



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal


HOYLMAN DEMANDS SUBPOENA TO COMPEL POLLUTERS TO TESTIFY AT HOOSICK FALLS WATER QUALITY HEARINGS

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL September 2, 2016



q

Hoylman: What did these companies know and when did they know it? The public has the right to know.”

NEW YORK – State Senator Brad Hoylman (D-Manhattan), Ranking Member of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, sent a letter today to State Senators Thomas 

O'Mara (R-Big Flats), Chair of the Environmental Conservation Committee, and Kemp Hannon (R-Nassau), Chair of the Senate Health Committee, demanding they use their subpoena power to compel the appearance of officials from Saint-Gobain North America, Taconic Plastics, and Honeywell International, Inc. at this month's public hearings on water quality and contamination to testify under oath.

After months of growing public pressure and outrage, the New York State Senate convened the first of three legislative hearings on Tuesday looking into water contamination in Hoosick Falls and Petersburg, where dangerous levels of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) have been found in local water supplies. While the hearing included testimony from affected residents, local leaders and officials from state government, representatives from Saint-Gobain, Taconic Plastics and Honeywell -- the three companies allegedly responsible for the water contamination crisis -- failed to attend and submit to questioning by the Legislature. Instead, one company, Saint-Gobain, submitted less than a page of written testimony totaling just 349 words.

In his letter, Hoylman urges Senator O'Mara and Senator Hannon to invoke Section 62-A of the New York State Legislative Law, which allows them to issue a legally-binding subpoena to the three companies, mandating their participation in the upcoming hearings.

State Senator Brad Hoylman said: "The absence of Saint-Gobain, Taconic Plastics and Honeywell at Tuesday's public hearing in Hoosick Falls was an insult to the people of that beleaguered community and all New Yorkers. As we work to uncover the facts of the PFOA water contamination crisis, the testimony of these companies is essential. What did these companies know and when did they know it? The public has the right to know."

In addition to this letter, Senator Hoylman, who along with Senate Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins called for water quality hearings back in June, announced a

package of water safety bills prior to Tuesday's hearing to address water quality and contamination issues including unregulated chemicals and potentially hazardous lead pipes in New York's water supply.

Senator Hoylman's full letter can be found below.

September 1, 2016

Hon. Thomas F. O'Mara

Hon. Kemp Hannon

Chair, Environmental Conservation Committee

Chair, Health Committee

New York State Senate

New York State Senate

307 Legislative Office Building

Capitol, Room 420

Albany, NY 12247

Albany, NY 12247

Dear Chairmen O'Mara and Hannon:

I write to urge you to use your statutory power as chairs of legislative committees to compel the appearance of officials from Saint-Gobain North America, Taconic Plastics, and Honeywell International, Inc. at this month's public hearings in Albany and Smithtown on water quality and contamination.

It was disappointing that Tuesday's public hearing in Hoosick Falls failed to include in-person testimony from representatives of these companies, which bear the responsibility for significant PFOA contamination in the Towns of Hoosick and Petersburgh, and the Village of Hoosick Falls. There are many important questions about what these companies know and when they knew it, and the opportunity to ask those questions was mistakenly squandered yesterday.

There is still time to rectify that mistake. Under Section 62-A of the New York State Legislative Law, you have the power to issue a legally-binding subpoena to require an individual to appear before a public hearing and be examined under oath in reference to matters within the scope of the inquiry or investigation being conducted by your committee. This month's hearings present a perfect opportunity to exercise those powers.

The public deserves a full accounting of the cause and scope of the pollution these companies inflicted, and we as lawmakers should be using these hearings as an opportunity to get all of the facts of these cases into the public record. Continued failure to do so would be a massive affront to our constituents.

Sincerely,

Brad Hoylman

Ranking Member, Environmental Conservation Committee

27th Senate District

cc: Hon. John Flanagan, Senate Majority Leader