from the Lake often. The

1 Squillace
2 children don't know where it comes from.
3 They went back and asked their parents,
4 where the fish came from. And they
5 talked about big fish that they got,
6 which of course are the fish that are
7 most contaminated. They're calling in
8 neighbors, they're having parties and
9 sharing the fish.
10 So I, as well as many people here,
11 have big concerns about that. And the
12 signs are great, I'm glad the signs were
13 changed. But the real way to help them
14 is to clean the Lake enough that they
15 could actually fish and eat the fish out
16 of the Lake. That would be the real
17 benefit and what I hope to see in my
18 lifetime. Thank you.
19 ALJ McBRIDE: Frank Miller.
20 FRANK MILLER: My name is Frank
21 Miller, I'm the President and Founder of
22 Nine Mile Creek Conservation Council,
23 it's a non-profit corporation,
24 apolitical, all volunteers, no paid staff.
25 Our focus has been specifically time

1 Miller
2 on task to the Nine Mile Creek and the
3 watershed. The group was first
4 formulated when I began researching it
5 in 1990, and we became really solid in
6 1993. We've instituted the Nine Creek
7 Water Trail by funding by ourselves and
8 empowering a water trail that could be
9 mapped with docks for canoes and kayaks
10 from the Camillus Village to the Lake.
11 We do a lot of water trout stocking,
12 and there are a variety of other
13 projects that we've been involved with,
14 including the first, to our knowledge,
15 of the Nine Mile Creek River Watershed
16 Preservation Plan, funded by our group
17 through SUNY ESF.
18 I'm not trying to tout our
19 organization to the degree of self
20 promotion. The idea is when we spend
21 money, any money, public or private
22 money, NRDA funds, and there are three
23 projects that are specific to Nine Mile
24 Creek Watershed. There should be an
25 organization at the grassroots level

1 Miller
2 which we are, which networks the town
3 governments and beyond, and finds the
4 best personal resources to solve
5 problems and initiate meaningful
6 projects. That you should, when these
7 NRDA projects are put out there, there
8 should be a responsibility on the
9 community to follow through. And in our
10 case, the Nine Mile Creek Conservation
11 Council has a record of success. And we
12 will be there today and tomorrow to
13 provide support at the grassroots level
14 for any of the projects that are
15 initiated at the Nine Mile Creek
16 corridor.
17 The restoration of all habitats
18 along Nine Mile Creek, and even the west
19 shore of Onondaga Lake are extremely
20 important. Fragmented habitats that
21 have been pretty much proven to be
22 unsuccessful. So by creating a model
23 which we started out with envisioning in
24 1990, based on other models in the
25 country, is to develop a wildlife

1 Miller
2 corridor, a habitat corridor, preparing
3 a buffer corridor, and with an eye on
4 watershed.
5 In order to achieve the goal that
6 had been touted by all the partners
7 involved with the Lake cleanup,
8 certainly habitat preservation for the
9 future is a long term goal that should
10 be met. The three projects at Nine Mile
11 Creek, you're well aware of, are very
12 specific for the long term goals of
13 habitat preservation and the trout
14 fishery preservation, and also our
15 leaders and politicians and independent
16 grassroots group and environmental
17 groups from all walks of life have
18 touted for the past 40 years. Thank you
19 very much for your time.
20 ALJ McBRIDE: Sheila Sicilia.
21 SHEILA SICILIA: Hello. I'm
22 concerned that we have increasing
23 fishing access to the Lake even though
24 the fish aren't safe to eat. It just
25 feels wrong. And I think that this

1 Sicilia
2 whole plan is sort of distracting from
3 the fact that the Lake hasn't been
4 cleaned up and it isn't going to be
5 cleaned up at this point. The caps that
6 were ill advised, haven't been working,
7 and even if they did work it wouldn't
8 improve cleaning the Lake.
9 I would like you to listen to the
10 Onondaga people as the rightful owners
11 and stewards of the Lake. I would like
12 them to be partners in this process
13 rather than reduced to commenting like
14 the rest of us.
15 Actually these plans are workable,
16 but I think our first priority needs to
17 be get the Lake truly clean. To build
18 all these things around a polluted lake
19 kind of feels like putting lipstick on a
20 pig. Thank you.
21 ALJ McBRIDE: Thank you. Peter King.
22 PETER KING: Good afternoon DEC and
23 Fish and Wildlife. I'm not going to try
24 and repeat a lot of what's been said.
25 But basically I'm here as a member of

1 King
2 Bikes CNY, and Moving People Transport
3 Coalition, but also a more Partnership
4 for Onondaga Creek whom I've attended
5 for a few years.
6 So I'm not opposed to any of the
7 projects proposed so far as I know and
8 understand. Bike lanes are fine, bike
9 routes, as long as they're connected.
10 And we have major problems in Syracuse
11 with unconnected routes. However, not
12 at the expense of certain other
13 questions.
14 And I think you need to take, we
15 need to take a larger turn perspective
16 as the Lake cleanup does over the last
17 century, realizes that Syracuse is not
18 unique. Syracuse has what many other
19 cities that are disinvested by, and this
20 is coming out more and more, as people
21 realize it, federal policies and so
22 forth over the past century, starting
23 with red lining in the '30s, the Federal
24 Highway Act.
25 Basically we have disinvented our

1 King
2 cities and the wealth has moved out.
3 And a specific example of sort of
4 disinvestment was what happened with
5 Onondaga Lake, which was used as a
6 subsidy for the industry. And I think
7 that the question of Onondaga Creek
8 should be much more central because of
9 the mud boils.
10 Now I understand you are not FEMA,
11 Federal Emergency Management, you are
12 two other departments. But nevertheless
13 there is an essential balance between
14 the mud boils, which were caused by
15 Solvay Process Company, although maybe
16 that causation is not solid, I think
17 it's pretty clear. And on the other
18 hand higher insurance premiums for the
19 local residents who are already in
20 poverty from the multitude of other
21 issues.
22 So I think that priorities of, on
23 some form of restoration project, which
24 would provide education for the City
25 residents and for anybody who wants to

1 King
2 learn more about urban streams, is an
3 essential and increasingly important
4 topic. But moreover finding ways to
5 work with natural systems that don't
6 fight nature but work with nature. You
7 will get much farther on that dime than
8 with concrete projects, re
9 infrastructure.
10 I think that project in the Onondaga
11 Creek Watershed, which was an attempt to
12 alleviate flood control would be an
13 excellent project. And moreover,
14 bearing those extra values from the spin
15 off of that. And moreover, I think that
16 urban jobs could be created, urban
17 skills could be created from those
18 projects, which would in turn influence
19 further development. I think we need to
20 think about climate change. Thank you.
21 ALJ McBRIDE: Thank you. Elmore
22 Davis. Is Elmore Davis here? Olivia
23 Green.
24 OLIVIA GREEN: Hi, I'm Olivia Green,
25 here representing Atlantic States Legal

1 Green
2 Foundation; been working to clean up the
3 Lake for decades. As has been stated
4 several times already, Onondaga Lake was
5 once the most polluted Lake in the
6 nation. Precedent setting. We suffered
7 and our Lake suffered a precedent
8 setting loss, and it deserves a precedent
9 setting restoration and natural resource
10 damages fund and settlement.
11 So I'm here in addition to the
12 comments we've already submitted on the
13 record, to encourage the Trustees to go
14 big. Go big on how you define the
15 natural resource damages in your
16 assessment and go big on the restoration
17 plan. Please expand the scope of the
18 damage assessment beyond the harmful
19 wildlife and the loss of recreational
20 use of the Lake. Include claims, every
21 imaginable claim you can think of.
22 Include claims related to the air that's
23 often too foul to breathe, the land that
24 is now wastebeds and the water that will
25 never be pure.

1 Green
2 Also include claims related to
3 existence and non-use values. If that's
4 ever been appropriate in an NRD claim,
5 it's most certainly appropriate here.
6 Include claims for the loss of the
7 cultural resources of our Lake. After
8 all, we're a Lakeside community that
9 lost its Lake. Imagine Ithaca without
10 it's Lake or Skaneateles or Cazenovia
11 without it's Lake. We once had a huge
12 valuable cultural asset in our Lake.
13 People flocked to the resort, and even
14 exported our fish.
15 But because of the industrial
16 pollution of our Lake it lost all it's
17 desirability for people to come to it.
18 And it only attracted other polluters,
19 like our wastewater treatment plants and
20 Roth Steel.
21 There has been a huge cultural loss
22 to the people around our Lake. And it's
23 not just the Onondaga Nation, but all of
24 us. People here live in the shadow of
25 the nation's dirtiest Lake and lived

1 Elliott
2 that way for all their lives and for
3 generations. It's a psychological
4 stigma that's been borne by generations
5 and will continue to harm the people of
6 this region, regardless of the cleanup.
7 We deserve for that loss to be
8 acknowledged, and for there to be some
9 attempts to make that right and to
10 restore what was once a cultural asset.
11 Please do something. Whether it's
12 education, outreach, increased
13 restoration, to restore our Lakeside
14 culture and our sense of the Lake as an
15 asset. And I thank you for this
16 opportunity to speak on the record.
17 ALJ McBRIDE: Jessica Elliott.
18 JESSICA ELLIOTT: Good evening. My
19 name is Jessica Elliott. I am a life
20 long resident of the City of Syracuse.
21 And for all my life I could throw a rock
22 into Onondaga Creek from my bedroom
23 window if I could see it. What the DEC
24 has to understand is that this whole
25 community is left out of all restoration

1 Elliott
2 projects. This community is tired of
3 being ignored completely. As we look at
4 those beautiful platforms that you have
5 set up out there, there is no mention of
6 us anywhere in those plans. We talk
7 about restoring Onondaga Lake, but we
8 refuse to recognize the fact that
9 Onondaga Creek flows directly into
10 Onondaga Lake.
11 If we take the time to naturalize
12 and revitalize the Lake, just like they
13 did with Meadowbrook up on the East
14 Side, this community could be so much
15 greater. I have two young sons who have
16 never seen Onondaga Creek, because
17 they're not tall enough. We don't do
18 anything to stop the flow of water or to
19 slow down the flow of water. It's not a
20 natural thing to have water going that
21 fast through a community.
22 How do you expect for people in this
23 community to appreciate nature when they
24 can't see nature? Please include us in
25 your plans. Stop ignoring this part of

1 Elliott
2 the community. Nine Mile, Tully, all of
3 those places, yes, revitalize those
4 places too, but put us in there too.
5 Put the South Side of Syracuse in there
6 too.
7 The lady that was before me, she
8 spoke about us being a Lakeside community.
9 We are that. The South Side of Syracuse
10 is that. Whether you fail to realize it
11 or not, I don't know what to tell you.
12 But this side of the Lake, Onondaga
13 Creek, that runs straight through the
14 South Side, we need naturalization and
15 we need revitalization. Our children
16 want to see the Creek, just as anybody
17 else wants to see any other bed of water.
18 I appreciate you, I hope that you take
19 all that was said into consideration and
20 understand that this is a heartfelt cry,
21 maybe not cry, but it's heartfelt. I'm
22 done crying. It's very heartfelt that
23 you include us in your funding project
24 here and moving forward. Thank you.
25 ALJ McBRIDE: Alfonso Davis.

1 Alfonso Davis
2 ALFONSO DAVIS: Hello. My name is
3 Alfonso Davis. I'm an activist in this
4 community, and I've been such for over
5 30 years. To the young lady's point,
6 and I'm going a different angle. This
7 community has been economically
8 depressed for several years. And now
9 we're being environmentally depressed
10 and ignored and denied real access.
11 You know, when they talk about
12 revitalization, this is beautiful right
13 here. It really is. I love it. But to
14 her point, when I go out here and I look
15 at Kirk Park or you stop shy of
16 downtown, you got fence, you got tall
17 weeds, everything stops. You go down to
18 Clary, everything stops. So we know the
19 real issue. And the real issue is
20 embodiment of the racism. That's the
21 real issue. But no one will say it.
22 I'm just that bold in my speaking
23 consistently that I will call it like I
24 see it.
25 So when you talk about the young

1 Alfonso Davis
2 woman who was up here saying that, you
3 know, you do all these beautiful things
4 and it's like putting lipstick on a pig.
5 Well, we'll say it's like putting
6 lipstick on a corpse, when you talk
7 about this quadrant right here. Because
8 no one is really bringing real resources
9 to this quadrant.
10 Now in 1980, or was it '81, monies
11 was beginning to be set aside for this
12 particular issue. That's 37 years ago.
13 Think about it. 37 years ago. And to
14 date no financial services to change
15 this Creek Walk in Onondaga Creek? 37
16 years. And no money to date. What do
17 you call that? I call it environmental
18 racism. I don't know what you call it.
19 I call it avoiding and neglecting people
20 in a particular community based on what?
21 Something I said Monday, if the
22 complexity of this community changed,
23 within the next five years it would be a
24 major issue. And they would change,
25 they would do what they did, because I

1 Merrill
2 now live in Brookford Road in that area.
3 And to this point, they did a very good
4 job changing that to make sure it's not
5 flooding.
6 Now you've got the flood insurance.
7 I'm in the insurance business, so you've
8 got insurance companies now preying on
9 people in this community with these
10 premiums. And then you've got insurance
11 companies giving the policies that they
12 are cancelling them and taking their
13 money, not refunding it, which I think
14 they should file a class action lawsuit,
15 but that's a different story.
16 Environmental racism is real. What are
17 you going to do about it? Thank you.
18 ALJ McBRIDE: Tom Merrill.
19 TOM MERRILL: Hello. My name is Tom
20 Merrill, I live in Baldwinsville. And
21 when I first moved to this area 30 years
22 ago I remember thinking how sad it was
23 that this beautiful Lake was considered
24 one of the most polluted or the most
25 polluted in the country. It was a toxic

1 Merrill
2 Lake. And I'm sure many people in this
3 room know the history more than I do.
4 Since then there's been a lot of
5 money, time and effort spent to clean up
6 the Lake. And we do, we have restored
7 the Lake back to a point where it can be
8 enjoyed by the public. And I think the
9 projects in this plan go a ways to
10 restoring, protecting wildlife habitat
11 and increasing our access to Onondaga
12 Lake and surrounding areas. In many
13 cases this is access that we currently
14 do not have and might never have but for
15 these projects. And I think these
16 proposals will benefit anyone who seeks
17 to enjoy the Lake.
18 I would encourage as the gentleman
19 who left, would encourage the US Fish
20 and Wildlife Service and the New York
21 State DEC to look for ways to provide
22 for more hunting opportunities on the
23 lands that are suitable for those
24 activities. And he brought up the Tully
25 area as a perfect example of that. And

1 Curtin
2 so as a resident of this county, a
3 hunter, a fisherman, and one who enjoys
4 the outdoors, I do support these
5 projects. And as the gentleman here
6 said, if there is anything we can do to
7 make them more handicapped accessible, I
8 think that's great because this is one
9 Lake that is going to have access all
10 around it. And make it so people that
11 are less able to get around, can enjoy
12 it. I think that's the way we should go.
13 ALJ McBRIDE: Maureen Curtin.
14 MAUREEN CURTIN: Hello, my name is
15 Maureen Curtin. I live at 4859 McDonald
16 Road in the Town of Onondaga, just
17 around the corner from Corcoran High
18 School. I live a little over a mile
19 away from the Creek's western edge, so
20 I'm going to let people's stories stand
21 that live closer to the Creek.
22 But I want to speak to a less
23 visible kind of damage, damage to social
24 connections. This isn't going to show
25 up in the metrics used to assess

1 Curtin
2 Honeywell's damage to the watershed in
3 the community, but it should.
4 For eight years I've traveled across
5 Brighton Avenue and down to Webster Pond
6 several times a week. It has rarely
7 occurred to me as I make these trips,
8 I'm crossing over or following alongside
9 Onondaga Creek, because of course it's
10 fenced in, invisible. As the recent
11 mandate to buy floodplain insurance
12 tells us, of course, fences don't mend
13 anything. Fences have just made the
14 Creek easier to ignore.
15 White majority institutions have
16 done a lot of work to build fences
17 between neighborhoods and between people
18 in the City. Redlining policies, I-81,
19 and stories that paint the South and
20 Southwest Sides as a war zone -- hello
21 District Attorney -- all make the
22 residents in this community easier to
23 ignore. These fences made residents
24 here less safe, and they made it harder
25 for us to connect.

1 Curtin
2 Recently, some of us in the CNY
3 Solidarity Coalition have joined the
4 effort to connect. Back in April we
5 began talking with people here on the
6 South and Southwest Side to begin taking
7 down fences. In a meeting of four dozen
8 people in the Dunbar Center, passionate
9 concern about the floodplain bubbled up.
10 This is Jessica Elliott. Near the end
11 of the meeting the distinguished poet
12 Jackie Warren-Moore, who was sitting
13 among us, declared, it's about time you
14 all showed up. We all laughed together,
15 but Ms. Warren-Moore was not kidding
16 around. We are a segregated community.
17 Just like the City never developed
18 good transport systems for getting
19 people to Onondaga Lake -- no access,
20 right? Central New Yorkers never
21 developed strong practices for fostering
22 interracial solidarity. We have a long
23 way to go, but we know one thing for
24 sure, an injustice here in Onondaga
25 Creek is an injustice everywhere in this

1 Lansley
2 watershed. There is no meaningful
3 restoration of Onondaga Lake without
4 meaningful restoration of Onondaga Creek.
5 So 20 projects in the suburbs aren't
6 enough. Whatever challenges Onondaga
7 Creek poses, aren't so much technological
8 as political. Let's take down the
9 fences around this Creek and this
10 community. Thank you.
11 ALJ McBRIDE: Bill Lansley. Is Bill
12 Lansley here?
13 BILL LANSLEY: Bill Lansley. I
14 appreciate all the comments that are
15 here tonight. I come here as a resident
16 of Onondaga County, Syracuse address, up
17 on Skyline. I had the opportunity to
18 work on Onondaga Lake, and it's a
19 treasure that I've seen transform over
20 the last nine years. I've been
21 personally involved with the Loop The
22 Lake project. I worked with a lot of
23 people in the room. It's been a
24 treasure to be part of the restoration
25 and increasing opportunities for people

1 Lansley
2 to use Onondaga Lake and the surrounding
3 recreational areas.
4 We've expanded the recreational
5 trails, worked with Chuckie Holstein,
6 who did a project that identified 80
7 years of comments, public comments that
8 were looking for the continuation of
9 trails around Onondaga Lake. And the
10 Loop The Lake Trails is one of the top
11 things that has been on the minds of
12 people for decades. I have a great
13 interest in continuing to Loop The Lake.
14 When you Loop The Lake you loop the
15 community.
16 Right now we're serving Liverpool
17 and Lysander and Geddes, and when you
18 continue to Loop The Lake you involve
19 the City, you involve the North Side,
20 you involve Galeville, and you loop all
21 of those communities together.
22 The Erie Canal Trail Project would
23 bring people from Buffalo and Albany and
24 all the way through the central part of
25 Onondaga County right around the Lake.

1 Daher
2 I appreciate the comments here tonight
3 from everyone. I do appreciate the work
4 done by the DEC and the US Fish and
5 Wildlife. I support the projects that
6 are put here today. And I thank you for
7 the opportunity to come and speak on
8 behalf of them.
9 ALJ McBRIDE: Albert Daher.
10 ALBERT DAHER: Hello, my name is Al
11 Daher. Some of you may know me from
12 Mickey's Bait and Tackle, I've been
13 there 35 years. I have a deep
14 understanding regarding those issues.
15 Fishing. Psychological, spiritual,
16 physical benefits associated with
17 fishing. I belong to the Isaac Walton
18 League. This will be our 31st Annual
19 Family Fun Fishing Day, August 20th. We
20 bring children to the shores of Onondaga
21 Lake. We teach them the importance of
22 nature and it's benevolence to our
23 health and the community's health. It's
24 a great lesson for these kids to
25 understand.

1 Daher
2 Fishing helps them reconnect to a
3 resource that has been disheveled and
4 degraded within our lifetimes. It's an
5 important vehicle and must be protected
6 and fostered. And the proposals that
7 are put forth by today's Committee, and
8 DEC, Department of Forestry, are
9 certainly beneficial, with the
10 improvement of the jetty at the outlet,
11 making it more safer for people to
12 access. The Nine Mile Creek improvements.
13 Yes, Onondaga Creek is important. Years
14 ago we recognized that, we should be
15 more involved with Trout Unlimited and
16 being able to restore Onondaga Creek.
17 And I would encourage the residents
18 of the City to get involved with Trout
19 Unlimited to make that happen. Also get
20 involved with Isaac Walton League.
21 They're a very great localized
22 conservation organization, who got their
23 hands dirty over the years in helping to
24 foster these projects, make people aware.
25 My heart belongs to the unduly

1 Daher
2 wronged Native Americans over the years,
3 that we've destroyed that Lake. But my
4 mind belongs to the future. We weren't
5 even talking about the cleanup 30 years
6 ago. We just would drive by that Lake
7 and ignore it completely. So I feel
8 fishing is a great vehicle, it's a first
9 start. It's just one cog in the wheel
10 that help people reconnect to that
11 resource.
12 And I commend all the projects that
13 are certainly put forth. I developed
14 three films on Onondaga Lake in the last
15 10 years or so with the help of the EPA.
16 You can see them at OnondagaLake
17 fishing.com. We helped the County with
18 their fishing access site. Make fishing
19 well known to the residents of Central
20 New York. Certainly that helps.
21 Consideration with regards to the
22 consumption of fish is a major issue and
23 should be addressed. It's bad when
24 minorities can overconsume fish that
25 come from that Lake. Certainly we have

Ivery

to do everything we possibly can. I know there was a recent study by the Health Department. And anyway let's go forward instead of looking backwards. Thank you.

ALJ McBRIDE: Marty Ivery.

MARTY IVERY: Hi everybody. Marty Ivery, I'm a Board Member of Trout Unlimited and a delegate to the Onondaga County Federations Sportsmen's Clubs. Our club supports the DEC, the Fish and Wildlife, Honeywell on this project. We do believe that it probably could be some work on Onondaga Creek, and we are for it. We believe that to proceed with these projects would be great for the community.

Our Club has done work on Onondaga Creek with other clubs. We've done cleanups, we've done fish, putting in fish. And like I said, I think we should proceed with this project that you have proposed, and it would be great for the community. I thank my good

1 Simmons
2 friend Al for commenting about Trout
3 Unlimited, because like I said, we one
4 hundred percent would like to work on
5 any project that the DEC or the County
6 comes up with. But we do believe that
7 these projects that you have here would
8 be great and we should proceed with
9 them. Thank you very much.
10 ALJ McBRIDE: David Simmons.
11 DAVID SIMMONS: Good evening. My
12 name is David Simmons. I'm the President
13 of the Onondaga County Federation of
14 Sportsmen's Clubs. Several of our
15 Federation and Club Members have been up
16 here already and explained the mission
17 of the Federation pretty well so I won't
18 go over that. I'm also not as eloquent
19 as some of the people that have already
20 spoken. So as everybody knows me, I'm
21 kind of a nuts and bolts guy. So I'm
22 going to get right down to it.
23 The Onondaga County Federation of
24 Sportsmen's Clubs supports the proposed
25 projects. While we recognize that

1 Simmons
2 Onondaga Creek, within the City of
3 Syracuse, experiences flooding and other
4 problems, we also realize that these
5 problems within the City of Syracuse are
6 not part of Honeywell's responsibility.
7 And we do in fact fully support
8 other processes that are available to
9 fix what's wrong with Onondaga Creek
10 through the City of Syracuse. There
11 have already been enough delays that the
12 project which could have been finished
13 will not be finished this year. And
14 further delays will prevent being able
15 to start still other projects in 2017.
16 As I already mentioned, we believe
17 there are other processes of funding to
18 address Onondaga Creek problems within
19 the City of Syracuse. And again, the
20 Federation will fully support any and
21 all efforts by the people in the
22 neighborhoods that are affected, and the
23 City of Syracuse itself to help sort out
24 these problems. But this NRDA process
25 should not be held hostage to just

1 Jones
2 unrelated problems. This NRDA process
3 should move forward without further
4 delay, and continue the ongoing
5 restoration efforts in the Onondaga Lake
6 watershed. Thank you.
7 ALJ McBRIDE: Mercedes Jones.
8 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: What number are
9 we on?
10 MERCEDES JONES: I'm number 40. Hi,
11 my name is Mercedes Jones. I'm going to
12 speak as a resident. I belong to the
13 National Action Network as well as
14 Syracuse United Neighbors. I'm a
15 community activist. I am also a fishing
16 person. I love to fish. I've got two
17 boats. But I'm affected in both areas.
18 I live right here at 469 Midland
19 Avenue. You cannot even plant trees in
20 my backyard because they will not come
21 to fruition. If we plant any vegetables
22 or anything along the Creek line, they
23 come infected. The only way that you
24 can raise fruits and vegetables in my
25 backyard is to put them in an upgrade

1 Jones
2 bed so they don't consume the toxins
3 from the dirt.
4 So they talk about, you know, you
5 talk about restoration of Onondaga Lake,
6 which is a good idea, but it's kind of
7 like, you know, fixing a dog's leg and
8 only fixing one, and the other three are
9 broken. So you understand you've got to
10 fix the whole thing. You've got to
11 restore, you know, in combination.
12 I don't agree that you can only
13 focus on one problem. It's a big
14 problem. It's environmental injustice,
15 because the South Side of Syracuse is
16 always left out. I believe they think
17 that we are the personal dumping ground
18 for all the crime, the drugs, the
19 toxins, whatever you don't want, it
20 comes to the South and the Southwest Side.
21 Nobody ever wants to hear that word.
22 They don't want to here injustice. They
23 don't want to hear racial impact. They
24 don't want to hear racial discrimination.
25 Don't want to hear red-lines. They

Jones

don't want to hear anything negative to their environment.

I can tell you that as a fisherman, here we go, so I can't go to Onondaga Lake and go fishing. So I have to go to another Lake not even near my home. And you should see the dirty looks when you try to put your boat in the water, because you're not part of their community. It's not your Lake.

People don't even want you in Ontario, Skaneateles, Cayuga, Owasco, I've been to Port Jefferson. All different types of places. But because they know that they kept their Lake clean and was responsible, we are the ones that are being affected by the irresponsibility of people who weren't being held accountable. So you should keep whoever is running politically? Right. And you have a voice, and if they're not working on anything from the Southwest Side, I encourage you to vote wisely.

1 Haley
2 ALJ McBRIDE: Jonah Minkoff-Zern.
3 Is Jonah Minkoff-Zern here? Robert
4 Haley.
5 ROBERT HALEY: Thank you. My name
6 is Robert Haley. I've lived in the
7 University area for 47 years now. I'm
8 also on the Board of Focus Greater
9 Syracuse, and we did the Lake, Onondaga
10 Lake study. So that's about two years
11 of work. And then the Onondaga Creek
12 Revitalization Project, which I'm very
13 proud to have been part of the four
14 years on that.
15 But listening to you all tonight is
16 encouraging, because there is so many
17 different points of view of what the
18 water means to our culture. I'm going
19 to go through my notes as you helped me
20 create them tonight, because I did not
21 come with a prepared plan.
22 First of all, one of our primary
23 goals was full walkable access around
24 the Lake, Loop The Lake. That's not
25 happening. We first envisioned an

1 Haley
2 aquifer zone, an environmental zone
3 between the Lake and all private land or
4 public lands. So that you could have
5 healthy water, healthy vegetation,
6 healthy microbes, as well as have people
7 walk that Lake.
8 From tonight we found that we should
9 be able to possibly extend that to the
10 full Creek Walk. The Creek Walk Plan
11 has so many walkable neighborhoods. I'm
12 impressed by some of the issues that
13 came up tonight about selective resource
14 misuse by decision makers in the past.
15 Whether it's racism or cultural or
16 environmental neglect or business.
17 What's happening is, such resources
18 like Onondaga Creek and Onondaga Lake
19 are not being cared for to their fullest
20 extent, fullest environmental extent and
21 human extent for future generations.
22 The Onondaga people have talked about
23 the fact that the Lake is not clean --
24 I'm getting off script already, I
25 apologize.

1 Haley
2 But the fact that the resource in
3 the South Side, Onondaga Creek, that
4 whole zone should be made the most
5 beautiful resource of the center of the
6 South Side, let alone Onondaga Lake.
7 That would raise the value of all the
8 land and the quality of the places for
9 the South Side. That should be done.
10 So that's the full requisite.
11 So we should have -- there should be
12 no broken links in the Lake, which is
13 hard to do, because we can't let private
14 things, such as -- off script again --
15 the Arena. Which closes its access to
16 the Lake, the Arena perimeter, that's a
17 preferred preference, that should not be
18 done.
19 Let's go back to the origin here,
20 and the fact that the Onondaga people,
21 the land and the water belongs to all of
22 us. Certainly to the first people,
23 first to mother earth as Oren would say
24 tonight, if he were here. Next to the
25 first people in terms of first

1 Haley
2 responsibility. Now we are the current
3 visitors to that Lake. So the decisions
4 that should be made should be perfectly
5 environmental, not short-capped.
6 The fact that we are storing,
7 capsulized negative, an environmental
8 negative project in the Lake. In other
9 words, environmental systems with steel
10 barriers and containers that is not
11 permanent is a big mistake. That will
12 blow up in the future with every
13 solution. I will write the rest of my
14 comments.
15 The Erie Canal project should gone
16 ahead. The mud lot restoration project
17 will continue the concept of immigration
18 into Central New York, the Erie Canal,
19 through the Canal system that's
20 connected from Montreal.
21 There is a number of projects
22 developed. Neighborhood Urban Farms, in
23 the sense that the Creek could, with the
24 environmental Creek Walk Study, show how
25 that water could be taken out and help

1 Abdul-Qadir
2 this woman grow proper plants in proper
3 soils next to the water, using the
4 floodplains that are now turned into
5 this area as a resource space, not
6 negative space. I'll write the rest of
7 my comments and I thank you for your
8 consideration.
9 ALJ McBRIDE: Yusef Abdul-Qadir.
10 YUSEF ABDUL-QADIR: I'm number 43
11 coming up. Before I begin, I want to
12 mention I'm the Director of the Civil
13 Liberties Union, Central New York
14 Chapter. I speak on behalf of my own
15 personal self. And before I do so, I
16 want to say with big respect and honor
17 to the people of the Haudenosaunee, on
18 whose ancestral land, on whose current
19 land we live on.
20 I think it is utterly deplorable and
21 offensive, both from a professional
22 perspective and a personal perspective
23 as a resident of the Southwest community
24 for anyone to come from wherever they
25 want to come from, to tell people here

1 Abdul-Qadir
2 that a major tributary to Onondaga Lake,
3 Onondaga Creek is not as important, and
4 there are other processes that should
5 mitigate that issue. It always seems
6 when it comes to the community of color,
7 when it comes to communities of the
8 South Side, when it comes to the Native
9 American community, and African-American
10 community, there are always other
11 processes. We should sit in the
12 proverbial back of the bus and wait, so
13 to speak. But we're not waiting
14 anymore.
15 But not for the fact that members of
16 SUN and Southwest solidarity communities
17 of color raised their voices to tell and
18 implore the DEC that you will reconsider
19 this, otherwise this issue wouldn't have
20 been brought up. I love the idea of
21 Loop The Lake, that sounds nice. I love
22 the idea of all these lovely trails and
23 the Erie Canalway. That sounds nice and
24 beautiful. That's a tourist attraction,
25 which we do need.

1 Abdul-Qadir
2 But what we're talking about today
3 are public health issues. You know,
4 when you consider the fact that there
5 are toxins that are currently being
6 emitted out of that Lake. And as a
7 person who worked on the mitigation of
8 the Akin, and the island of the Akin,
9 there was a former municipal dump site
10 on one of the Virgin Islands in Puerto
11 Rico, and helped to work to remediate
12 that area so that it can become a public
13 good, and interaction you could actually
14 have wildlife restored and come back.
15 It's a gem. To tell people that their
16 issues aren't as important, so you can
17 go fishing? So that you can have fun?
18 When this is about people's lives.
19 This is the fact that people consume,
20 breathe the air that comes out of there.
21 Children can't even fish in those areas
22 or the fish might have three eyes or six
23 legs. You see them evolve into people
24 in a few years.
25 The reality is, it is not just about

1 Abdul-Qadir
2 an environmental racism issue, it's a
3 human rights issue. These people don't
4 matter. Just say that. Just say you
5 people don't matter. Because that's
6 exactly what you're telling them. You
7 do not matter to my ability of my
8 privilege to be able to throw a line out
9 there and reel in some fish.
10 I appreciate the Federation or
11 whatever they're called, the Sportsmen,
12 but this is not what we're here for
13 today. This is an environmental justice
14 issue. This isn't about fishing and
15 your ability to be able to have access
16 to it. You want to talk about fishing?
17 The only people who should have access
18 to fishing and right to fish is the
19 Nation who started on those shores. The
20 indigenous people whose land we inherit
21 today. But not for the fact that people
22 settled and other people were settled
23 here and became settlers because they
24 were brought on ships to cultivate lands
25 of other people to settle here and take

1 Abdul-Qadir
2 advantage of those communities, you
3 wouldn't be able to talk about the lack
4 of utmost respect for the people who
5 lived there.
6 To suggest it's a major tributary to
7 the most polluted Lake in the country is
8 not that significant. You can go
9 somewhere else. We don't have time for
10 that. We should be talking about
11 holding Honeywell accountable. Because
12 as a company that bought another
13 company, that was a part of their
14 liability worksheet. It is a liability
15 of which they are now morally and should
16 be legally held responsible. The state
17 should do it's job. Stand up for the
18 people who live there. And actually
19 ensure that they can continue living
20 again. Thank you.
21 ALJ McBRIDE: Lindsay Speer.
22 LINDSAY SPEER: Hi, I'm Lindsay
23 Speer. I'm representing, consulting as
24 a member of the Onondaga Nation I'm
25 speaking on behalf of tonight. And I

1 Speer
2 want to start off by just noting a
3 couple of things. First I want to echo,
4 save the Onondaga Nation for being on
5 their land we stand on today and
6 acknowledge that the debt we have to
7 them, which is not often acknowledged
8 enough.
9 I am the fifth generation of my
10 family lived here in Syracuse. And as I
11 saw them work around Onondaga Lake
12 stories have come up. I heard from my
13 uncle, stories of my great grandparents,
14 how they used to go out to the Lake and
15 actually get to go there for pleasure.
16 That's something that this community has
17 not known. They have not known that for
18 a long time. We're beginning to get it
19 back, but then our access is limited.
20 We have to be careful how we
21 interact with that Lake still. Those
22 fish are not safe to eat, and they may
23 never be safe to eat. We are being left
24 with 9.5 million cubic yards of toxic
25 waste in the bottom of that Lake. That

1 Speer
2 is not clean. That is for our future
3 generation to have a legacy. Sadly it
4 has been a stigma on our community for a
5 very long time because of the way it was
6 treated. And that is being accounted
7 for in the injury assessment.
8 And immigrants and people of color
9 are not the only ones thinking about
10 fishing. I don't fish because I can't
11 eat the fish, a woman of child bearing
12 age. There's no point of it for me. I
13 should be able to eat fish.
14 The Loop The Lake Trail is too close
15 to the Lake in many places. There needs
16 to be a buffer zone to protect the Lake
17 to allow the Lake to heal. There needs
18 to be proper signs at any point where
19 you're fishing in the Lake that clearly
20 states that the fish advisory for the
21 Lake and in ways that are universally
22 understood with signage. Very clear
23 symbolism.
24 And further, this community, South
25 Side, Onondaga Creek needs to be

1 Speer
2 addressed in these plans. I'm going to
3 echo whatever everyone else said here,
4 that this is environmental racism and
5 injustice. And in part I had the
6 pleasure of working on the Onondaga
7 Creek. It has been frustrating to no
8 end basically to end up on a shelf.
9 That information, the input from the
10 community should be taken into account
11 and it should become and used to develop
12 a plan to restore the entirety of
13 Onondaga Creek, which so badly needs it.
14 My family grew up on Borden Avenue,
15 my parents family. They remember killer
16 Creek. They remember watching the
17 Creek, I know the sewage is not the
18 issue at the moment, it's the toxins at
19 Onondaga Lake. But the point is that
20 this Creek can also benefit the
21 community. And we finally have an
22 opportunity to funding to deal with it.
23 And the DEC and Fish and Wildlife
24 Service needs to do everything they can
25 to make that a reality. That means a

1 Shenandoah
2 priority. Onondaga Creek is the first
3 and foremost tributary to Onondaga Lake,
4 it's a major source of water to Onondaga
5 Lake. If we don't clean up Onondaga
6 Creek, and if we don't take care of it
7 and give it the habitat and ecological
8 area that it needs and provide people
9 with access and take away the chains
10 around it, then we have done nothing.
11 Thank you.
12 ALJ McBRIDE: Jeanne Shenandoah.
13 JEANNE SHENANDOAH: Hello, my name
14 is Jeanne Shenandoah. I live at the
15 Onondaga Nation, the home of my people
16 forever back through history. The
17 waters that we're discussing, Onondaga
18 Creek and Onondaga Lake are very sacred
19 places to my people.
20 As a matter of fact yesterday was
21 Worldwide Day of Prayer for Sacred
22 Places. Many people here know the
23 stories of all the sacred things that
24 happened to our people along that
25 waterway.

1 Shenandoah
2 At this present time I'm living in a
3 community that is deprived of the use of
4 our waterway, because of all the damage
5 that has been done through the mud boils,
6 the heavy sediment load that comes
7 through. The water has changed, it's
8 slowed down, no longer a clear water
9 fishery, so native fish are hard to be
10 found. Unable to use it. I have many
11 stories through my family history and
12 also my own experience in seeing clean
13 water flowing through there.
14 At this point in time I don't think
15 you can see a foot down into the water
16 it's so dark. And then it flows to the
17 Lake which has extreme historical
18 precious significance to my people. The
19 place where the great word of Peace came
20 to be. The great word of Peace which
21 has spread all over the world. There
22 are people paying attention to what
23 happened on that site of that precious
24 water.
25 All water is precious. All the

1 Shenandoah
2 water everywhere. There needs to be
3 more to be done, there needs to be more
4 clean up done, because what has been
5 done is only superficial. It's not safe.
6 I constantly worry about the people that
7 consume the fish from that. We can't
8 say we've done anything when we go there
9 and do sport fishing, because that's not
10 our way, just to catch these little
11 fishies and throw them back in. We do
12 fishing for substance.
13 There's been a long history of my
14 people to eat fish for our major protein
15 and now we are deprived of it. I don't
16 dare even talk about the fish, I have to
17 warn the children, my grandchildren, my
18 great grandchildren, the future have to
19 know about how dangerous it is, how
20 dangerous Onondaga Lake is to everybody.
21 Not just my people, all of us, every one
22 of us here. All the people that live
23 near the Lake, the people that go there
24 and fish and eat, because they also come
25 from fish-eating communities ways of

1 Shenandoah
2 life. Everything about that, the
3 actions there are scary and dangerous
4 for the future.
5 There has not been sufficient
6 warning, not been sufficient work. They
7 just have not paid attention to the
8 words of us. People that have great
9 concern with what's happening there. I
10 think the major concern too is all the
11 work that has been done has been the
12 budget. And when they did that that was
13 the end of it. They did not want to
14 hear the word from Onondaga Nation.
15 ALJ McBRIDE: That was the last
16 speaker card I had. Is there anyone
17 that has not yet had a chance to put a
18 comment on the record that would like
19 to? State your name for us, please.
20 SHARON OWENS: My name is Sharon
21 Owens, CEO of Syracuse Community
22 Connections, we operate the building
23 we're in right now. Sorry for being
24 late, I'll be quick, because I'm the
25 last person. But I was at a great

1 Owens
2 graduation. I just don't want the South
3 Side and the Southwest Side to be, you
4 know, the after-thought in the
5 development.
6 What is precious about our portion
7 of the plan is that it runs through
8 neighborhoods. It can be enhanced by
9 the people in the community. The people
10 in the community love it, and it's part
11 of the life blood of this side of town.
12 The improvements that are being proposed
13 are great. We want to continue to
14 emphasize that what usually happens for
15 this side of town is not part of this.
16 It's written in a plan, but it's left to
17 the third, fourth, fifth and sixth
18 session of the overall plan.
19 Let it be an equal part of the
20 viability of this entire plan.
21 Particularly because people who live in
22 this neighborhood and people who visit
23 this neighborhood know the Creek, the
24 Creek Walk and its presence as a viable
25 part of who we are. And it only

1 Owens
2 enhances this City. So let's not think
3 about it as an add on or a last minute
4 thought to this, but an integral part.
5 It's equally important as any other
6 focus. Sometimes when you are caught in
7 the middle you're forgotten. So I'm
8 asking that we not be forgotten.
9 ALJ McBRIDE: Is there anyone else
10 that would like to make a comment on the
11 record? (No response). On behalf of the
12 DEC I want to thank you all for coming
13 out this evening. Have a safe trip
14 home.
15 [Conclusion of Public Hearing 7:50 pm.
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1
2 C E R T I F I C A T E
3 This is to certify that I am a
4 Certified Shorthand Reporter and Notary
5 Public in and for the State of New York,
6 that I attended and reported the above
7 entitled proceedings, that I have
8 compared the foregoing with my original
9 minutes taken therein and that it is a
10 true and correct transcript thereof and
11 all of the proceedings had therein.
12
13
14 John F. Drury, CSR
15
16 Dated: June 26, 2017
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