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## **Residents Stand Up against Sewage Sludge Processing Plant Plainfield Township Hears Latest Synagro/Waste Management Application**

*Pen Argyl, Northampton County, Pennsylvania* – Residents opposed to a proposal to build a sewage sludge processing facility at the Grand Central Sanitary Landfill in Plainfield Township, on the border of Pen Argyl, PA, are speaking out against the project. Beginning in 2016, opposition has been mounting as the applicant attempts to gain approval for variances needed from the Plainfield Township Planning Commission.

The current proposal is for Synagro Technologies, a “bio solids” processing company, to develop the “Slate Belt Heat Recovery Center” on the Green Knight Energy Center lot, located at the Grand Central Landfill, owned and operated by Waste Management Inc.

<https://www.wmsolutions.com/locations/details/id/213> The project is actually two uses – a plant to dry the sewage sludge into pellets and an electric generating facility that would use a combination of waste heat from the sludge drying plant and other fuel.

The sewage sludge processing plant would truck in up to 400 wet tons per day of human sewage waste to produce dried sludge pellets, a “biosolids” product sold as fertilizer and heat pellets. Waste Management, Inc., owners of the landfill, are representing Synagro with a plan to use a 12.1 acre parcel of the Green Knight lot, at the location of a former rock quarry site at Grand

Central Landfill. The Plainfield Township Planning Commission will review both uses at the April 4 special public meeting based on reviews prepared by the township engineers and Zoning Office.

Residents of the area are opposed to the facility because of pollution concerns, public health effects, safety issues and property value decline. Residents Elisa and Tom Carlo of Pen Argyl have been involved since December 2016 and organized a community group Sludge Free Slate Belt to oppose the facility. Residents have come out to numerous Plainfield Township public meetings and to educational programs such as a rally and informational meeting in 2017 organized by Sludge Free Slate Belt. <https://www.facebook.com/sludgefreeslatebelt/>

Delaware Riverkeeper Network and residents are concerned that the proposed sludge processing plant would greatly increase truck traffic, would produce dangerous air emissions from the drying process and other potential impacts such as noise, lights, odors, and the risk of environmental impacts related to toxic substances and hazardous materials contained in the sewage sludge to be handled at the site. Questions remain regarding the potential for groundwater pollution, stormwater runoff impacts, and various issues regarding the generation of electricity, and the use of secondary fuels for the proposed power plant.

“There are numerous unresolved issues related to the processing of sewage waste at this site, located next to people’s homes and businesses and adjacent to high quality streams. The Synagro/Waste Management Inc. processing plant proposal entails the handling of potentially toxic and hazardous materials that are known to be contained in sewage sludge, complicated by the location at a former quarry with the risk of groundwater contact,” said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.

If the local planning process results in approval of the variances and site plans needed by the project, several permits from Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection will be required including a municipal waste processing permit, air permit, a beneficial use permit for the dried pellet product, stormwater permits, an industrial wastewater or water quality management permit, and planning permits. An approval by the Delaware River Basin Commission may not be required since the applicant is proposing to “back haul” the liquid waste to the original source, avoiding a stream discharge permit. However, the storage and transfer of the industrial process water poses other substantial environmental risks that have not been addressed.

Residents pledge that they are committed to stopping the proposed sludge plant and remain fully engaged in the planning process. For more information about the community organization: Elisa and Tom Carlo, Sludge Free Slate Belt, [saynotosynagro@gmail.com](mailto:saynotosynagro@gmail.com)

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