



THE SENATE
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ALBANY 12247

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August 15, 2016

Dr. Howard Zucker
Commissioner
New York State Department of Health
547 River St.
Troy, NY 12180

RE: Newtown Creek Health Outcomes Review

Dear Dr. Zucker,

I am writing regarding the report the NYS DOH published about the potential elevated incidences of certain health outcomes in the communities surrounding Newtown Creek. I understand that Newtown Creek Community Advisory Group (CAG) submitted feedback to you expressing certain concerns and I would like to mirror and expand on a few of their points. I would especially like to see an expansion of your community outreach effort to effectively warn the local population of the possible risks inherent in fishing and consuming fish and crabs from Newtown Creek for the public welfare of my district.

Throughout the report, there is little discussion of the historical industrial pollution that has contributed to health issues in and around the Newtown Creek area. For example, the report does not mention the multiple waste transfer sites, highways and Superfund sites, oil spills, Brownfield sites and petrochemical facilities, etc in that area. I recommend a more concerted effort to discuss these sources of pollution and the cumulative effects of exposure to this array of pollutants over decades, as well as their contribution to incidences of disease in the area surrounding Newtown Creek. As noted earlier, the report fails to outline a plan to engage members of the public who fish in Newtown Creek. This group of fisher-people, sportsmen/women and low-income communities who fish on the creek regularly may not be familiar with the risks posed by consuming contaminated fish from this region.

It's imperative that the NYS DOH develops a comprehensive community outreach program to educate any at-risk populations about the potential health hazards of eating fish and crabs from Newtown Creek. I strongly recommend that appropriate, multi-lingual signage be included as part of this program. Though there are fish and crab consumption advisories in effect for Newtown Creek and discussed in the report, there must be appropriate signage at key locations, as there are with other Superfund sites around New York State, like Onondaga Lake or The Hudson River.

Sincerely,



Martin Malavé Dilan

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